



**WESTERN
DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION**

Timely Economic Indicators for the Western Region

Third Report – January 2020

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

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Introduction

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.¹ 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.

What is covered in the timely economic indicator set?

Figure 1 – Timely Economic Indicator Set

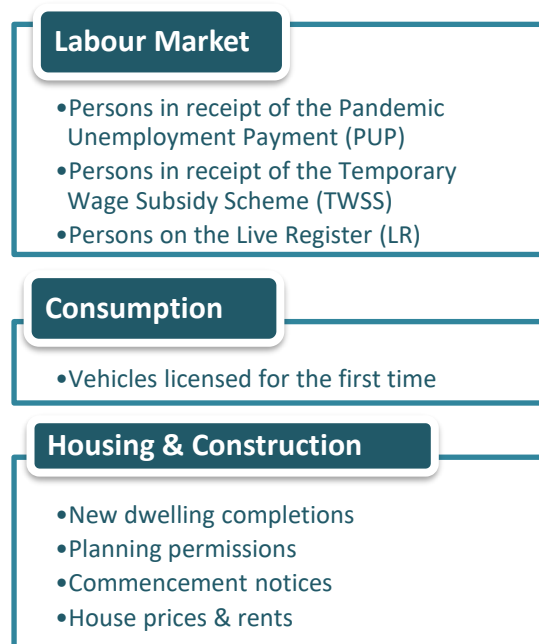


Figure 2 – The Western Region



Note: The Atlantic Economic Corridor includes all Western Region Counties as well as Limerick and Kerry.

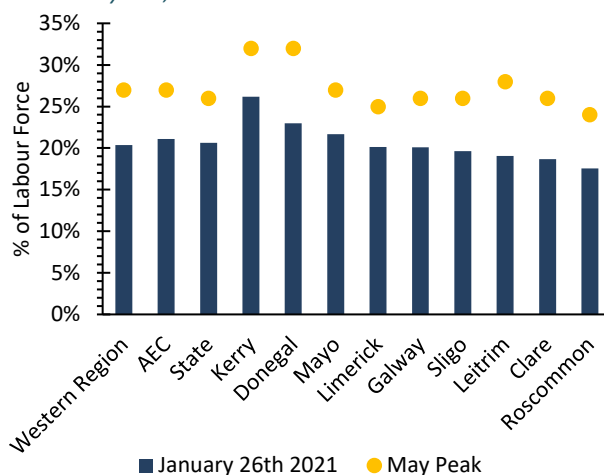
Why timely economic indicators are particularly important at the regional level?

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.

¹ The Western Region is defined under the Western Development Commission (WDC) Act 1998 as the seven counties of Clare, Donegal, Galway, Leitrim, Mayo, Roscommon and Sligo. The AEC is set out in Ireland 2040 as an initiative to drive balanced regional development and encompasses the Western Region as well as Kerry and Limerick.

Labour Market

Figure 3. % of Labour Force in receipt of PUP: May peak and January 19th, 2021.



Notes: Labour Force from 2016 Census.
Source: Own Calculations from CSO COVID-19 Income Support statistics and DEASP data.

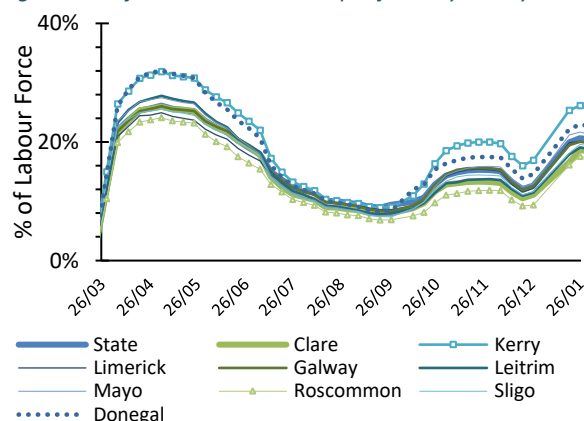
- **Sharp rise in PUP payments following enhanced restrictions.**

% labour force in receipt of PUP back at June levels during January. Kerry (26%) had the highest share nationally. Donegal (23%) was 3rd and Mayo (22%) was 6th. These counties have comparatively high employment in accommodation & food.

