

1.0 Introduction

The North Kerry Settlements Local Area Plan has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2002.

A Local Area Plan shall be consistent with the objectives of the development plan and shall consist of a written statement and plan or plans which may include:

Objectives for the zoning of land for the use solely or primarily of particular areas for particular purposes, or

Such other objectives in such detail as may be determined by the Planning Authority for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which it applies including detail on community facilities and amenities and on standards for the design of developments and structures.

This plan shall remain in force for a period not exceeding 6 years from its date of adoption.

Development within the boundaries of the settlements contained in Section 2 of this Local Area Plan shall be carried out in compliance with the objectives of the County Development Plan as well as any specific objectives contained within the individual settlement plans. **While the objectives of the Local Area Plan must be consistent with the objectives of the County Development Plan, in any instance where ambiguity may arise, the provisions, policies and objectives of the County Development Plan shall have precedence.**

This Local Area Plan comprises policies and zoning maps, with defined boundaries for each settlement. The policies and objectives of the Kerry County Development Plan 2003-2009 apply to all the settlements. Any objectives or policies contained in the individual settlement plans relate to the individual settlements and are not intended to be interpreted or construed as relating to any lands outside the development boundaries as defined. The policies and zoning for lands outside the settlement boundaries, as defined on the maps in Section 2, are contained in the County Development Plan 2003-2009.

The overall aim for this plan is to provide a comprehensive local planning framework for the settlements in the plan area which clearly sets out the policies and objectives for their development. Taken in conjunction with the Regional Planning Guidelines, the County Development Plan and the LAP's for Ballybunion and Tarbert, it will complete the planning framework for the North Kerry area. These plans will clearly set out the policies and objectives for the development of each settlement and make clear to landowners, developers and agents the vision of the Planning Authority for the development of the area.

This plan is presented in two sections. Section 1 outlines the strategic context, overall strategy, the growth strategy, and the policy issues for each sector.

Section 2 comprises the policies, objectives and maps for each of the settlements within the Plan Area.

It is an objective of the council	
HI-1	That in addition to the objective of this plan, the policies and objectives of the Kerry County Development Plan 2003-2009, shall apply to all settlements.

SECTION 1

2.0 Plan Context

2.1. In the formulation of policies and objectives in this plan the planning authority have had regard to the following documents:

- National Development Plan (2007 – 2013)
- National Spatial Strategy (2002 – 2020)
- Sustainable Development – A Strategy for Ireland 1998
- Departmental Planning Guidelines
- South West Regional Planning Guidelines 2004-2020
- Meitheal Chiarrai
- The Barcelona Declaration Implementation Plan
- Kerry County Development Plan 2003-2009
- Land Use and Transportation Study for Listowel (LUTS)
- Shannon Development Corporate Plan 2005-2007

The Council is obliged, in the performance of its functions, to have regard to government policies and guidelines, and it is within the context of these documents that local policies are developed.

2.2. National Development Plan / National Spatial Strategy

The National Development Plan 2007 – 2013 is a blueprint for the economic and social development of the Country up until 2013. One of the principal objectives of the plan is to promote balanced regional development. This plan builds on the previous NDP which identified the need for a National Spatial Strategy, in order to promote regional development throughout the country by the identification of a number of development corridors as Gateways and Hubs in individual regions. These development corridors have been designated to act as development growth areas that will be promoted in terms of infrastructure and

investment to act as economic drivers for their region. The peripherality of County Kerry is one of the major obstacles limiting its economic development. The National Spatial Strategy has identified the Tralee-Killarney corridor as a development corridor by giving it Hub status. It is intended that the growth of the hub will influence the entire county.

The identification of development corridors is only the initial step in the process of balanced regional development. The success of the development corridor, in its role of achieving strong and sustainable economic growth, is dependent on a number of factors including the development of an area's **Potential, Critical Mass** and **Linkages**.

Potential is defined as *the capacity which an area possesses for development arising from its endowment of natural resources, population, labour, economic and social capital and location relative to markets.*

Critical Mass is defined as *the size, concentration and characteristics of population that enable a range of facilities to be supported and which, in turn, can attract and support higher levels of economic activity.*

Linkages are *the means of moving people, goods, energy and information.*

The policies and objectives contained in this Plan promote these concepts through facilitating improved linkages, promoting the development of critical mass and protecting and promoting the potential of the county.

2.3.1 Sustainable Development – A Strategy for Ireland

This is the government's policy on sustainable development, how it can be implemented and how it can be integrated into the decision making process. The policies in this document with regard to the sustainability of rural housing have been modified by the publication of 'Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities'.

2.4 Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities

The publication of this document in April 2005 outlined the government's policy in relation to rural housing and contains detailed direction as to how Planning Authorities should formulate policy for their area. The document redefines the concept of sustainability with regard to rural housing and, as well as removing references to the unsustainability of rural housing, contains a presumption in favour of rural housing where the applicant can demonstrate a definite need to live in a rural area.

