



**WESTERN  
DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION**

# Timely Economic Indicators for the Western Region

*Second Report – October 2020*

The report is largely statistical, please see accompanying [WDC Insights Blog](#) for a commentary on the report.

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## Introduction

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The Western Development Commission (WDC) has compiled a set of timely economic indicators to help assess economic activity in the Western Region (WR) and Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) closer to real-time.<sup>1</sup> The indicators chosen are all published at least quarterly by official sources and can provide insight on what to expect once further official data become available. See the detailed methodology [here](#).

**The report is largely statistical, please see accompanying [WDC Insights Blog](#) for a commentary on what the statistics suggest.**

The WDC acknowledges that the indicator set is limited given the availability of official high-frequency county-level economic data. To address this limitation supplementary ad-hoc reports based on alternative data sources are produced. See our first supplementary report on [Google Mobility](#) data.

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### What is covered in the timely economic indicator set?

Figure 1 – Timely Economic Indicator Set

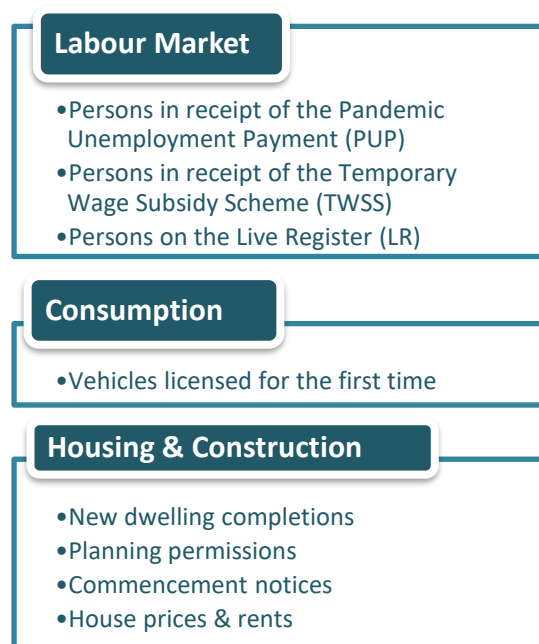


Figure 2 – The Western Region



*Note: [The Atlantic Economic Corridor](#) includes all Western Region Counties as well as Limerick and Kerry.*

### Why timely economic indicators are particularly important at the regional level?

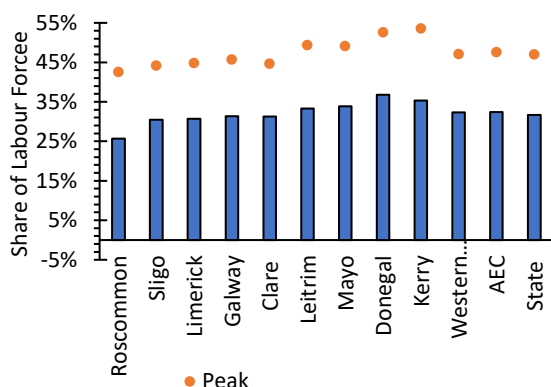
The lag between the data reference period and the publication of official national income accounts and other economic statistics has prompted considerable effort into the development of national real time economic indicators. The lag is often considerably longer for county and regional data. For example, the latest available regional income accounts relate to 2017 and 2018 and were published in February 2020, a lag of up to thirty-six months between the data reference period and publication. This demonstrates the need for timelier regional and county level indicators of economic activity.

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<sup>1</sup> Under the WDC Act 1998 the WDC's statutory remit is to 'foster and promote the economic and social development of the Western Region'. Where the Western Region is the seven counties identified in Figure 2. The AEC adds in Limerick and Kerry.

# Labour Market

Figure 3. Total Income Supports (LR + TWSS + PUP) % of Labour Force: 30<sup>th</sup> August compared with May peak.



Notes: Labour Force from 2016 Census. Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS) replaced TWSS on 1<sup>st</sup> Sept.  
Source: Own Calculations from CSO COVID-19 Income Support and Live Register data (excluding overlap) downloaded on 05/10.