- **People receiving PUP payments at 75-77% of the May peak.**

79,025 (105,542) individuals received a PUP payment in the WR (AEC) during the week ending 26/01 compared with a weekly peak of 105,542 (150,304) during last May.

Figure 4. % of Labour Force in receipt of PUP by county

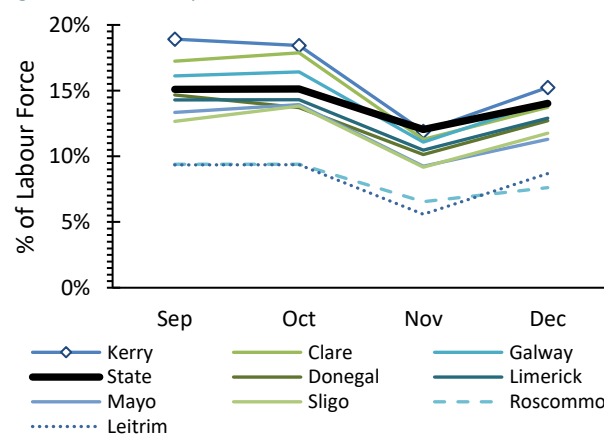


Source: Own Calculations from CSO Detailed COVID-19 Income Support statistics and DEASP data.

- **Within Region variation re-emerges.**

During the re-opening phases there was a convergence across the WR and AEC to the national average. As the public health restrictions were enhanced the variation has re-emerged. Lydon and McGrath (2020) show how the structures of employment and economic activity may explain the variation.

Figure 5. EWSS Recipients in AEC & WR



Source: Own Calculations from Revenue COVID-19 Support Schemes Statistics 14th January 2021.

- **Decline in EWSS supports.**

EWSS supports fell across WR & AEC from Sept.-Dec. The WR & AEC average was 15% of the labour force in September compared with 13% during December. All WR & AEC counties were below the national average (14%) during Dec., except Kerry. The decline reflects a flow from EWSS onto PUP and the live register. The variation reflects structures of employment and economic activity.

Table 1 - Total Persons in Receipt of PUP and as % of Labour Force by County

Reference Week	3 May	27 Sept.	03 Jan.
Donegal	22,814 (32%)	5,949 (8%)	11,942 (17%)
Sligo	7,716 (26%)	2,233 (7%)	4,157 (14%)
Leitrim	4,138 (28%)	1,185 (8%)	1,974 (13%)
Roscommon	7,144 (24%)	2,038 (7%)	3,247 (11%)
Mayo	16,485 (27%)	4,538 (8%)	8,942 (15%)
Galway	32,581 (26%)	10,469 (8%)	18,233 (15%)
Clare	14,664 (26%)	4,512 (8%)	7,112 (13%)
Limerick	22,467 (25%)	7,756 (9%)	12,920 (14%)
Kerry	22,295 (32%)	6,301 (9%)	13,323 (19%)
Western Region	105,542 (27%)	30,924 (8%)	55,607 (14%)
AEC	150,304 (27%)	44,981 (8%)	78,429 (14%)
State	602,107 (26%)	217,142 (9%)	335,599 (15%)

Notes: Share of labour force in parenthesis

Source: Own Calculations from CSO COVID-19 Income Support statistics and DEASP data.