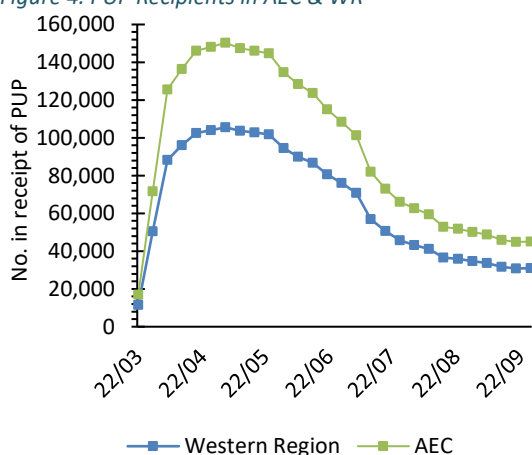
- Large fall in total income supports**

During May, the % of the labour force in receipt of state income supports peaked at 47% in WR, 48% in AEC and 47% nationally. This fell to 32% in WR, AEC and State by 30<sup>th</sup> August.

- Largest decline as a % of labour force was in Kerry.**

The labour force share of total income supports fell by 19 percentage points in Kerry from May to August.

Figure 4. PUP Recipients in AEC & WR



Source: Own Calculations from CSO Detailed COVID-19 Income Support and Live Register data downloaded on 05/10

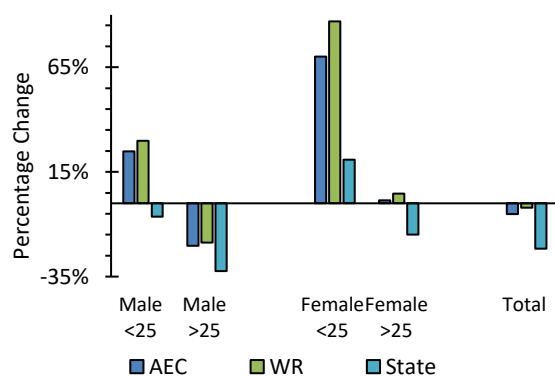
- Large decline in PUP payments**

PUP recipients in WR (AEC) declined from 105,542 (150,304) on 3<sup>rd</sup> May to 30,924 (44,981) as of 27<sup>th</sup> Sept.

- First weekly rise since May Peak.**

Weekly increase in WR (+170) and AEC (+183) during the week ending 27/09. Donegal (+126), Clare (+63), Kerry (+39), Mayo (+26), Leitrim (+17) & Roscommon (+8). Donegal moved to Level 3 restrictions on 26/09. There was also a rise nationally (+10,801) concentrated in Dublin (+10,035). Dublin moved to Level 3 on 18/09.

Figure 5. % Change in TWSS Supports from May Peak to 30<sup>th</sup> August



Source: Own Calculations from CSO Detailed COVID-19 Income Support and Live Register data downloaded on 05/10

- Regional TWSS dynamics.**

Strong increase in TWSS support for females and younger males in WR and AEC from the May peak. TWSS supports had been rising across WR and AEC from May peak to end June compared to a decline nationally. This may be driven by the accommodation and food sector. The WR & AEC have a relatively large share of employment in that sector and within the sector a relatively large share of female employment.

Table 1 - Total Persons in Receipt of State Income Support by County

Reference Week	22 March	3 May	5 July	30 Aug.
Donegal	12,311 (17%)	37,435 (53%)	31,578 (44%)	26,185 (37%)
Sligo	3,612 (12%)	13,368 (44%)	11,335 (37%)	9,210 (30%)
Leitrim	2,078 (14%)	7,346 (49%)	6,041 (41%)	4,963 (33%)
Roscommon	2,780 (9%)	12,614 (43%)	9,842 (33%)	7,624 (26%)
Mayo	8,721 (15%)	29,493 (49%)	24,379 (41%)	20,326 (34%)
Galway	13,842 (11%)	57,182 (46%)	48,162 (38%)	39,245 (31%)
Clare	6,846 (12%)	25,231 (45%)	21,161 (37%)	17,698 (31%)
Limerick	9,693 (11%)	40,358 (45%)	33,179 (37%)	27,683 (31%)
Kerry	10,599 (15%)	37,469 (54%)	30,671 (44%)	24,727 (35%)
Western Region	50,190 (13%)	182,669 (47%)	154,498 (40%)	125,251(32%)
AEC	70,482 (13%)	260,496 (48%)	218,348 (40%)	177,661 (32%)
State	253,569 (11%)	1,084,017 (47%)	893,344 (39%)	730,365 (32%)

Note: Share of labour force in parentheses

Source: Own Calculations from CSO Detailed COVID-19 Income Support and Live Register data downloaded on 05/10

Table 2 - Total Persons in Receipt of PUP

Reference Week	22 March	3 May	16 Aug.	27 Sept.
Donegal	2,400 (3%)	22,814 (32%)	7,162 (10%)	5,949 (8%)
Sligo	861 (3%)	7,716 (26%)	2,699 (9%)	2,233 (7%)
Leitrim	401 (3%)	4,138 (28%)	1,378 (9%)	1,185 (8%)
Roscommon	629 (2%)	7,144 (24%)	2,420 (8%)	2,038 (7%)
Mayo	2,016 (3%)	16,485 (27%)	5,451 (9%)	4,538 (8%)
Galway	3,739 (3%)	32,581 (26%)	12,391 (10%)	10,469 (8%)
Clare	1,453 (3%)	14,664 (26%)	5,071 (9%)	4,512 (8%)
Limerick	2,578 (3%)	22,467 (25%)	8,958 (10%)	7,756 (9%)
Kerry	2,756 (4%)	22,295 (32%)	7,236 (10%)	6,301 (9%)
Western Region	11,499 (3%)	105,542 (27%)	36,572 (9%)	30,924 (8%)
AEC	16,833 (3%)	150,304 (27%)	52,766 (10%)	44,981 (8%)
State	58,737 (3%)	602,107 (26%)	232,372 (10%)	217,142 (9%)

Note: Share of labour force in parenthesis

Source: Own Calculations from CSO Detailed COVID-19 Income Support and Live Register data downloaded on 05/10

Table 3 - Total Persons in Receipt of TWSS

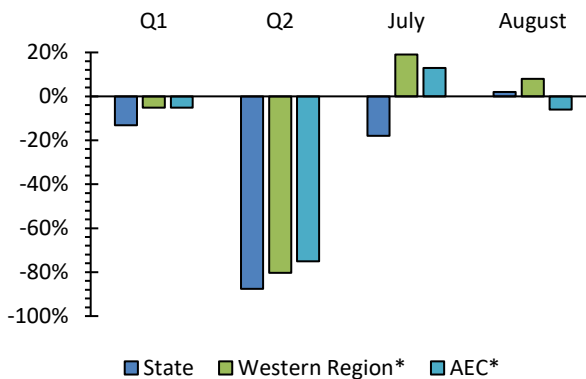
Reference Week	22 March	3 May	5 July	30 Aug.
Donegal	642 (1%)	8,155 (11%)	9,869 (14%)	10,647 (15%)
Sligo	444 (1%)	4,572 (15%)	4,462 (15%)	4,229 (14%)
Leitrim	122 (1%)	2,203 (15%)	2,189 (15%)	2,064 (14%)
Roscommon	319 (1%)	4,722 (16%)	4,210 (14%)	3,534 (12%)
Mayo	523 (1%)	9,191 (15%)	9,501 (16%)	9,235 (15%)
Galway	1,851 (1%)	21,170 (17%)	20,819 (17%)	19,311 (15%)
Clare	587 (1%)	8,820 (16%)	9,339 (17%)	8,655 (15%)
Limerick	1,173 (1%)	15,790 (18%)	14,614 (16%)	12,322 (14%)
Kerry	769 (1%)	11,624 (17%)	11,499 (16%)	11,902 (17%)
Western Region	4,488 (1%)	58,823 (15%)	60,341 (16%)	57,685 (15%)
AEC	6,430 (1%)	86,237 (16%)	86,454 (16%)	81,909 (15%)
State	35,959 (2%)	425,202 (18%)	388,504 (17%)	333,750 (14%)

Note: Share of labour force in parenthesis

Source: Own Calculations from CSO Detailed COVID-19 Income Support and Live Register data downloaded on 05/10