Table 2 - Total Persons in Receipt of EWSS and as % of Labour Force by County

Reference Week	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Donegal	10,443 (15%)	9,758 (14%)	7,215 (10%)	9,050 (13%)
Sligo	3,829 (13%)	4,182 (14%)	2,775 (9%)	3,555 (12%)
Leitrim	1,392 (9%)	1,394 (9%)	833 (6%)	1,293 (9%)
Roscommon	2,785 (9%)	2,788 (9%)	1,943 (7%)	2,262 (8%)
Mayo	8,006 (13%)	8,364 (14%)	5,550 (9%)	6,787 (11%)
Galway	20,190 (16%)	20,562 (16%)	13,875 (11%)	17,776 (14%)
Clare	9,747 (17%)	10,107 (18%)	6,383 (11%)	7,757 (14%)
Limerick	12,880 (14%)	12,895 (14%)	9,435 (10%)	11,635 (13%)
Kerry	13,228 (19%)	12,895 (18%)	8,325 (12%)	10,666 (15%)
Western Region	56,392 (15%)	57,154 (15%)	38,573 (10%)	48,400 (13%)
AEC	82,500 (15%)	82,943 (15%)	56,333 (10%)	70,781 (13%)
State	348,100 (15%)	348,500 (15%)	277,500 (12%)	323,200 (14%)

Notes: Share of labour force in parentheses. Data reported in Table 3 are from Revenue. The TWSS closed on 31 Aug. and replaced with the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS). The CSO have noted that "we are not yet in a position to disseminate this information" thus no data for the EWSS scheme or the total number of persons in receipt of state income supports excluding overlaps are available yet.

Source: Own Calculations from Revenue COVID-19 Support Schemes Statistics 14th January 2021.

Table 3 - Total Persons in Receipt of State Income Support and % of Labour Force by County

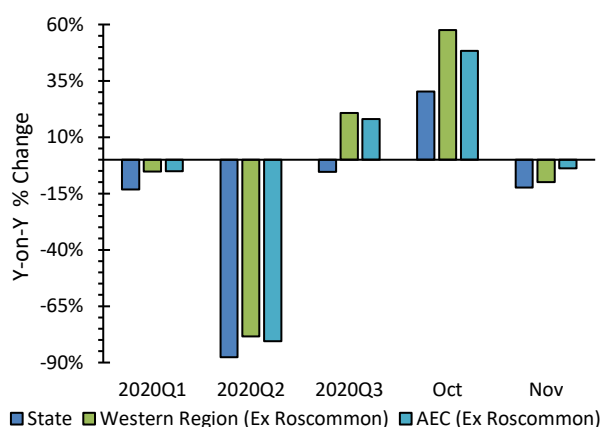
Reference Week	22 March	3 May	5 July	30 Aug.
Donegal	12,311 (17%)	37,435 (53%)	31,578 (44%)	26,185 (37%)
Sligo	3,612 (12%)	13,368 (44%)	11,335 (37%)	9,210 (30%)
Leitrim	2,078 (14%)	7,346 (49%)	6,041 (41%)	4,963 (33%)
Roscommon	2,780 (9%)	12,614 (43%)	9,842 (33%)	7,624 (26%)
Mayo	8,721 (15%)	29,493 (49%)	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%)

Notes: Share of labour force in parenthesis. Official data is unavailable post August at the county level as the live register data includes overlaps between EWSS, PUP and the Live Register.

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

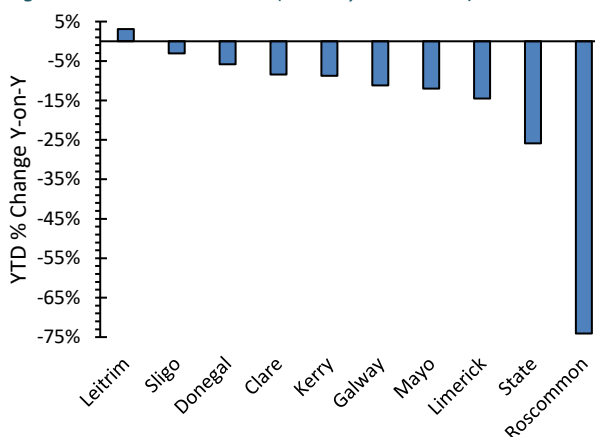
Consumption

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



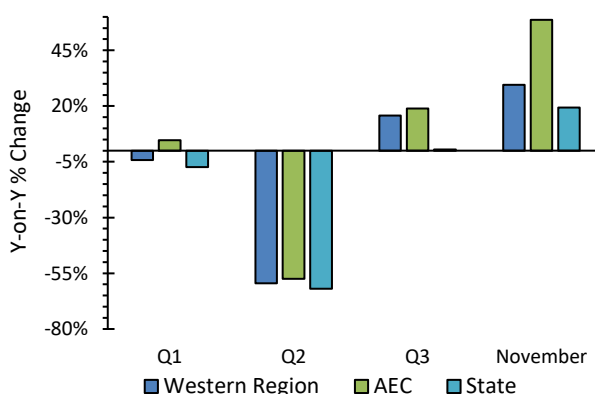
Note: as of 02/10 no data for June was available
 *Ex. Roscommon, as it distorts the WR/AEC aggregates due to the activity of a national car hire company see [here](#) and [here](#)
 Source: Own Calculations from CSO (TEM22)

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



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



Note October is excluded from both years as no data for October 2020 was available.
 Source: Own Calculations from CSO (TEM14)

- **Recovery in Q3 following Q2 collapse.**

Licences rose 48-58% in WR (AEC)* during Q3, compared with a 30% increase nationally.

- **Signal of Slowdown in November.**

Licences fell 4-10% in WR (AEC)* during November, compared with a 12% decline nationally.

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

All WR & AEC counties except Roscommon had a lower total registration decline than the State average, year on year, from January to November. There was 3% growth in Leitrim, year on year. Roscommon, is distorted due to the activity of a national car hire company see [here](#) and [here](#)

- **New goods vehicle registrations collapsed in Q2 but recovered in Q3 and November.**

During Q3, new goods vehicle registrations rose, year on year, by 16% (19%) in WR (AEC) compared to a national rise of 1%. During November, registrations rose 30% (59%) in the WR (AEC), year on year compared with a rise of 19% nationally.

Table 2 - New Private Cars Licensed for the First Time

	Q1		Q2*		Q3		Oct.		Nov.	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Clare	1,116	1,029	320	63	516	686	69	93	36	25
Donegal	1,109	1,043	342	85	554	738	54	96	40	31
Galway	1,926	1,807	534	113	994	1115	107	153	66	57
Leitrim	198	218	70	19	103	134	6	16	6	8
Mayo	956	901	261	58	492	506	33	72	26	30
Roscommon	1,331	761	1,560	32	1169	254	121	37	46	13
Sligo	553	557	146	24	247	328	30	41	16	20
Western Region (Ex. Roscommon)	5,858	5,555	1,673	362	2,906	3,507	299	471	190	171
Kerry	1,109	1,077	333	54	596	692	49	87	20	33
Limerick	1,898	1,784	590	91	947	1,050	114	127	53	49
AEC (Ex. Roscommon)	8,865	8,416	2,596	507	4,449	5,249	462	685	263	253
State	50,861	44,167	26,778	2,828	30,047	28,436	3,214	4,189	1,676	1,468

Note: *June was excluded from Q2 in both years as June 2020 data was unavailable as of 12/01/21

Source: CSO (TEM22)

Table 3 – New Goods Vehicles Licensed for the First Time

	Q1		Q2		Q3		Nov.	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Clare	119	109	91	36	74	97	19	19
Donegal	149	156	110	41	92	134	14	21
Galway	282	276	230	74	230	208	24	36
Leitrim	36	43	23	15	18	32	2	6
Mayo	152	147	117	62	169	177	20	15
Roscommon	86	71	63	25	49	74	7	15
Sligo	103	86	73	33	54	72	12	15
Western Region	927	888	707	286	686	794	98	127
Kerry	196	234	146	74	134	181	23	29
Limerick	273	340	224	98	215	255	24	74
AEC	1,396	1,462	1,077	458	1035	1230	145	230
State	7,931	7,345	6,374	2,427	6,927	6,966	1,264	1,509

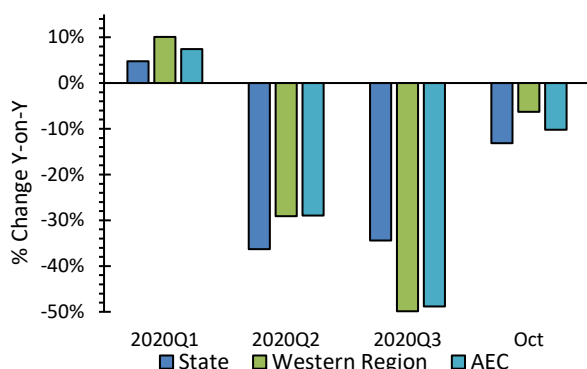
Note: No data for October 2020 was available as of 12/01/21

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 have continued through Q2, Q3 and into October across the country.