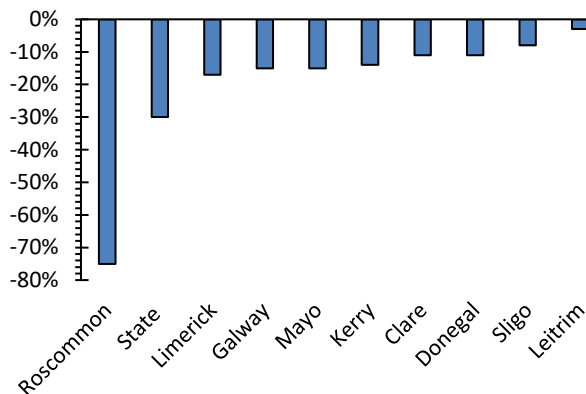
# Consumption

Figure 6. Year-on-year % Change in New Private Cars Licensed for the First Time



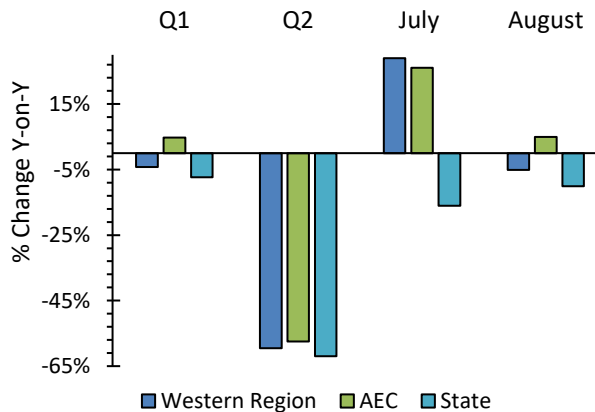
Note: as of 02/10 no data for June was available  
 \*Excluding Roscommon, as it distorts the WR/AEC aggregates see [here](#) and [here](#)  
 Source: Own Calculations from CSO (TEM22)

Figure 7. Year on Year % Change in New Private Car Registrations – Year to Date (January-August)



Note: June was excluded for both years as June 2020 data was unavailable  
 Source: Own Calculations from CSO (TEM22)

Figure 8. Year-on-year % Change in New Goods Vehicles Private Cars Licensed for the First Time



Source: Own Calculations from CSO (TEM22)

- **New car registrations fell pre-COVID-19**

All WR and AEC counties recorded year on year declines in Jan. & Feb.

- **COVID-19 impact = Q2 collapse**

75-80% year on year decline in WR\* & AEC\* in Q2 (88% nationally).

- **Signs of recovery during Q3**

Excluding Roscommon due to the distortionary impact of hire cars, WR (AEC) registrations rose 19% (13%), year on year during July. July is a key month for new car sales given the dual registration system.

- **Lower decline in year to date sales in WR & AEC.**

All WR & AEC counties except Roscommon had a lower comparative total sales decline than the State average from January to August.

- **New goods vehicle registrations collapsed in Q2 but some signs of Recovery in Q3.**

During July, new goods vehicle registrations rose, year on year, by 29% (26%) in WR (AEC) compared to a national decline (-16%). During August, registrations rose 5% in the AEC, year on year.

Table 4 - New Private Cars Licensed for the First Time

	Q1		Q2*		July		August	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Clare	1,116	1,029	320	63	296	402	140	171
Donegal	1,109	1,043	342	85	310	375	160	206
Galway	1,926	1,807	534	113	539	578	293	301
Leitrim	198	218	70	19	62	68	22	38
Mayo	956	901	261	58	280	327	130	104
Roscommon	1,331	761	1,560	32	1,057	146	76	64
Sligo	553	557	146	24	143	185	74	81
Western Region	7,189	6,316	3,233	394	2,687	2,081	895	965
Western Region (Ex. Roscommon)	5,858	5,555	1,673	362	1,630	1,935	819	901
Kerry	1,109	1,077	333	54	359	380	359	162
Limerick	1,898	1,784	590	91	605	619	215	252
AEC	10,196	9,177	4,146	539	3,651	3,080	1,469	1,379
AEC (Ex. Roscommon)	8,865	8,416	2,596	507	2,594	2,934	1,393	1,315
State	50,861	44,167	26,778	2,828	18,741	15,329	7,202	7,360

Note: \*June was excluded from Q2 in both years as June 2020 data was unavailable

Source: CSO (TEM22)