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

Month	AUG	SEPT	OCT
Year	2020	2020	2020
State	296 (-3%)	292 (-3%)	303 (1%)
Donegal	136 (-6%)	132 (-4%)	164 (14%)
Leitrim	130 (4%)	137 (14%)	133 (18%)
Sligo	155 (-18%)	153 (-8%)	160 (-7%)
Galway City	307 (-6%)	318 (4%)	331 (12%)
Galway County	229 (6%)	220 (-2%)	239 (-2%)
Mayo	158 (0%)	137 (-13%)	146 (1%)
Roscommon	109 (-23%)	129 (-8%)	151 (19%)
Limerick City	172 (-18%)	191 (1%)	200 (28%)
Limerick County	223 (-3%)	215 (-6%)	253 (21%)
Clare	117 (0%)	179 (-12%)	207 (2%)
Kerry	181 (-1%)	210 (6%)	196 (-3%)

Notes: Year on year % change in parentheses. See previous TEI report for January-July

Source: CSO (HPM03)

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

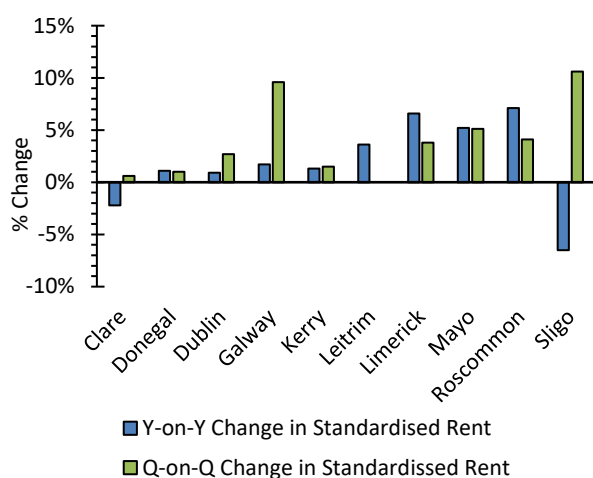
Month	AUG	SEPT	OCT
Year	2020	2020	2020
State	260 (-2%)	256 (-3%)	265 (2%)
Donegal	132 (-1%)	123 (-3%)	140 (5%)
Leitrim	137 (14%)	105 (-6%)	130 (27%)
Sligo	130 (-23%)	133 (-12%)	136 (-8%)
Galway City	308 (6%)	290 (3%)	280 (0%)
Galway County	220 (5%)	205 (-2%)	235 (7%)
Mayo	140 (-8%)	118 (-16%)	127 (-10%)
Roscommon	90 (-35%)	110 (-10%)	127 (18%)
Limerick City	185 (3%)	185 (9%)	175 (29%)
Limerick County	206 (-9%)	199 (-13%)	225 (6%)
Clare	164 (-2%)	169 (-16%)	190 (3%)
Kerry	152 (-10%)	175 (-1%)	165 (-12%)

Note: Year on year % change in parentheses

Source: CSO (HPM03)

Average Rents

Figure 10. Residential Tenancies Board Standardised Rent Q3 2020: % change year on year and quarter on quarter



Source RTB (2020)

- **Rents down in Clare and Sligo Y-on-Y.**

During Q3, rents fell in Sligo (-6.5%) and Clare (-2.2%), year on year.

- **Rents rise Q-on-Q in all WR & AEC counties.**

Sligo (10.6%) and Galway (9.6%) had the largest increases from Q2 to Q3. Clare (0.6%) had the lowest increase from Q2 to Q3.