Table 5 – New Goods Vehicles Licensed for the First Time

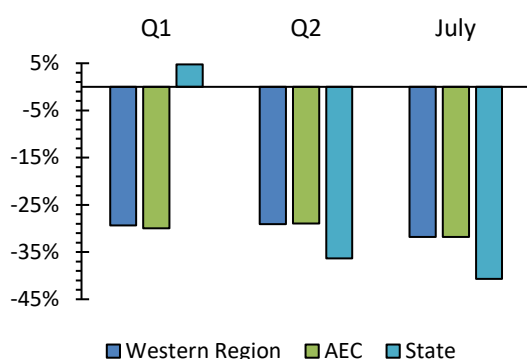
	Q1		Q2		July		August	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Clare	119	109	91	36	32	31	19	34
Donegal	149	156	110	41	37	49	30	48
Galway	282	276	230	74	78	76	104	62
Leitrim	36	43	23	15	5	11	7	11
Mayo	152	147	117	62	73	101	47	35
Roscommon	86	71	63	25	17	33	15	21
Sligo	103	86	73	33	24	42	14	13
Western Region	927	888	707	286	266	343	236	224
Kerry	196	234	146	74	54	58	49	65
Limerick	273	340	224	98	98	126	61	74
AEC	1,396	1,462	1,077	458	418	527	346	363
State(000's)	7,931	7,345	6,374	2,427	2,736	2,298	2,499	2,247

Source: CSO (TEM22)

# Housing

## Sales Volumes and House Prices

Figure 9. Year on Year % change in sales volume



Source: Own Calculations from CSO (HPM03)

- **COVID-19 impact = collapse in sales.**

Large year on year decline in sales volumes from April-July. From Q2 the fall in sales volumes appears comparatively less severe in WR and AEC compared with the State.

Table 6 - Mean House Prices based on Market Transactions of all Properties in € Thousands

Month	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY
Year	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
Clare	206 (5%)	198 (17%)	181 (-4%)	182 (-1%)	174 (-12%)	217 (14%)	201 (2%)
Donegal	148 (23%)	146 (23%)	154 (12%)	127 (-3%)	111 (-10%)	144 (13%)	144 (12%)
Galway City	301 (6%)	284 (0%)	298 (9%)	294 (-2%)	260 (-20%)	296 (15%)	314 (-1%)
Galway County	229 (5%)	202 (-1%)	245 (-18%)	257 (15%)	267 (35%)	234 (15%)	256 (15%)
Leitrim	102 (-24%)	129 (-3%)	102 (-11%)	112 (8%)	151 (12%)	140 (4%)	150 (27%)
Mayo	153 (-15%)	167 (36%)	144 (-11%)	139 (-12%)	139 (-11%)	159 (-10%)	135 (12%)
Roscommon	128 (3%)	118 (11%)	133 (-4%)	123 (-4%)	128 (-7%)	123 (-21%)	134 (9%)
Sligo	159 (1%)	132 (-11%)	145 (-19%)	146 (-17%)	149 (7%)	163 (10%)	142 (15%)
Kerry	187 (7%)	202 (7%)	187 (0%)	193 (-1%)	211 (2%)	183 (-4%)	189 (4%)
Limerick City	187 (0%)	192 (-4%)	229 (16%)	204 (5%)	203 (17%)	163 (-11%)	212 (9%)
Limerick County	217 (11%)	221 (2%)	218 (11%)	227 (10%)	251 (12%)	233 (2%)	240 (0%)
State	292 (2%)	296 (1%)	289 (2%)	280 (-3%)	277 (-5%)	287 (0%)	299 (-1%)

Note: Year on year % change in parentheses

Source: CSO (HPM03)

Table 7 - Median House Prices based on Market Transactions of all Properties in € Thousands