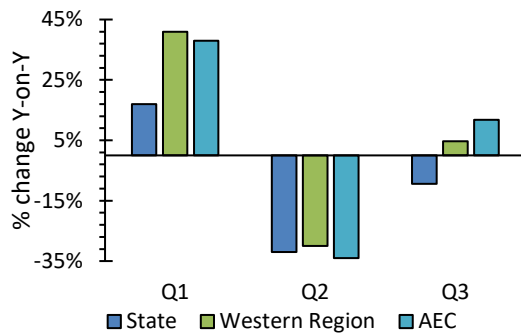
Table 8 - Residential Tenancies Board Standardised Rent (Euro)

	2020Q3	2020Q2	2020Q1	Q3 % Change Y-on-Y	Q3 % Change Q-on-Q
Clare	736	728	740	-2.2	0.6
Donegal	618	616	606	1.1	1.0
Galway	1,178	1,075	1,041	1.7	9.6
Leitrim	600	599	554	3.6	0.0
Mayo	733	695	684	5.2	5.1
Roscommon	674	641	620	7.1	4.1
Sligo	812	739	754	-6.5	10.6
Limerick	1,022	988	957	6.6	3.8
Kerry	802	792	789	1.3	1.5
Dublin	1,758	1,709	1,735	0.9	2.7

Source: Residential Tenancies Board Rent Index Q2 2020

Dwelling Completions

Figure 8. Year on Year % Change in Total Dwelling Completions during 2020



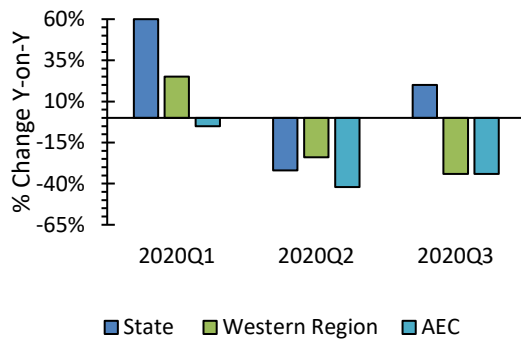
Source Own Calculations from CSO (NDQ06)

- **Q3 recovery in WR & AEC following Q2 collapse.**

During Q3, total dwelling completions rose in WR (AEC) by 5% (12%) compared to a national decline of 9%.

Planning Permissions (Units for which Permission Granted)

Figure 12. Year on Year Change in Total Planning Permissions (units) during 2020



Source: Own Calculations from CSO (NDQ06)

- **Q3 recovery nationally but continued decline in WR and AEC.**

During Q3 2020, total units for which planning permission was granted fell by 34%, year on year, in the WR & AEC compared with a national rise of 20%.

Table 9 - Total Dwelling Completions During Q1-Q3

Local Authority	2017			2018			2019			2020		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q1	Q2	Q3
Clare	58	50	85	57	55	75	56	119	102	77	77	114
Donegal	76	93	96	87	90	125	85	111	133	116	100	134
Galway County	110	108	121	119	135	123	145	197	201	187	132	199
Galway City	37	39	42	31	41	27	30	39	93	57	31	47
Leitrim	14	23	23	16	14	19	11	11	11	5	5	11
Mayo	37	74	60	71	70	81	96	88	95	124	56	136
Roscommon	17	25	27	31	31	39	39	36	40	28	37	50
Sligo	20	24	34	32	43	44	11	42	36	75	14	53
Western Region	369	436	488	444	479	533	473	643	711	669	452	744
Limerick	83	88	95	126	141	113	87	162	128	128	81	142
Kerry	53	79	87	96	82	117	80	101	116	84	61	182
AEC	505	603	670	666	702	763	640	906	955	881	594	1068
State	2766	3265	3767	3468	4399	4632	4254	4829	5652	4986	3290	5118

Source Own Calculations from CSO data (NDQ06).