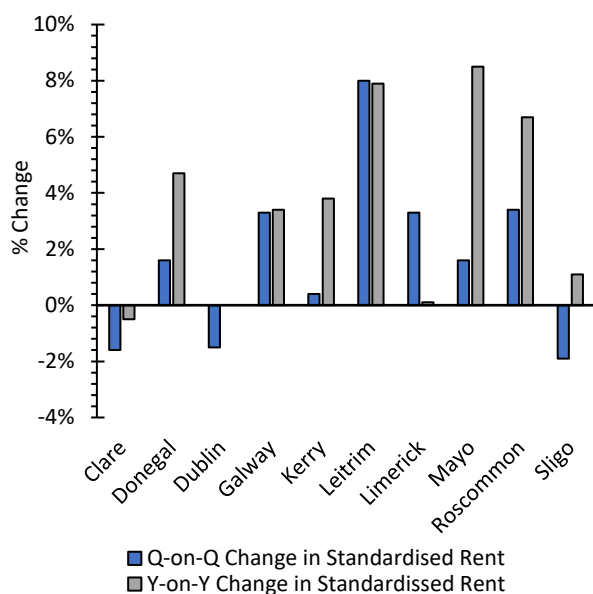
Month	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY
Year	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
Clare	191 (12%)	189 (19%)	179 (4%)	185 (2%)	165 (-8%)	213 (21%)	188 (2%)
Donegal	115 (0%)	123 (26%)	148 (18%)	108 (-6%)	108 (-13%)	133 (12%)	123 (0%)
Galway City	282 (18%)	247 (-8%)	270 (7%)	255 (-2%)	253 (-11%)	263 (5%)	282 (2%)
Galway County	208 (-8%)	190 (12%)	238 (19%)	255 (14%)	250 (21%)	201 (6%)	241 (29%)
Leitrim	88 (-32%)	121 (0%)	97 (-3%)	96 (7%)	116 (6%)	120 (-18%)	125 (30%)
Mayo	145 (13%)	158 (37%)	135 (-7%)	139 (3%)	140 (0%)	144 (4%)	106 (-24%)
Roscommon	130 (39%)	104 (-17%)	109 (8%)	122 (3%)	97 (17%)	105 (-26%)	118 (-2%)
Sligo	165 (22%)	112 (-17%)	134 (10%)	135 (-25%)	118 (27%)	120 (-15%)	129 (-11%)
Kerry	167 (1%)	180 (8%)	175 (8%)	168 (-6%)	190 (0%)	160 (-9%)	184 (10%)
Limerick City	155 (13%)	144 (4%)	228 (28%)	195 (13%)	179 (5%)	174 (15%)	210 (25%)
Limerick County	215 (19%)	214 (10%)	201 (9%)	205 (7%)	210 (3%)	200 (-14%)	230 (5%)
State	255 (2%)	250 (0%)	255 (4%)	250 (0%)	237 (7%)	251 (-2%)	260 (-3%)

Note: Year on year % change in parentheses

Source: CSO (HPM03)

## Average Rents

Figure 10. Residential Tenancies Board Standardised Rent % change year on year and quarter on quarter



Source RTB (2020)

- Rents down in Clare and Sligo**  
 During Q2, rents fell on a quarterly basis in Sligo and Clare. Rents fell on an annualised basis in Clare.
- Largest rent rises were in WR**  
 Mayo (8.5%) and Leitrim (7.9%) had the largest annualised increases in the State during Q2.
- Pandemic coincided with a moderation in annualised growth.**  
 Nationally, 2020Q2 was the first time since 2014 that annualised rent growth was below 10% in every county. Annualised rent growth ranged from -0.5-8.5% in WR & AEC.

Table 8 - Residential Tenancies Board Standardised Rent (Euro)

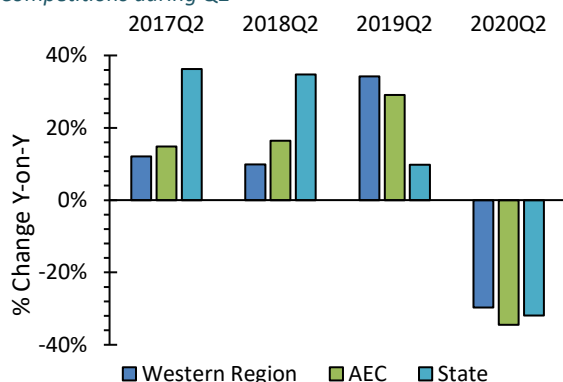
	2020Q2	2020Q1	% Change Y-on-Y	% Change Q-on-Q
Clare	728	740	-0.5	-1.6
Donegal	616	606	4.7	1.6
Galway	1,075	1,041	3.4	3.3
Leitrim	599	554	7.9	8.0
Mayo	695	684	8.5	1.6
Roscommon	641	620	6.7	3.4
Sligo	739	754	1.1	-1.9
Limerick	988	957	0.1	3.3
Kerry	792	789	3.8	0.4
Dublin	1,709	1,735	0.0	-1.5

Source: Residential Tenancies Board Rent Index Q2 2020



## Dwelling Completions

Figure 8. Year on Year % Change in Total Dwelling Completions during Q2

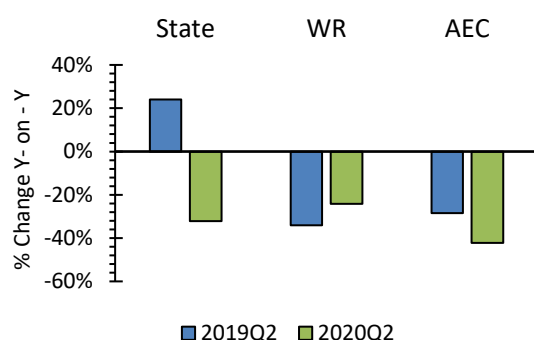


Source Own Calculations from CSO (NDQ06)

- **COVID-19 impact = Q2 Collapse.** During Q2, total dwelling completions declined in WR (AEC) by 30% (34%) compared to a national decline of 32%.

## Planning Permissions (Units for which Permission Granted)

Figure 12. Year on Year Change in Total Planning Permissions (units) during Q2



Source: Own Calculations from CSO (NDQ06)

- **Q2 collapse.** During Q2 2020, total units for which planning permission was granted fell by 24% (42%) in the WR (AEC) compared with a national decline of 32% compared with Q2 2019.

Table 9 - Total Dwelling Completions During Q1 and Q2

Local Authority	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2
Clare	38	51	58	50	57	55	56	119	77	77
Donegal	57	84	76	93	87	90	85	111	116	100
Galway County	81	109	110	108	119	135	145	197	187	132
Galway City	19	27	37	39	31	41	30	39	57	31
Leitrim	10	18	14	23	16	14	11	11	5	5
Mayo	40	51	37	74	71	70	96	88	124	56
Roscommon	15	28	17	25	31	31	39	36	28	37
Sligo	13	21	20	24	32	43	11	42	75	14
Western Region	273	389	369	436	444	479	473	643	669	452
Limerick	58	69	83	88	126	141	87	162	128	81
Kerry	42	67	53	79	96	82	80	101	84	61
AEC	373	525	505	603	666	702	640	906	881	594
State	1978	2396	2766	3265	3468	4399	4254	4829	4986	3290

Source Own Calculations from CSO data (NDQ06).

Table 6 – Planning Permissions - Houses (Number) – Q2

Local Authority	2018	2019	2020
Clare (County Council)	146	78	64
Donegal (County Council)	83	99	138
Galway (County Council)	257	126	50
Galway (City Council)	84	16	25
Leitrim (County Council)	4	18	3
Mayo (County Council)	75	73	28
Roscommon (County Council)	34	30	4
Sligo (County Council)	29	19	10
Western Region	712	459	322
Limerick City and County	213	185	51
Kerry (County Council)	151	98	33
AEC	1076	742	406
State	4951	4936	3063

Source: CSO (BHQ12)

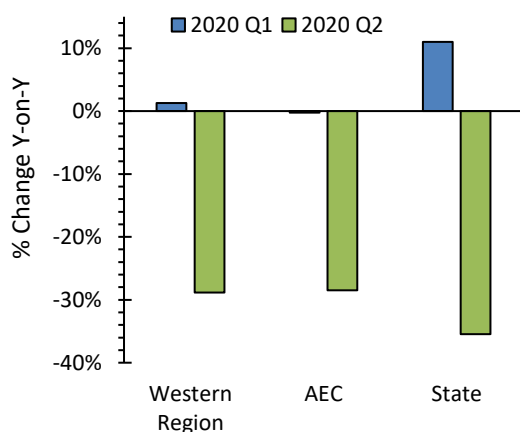
Table 127 - Planning Permissions One- Off Houses (Number) – Q2

Local Authority	2018	2019	2020
Clare (County Council)	60	65	15
Donegal (County Council)	75	82	31
Galway (County Council)	98	110	41
Galway (City Council)	11	4	2
Leitrim (County Council)	4	11	3
Mayo (County Council)	71	71	23
Roscommon (County Council)	25	30	4
Sligo (County Council)	22	10	4
Western Region	366	383	123
Limerick City and County	51	56	23
Kerry (County Council)	43	53	23
AEC	460	492	182
State	1315	1387	669

Source: CSO (BHQ12)

## Commencement Notices

Figure 13. Year on Year % Change in Commencement Notices



Source: Own Calculations from Department of Housing Planning and Local Government.