Table 4 – Planning Permissions - Houses (Number) – Q3

Local Authority	2018	2019	2020
Clare (County Council)	142	78	116
Donegal (County Council)	86	237	285
Galway (County Council)	229	337	204
Galway (City Council)	8	98	32
Leitrim (County Council)	7	13	25
Mayo (County Council)	105	112	95
Roscommon (County Council)	64	35	24
Sligo (County Council)	31	100	41
Western Region	672	1010	565
Limerick City and County	105	186	93
Kerry (County Council)	58	79	80
AEC	835	1275	738
State	4879	4934	5728

Source: CSO (BHQ12)

Table 125 - Planning Permissions One- Off Houses (Number) – Q3

Local Authority	2018	2019	2020
Clare (County Council)	63	52	63
Donegal (County Council)	71	114	124
Galway (County Council)	124	125	153
Galway (City Council)	6	n/a	8
Leitrim (County Council)	7	10	12
Mayo (County Council)	83	61	76
Roscommon (County Council)	30	31	24
Sligo (County Council)	23	26	20
Western Region	407	419	480
Limerick City and County	63	65	59
Kerry (County Council)	54	77	59
AEC	524	561	598
State	1416	1514	1754

Source: CSO (BHQ12)

Table 11 - Planning Permissions - Multi-Development Houses (Number) – Q3

Local Authority	2018	2019	2020
Clare (County Council)	79	26	53
Donegal (County Council)	15	123	161
Galway (County Council)	105	212	51
Galway (City Council)	2	98	24
Leitrim (County Council)	n/a	3	13
Mayo (County Council)	22	51	19
Roscommon (County Council)	34	4	n/a
Sligo (County Council)	8	74	21
Western Region	265	591	342
Limerick City and County	42	121	34
Kerry (County Council)	4	2	21
AEC	311	714	397
State	3463	3420	3974

Source: CSO (BHQ12)

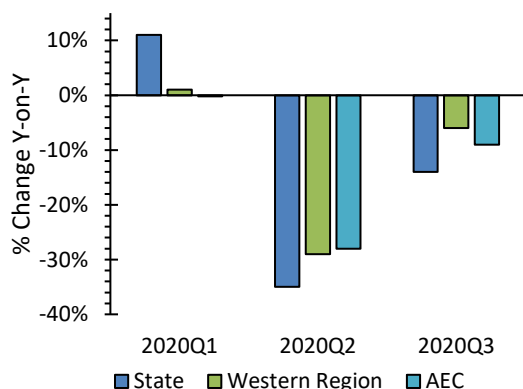
Table 13 - Planning Permissions Private Flats/Apartments (Number) – Q3

Local Authority	2018	2019	2020
Clare (County Council)	5	20	12
Donegal (County Council)	7	18	67
Galway (County Council)	34	93	49
Galway (City Council)	4	225	58
Leitrim (County Council)	n/a	n/a	1
Mayo (County Council)	1	4	n/a
Roscommon (County Council)	12	2	8
Sligo (County Council)	5	25	8
Western Region	68	387	203
Limerick City and County	33	48	16
Kerry (County Council)	5	28	10
AEC	106	463	229
State	3139	5656	7214

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.

- **Moderated declines in notices during Q3.**

In Q3, notices fell 6% (9%) in the WR (AEC), year on year, compared with a 14% decline nationally. The level of declines have moderated from the 28-35% declines observed during Q2.

Table 6 - 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

Table 16 - Commencement Notices Q3

Local Authority	2016Q3	2017Q3	2018Q3	2019Q3	2020Q3
Clare (County Council)	35	47	68	57	41
Donegal (County Council)	66	55	56	71	70
Galway (County Council)	81	98	112	119	106
Galway (City Council)	9	9	14	4	18
Leitrim (County Council)	7	7	4	4	12
Mayo (County Council)	59	71	69	64	63
Roscommon (County Council)	21	24	28	29	18
Sligo (County Council)	21	20	27	27	24
Western Region	299	331	378	375	352
Limerick City and County	54	52	60	70	53
Kerry (County Council)	58	57	66	54	51
AEC	411	440	504	499	456
State	1399	1554	1531	1631	1406

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 reports on [Google Mobility data](#).

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

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