Table 11 - Planning Permissions - Multi-Development Houses (Number) – Q2

Local Authority	2018	2019	2020
Clare (County Council)	86	13	49
Donegal (County Council)	8	17	107
Galway (County Council)	159	16	9
Galway (City Council)	73	12	23
Leitrim (County Council)	n/a	7	n/a
Mayo (County Council)	4	2	5
Roscommon (County Council)	9	n/a	n/a
Sligo (County Council)	7	9	6
Western Region	346	76	199
Limerick City and County	162	129	15
Kerry (County Council)	108	45	10
AEC	616	250	224
State	3636	3549	2394

Source: CSO (BHQ12)

Table 13 - Planning Permissions Private Flats/Apartments (Number) – Q2

Local Authority	2018	2019	2020
Clare (County Council)	1	5	n/a
Donegal (County Council)	2	8	21
Galway (County Council)	13	4	n/a
Galway (City Council)	50	44	80
Leitrim (County Council)	1	2	2
Mayo (County Council)	4	n/a	1
Roscommon (County Council)	n/a	1	n/a
Sligo (County Council)	1	4	n/a
Western Region	72	68	104
Limerick City and County	6	61	16
Kerry (County Council)	30	5	2
AEC	108	134	122
State	1826	4675	3744

Source: CSO (BHQ12)

- Slow growth in AEC and WR in Q1**  
 In Q1, notices rose 11% nationally, year on year, compared with a 1% increase in WR and a slight decline in AEC.
- COVID-19 impact = collapse in notices.**  
 Notices declined by 28-29% during Q2, in WR and AEC, year on year. Notices fell 35% nationally.

Table 8 - Commencement Notices Q1

Local Authority	2016Q1	2017Q1	2018Q1	2019Q1	2020Q1
Clare (County Council)	41	42	55	62	52
Donegal (County Council)	42	54	48	53	49
Galway (County Council)	2	7	15	13	5
Galway (City Council)	63	78	67	75	96
Leitrim (County Council)	2	8	6	4	11
Mayo (County Council)	30	52	39	60	61
Roscommon (County Council)	10	20	20	23	23
Sligo (County Council)	13	22	14	26	23
Western Region	203	283	264	316	320
Limerick City and County	37	46	60	56	49
Kerry (County Council)	26	46	32	47	49
AEC	266	375	356	419	418
State	756	863	930	1019	1132

Source: Department of Housing Planning and Local Government

Table 15 - Commencement Notices Q2

Local Authority	2016Q2	2017Q2	2018Q2	2019Q2	2020Q2
Clare (County Council)	37	52	62	68	44
Donegal (County Council)	73	64	81	78	62
Galway (County Council)	82	114	113	122	110
Galway (City Council)	4	12	13	15	7
Leitrim (County Council)	5	9	3	7	12
Mayo (County Council)	56	81	71	97	46
Roscommon (County Council)	23	32	29	43	22
Sligo (County Council)	23	22	26	17	15
Western Region	303	386	398	447	318
Limerick City and County	58	60	71	69	43
Kerry (County Council)	51	70	72	56	48
AEC	412	516	541	572	409
State	1364	1736	2189	1732	1118

Source: Department of Housing Planning and Local Government

Please see accompanying [WDC Insights Blog Posts](#) for a data description and a commentary on these statistics.

**The WDC acknowledges that the indicator set is limited given the availability of high-frequency official county-level economic data. To address this limitation the intention is to provide supplementary ad-hoc reports based on alternative data sources. See our first supplementary report on [Google Mobility data](#).**

Please visit <https://westerndevelopment.ie/policy/> to view other outputs from the Policy Analysis Team.

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