2.5 South-West Regional Planning Guidelines

The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG's) have been developed on the basis of guidance provided through the National Spatial Strategy and a

wide range of plans that exist at individual agency level throughout the region. The task of the guidelines is to provide a broad canvas to steer the sustainable growth and prosperity of the region and its people up to 2020.

Among the goals outlined in the guidelines is the goal to ‘*promote the sustainable development of Mallow and Tralee/Killarney as vibrant hub towns - creating a critical mass in terms of population, employment and services, which will enable them to attract investment and people – thereby supporting the role of the Gateway and delivering balanced regional development within the Southwest, through energising smaller towns and rural areas within the sphere of influence.*

Key elements of the Strategy include:

- *Growth in the hubs of Mallow and Tralee/Killarney must be prioritised.*
- *Towns close to the Gateways and Hubs should have organic employment-led growth, bolstered to a certain extent by commutes to the Gateways/Hubs. These towns should retain their own character and provide improved services and quality of life to people living within their catchments.*
- *Rural and peripheral areas should, at least, retain their current population levels. This goal shall be best achieved by making them more attractive places to live, by increasing service provision in towns and villages.*
- *A hierarchy of settlement types will be identified. Key roles will be assigned to these towns to help deliver the objectives of the guidelines.*

2.6 County Development Board Strategy

Meitheal Chiarrai

Meitheal Chiarrai is an economic, social and cultural development strategy for the development of the county over the ten-year period 2002 -2011. The vision for Meitheal Chiarrai is outlined in a number of Statements.

An Economic Vision

Focus on the comparative strengths of the county in such areas as tourism, agriculture, food production, fisheries and small enterprise development.

A Social and Health Vision

Address the social issues in the county, the need for education and training, the recognition that the quality of lifestyle can be achieved

through healthy living and the specific recognition of the needs of people in rural areas.

A Cultural Vision

Building on and preserving Kerry’s cultural identity – a unique Kerry experience.



An Infrastructural Vision

Ease of access to the county for all transportation modes. Provision of an adequate information and communications technology infrastructure to overcome the peripheral location of Kerry. The development of energy sources with particular reference to alternative energy methods.

An Environmental Vision

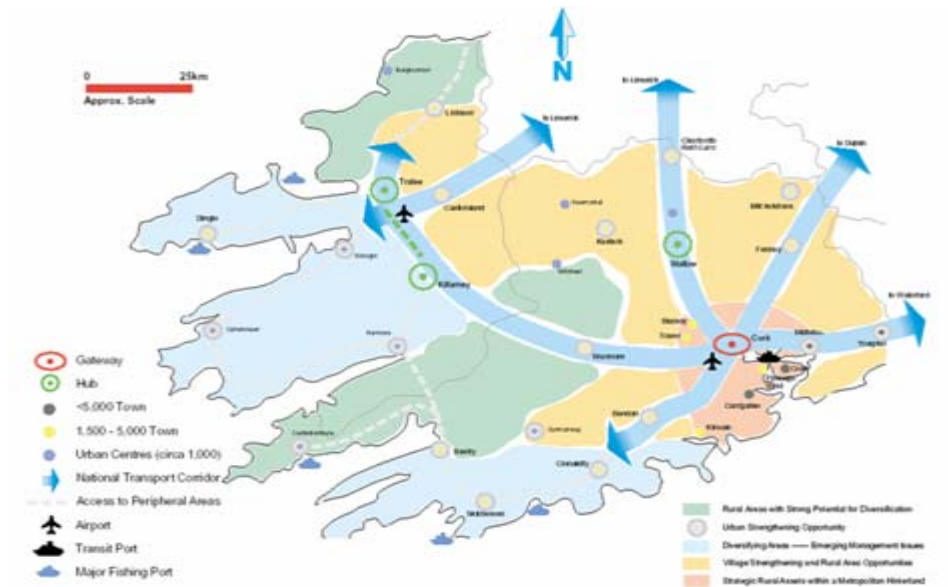
Balanced development between urban and rural areas and the protection of the unique landscape of the county. The strategy intends to co-ordinate all the economic, social and cultural sectors within the county in achieving the vision of the strategy.

2.7 Kerry County Development Plan 2003-2009

The principle aim of the County Development Plan is to provide for an improved quality of life for all the people in the county while regulating development in a sustainable manner. This can be achieved through the promotion of employment opportunities, efficient transportation and infrastructure, sufficient housing and social facilities as well as a safe, healthy and clean environment which all contribute to a good quality of life. The County Development Plan promotes these goals.

One of the major difficulties that the county experiences, is its peripherality. It is a priority that the Tralee/Killarney Hub development corridor is promoted which can act as a focal point for investment into the county. It is imperative that strong linkages between this development corridor and national networks are developed. The development of the corridor itself will create employment opportunities

and encourage the population growth in the area to reach a critical mass. This critical mass of population growth will sustain an increased range of services and facilities which will in turn make further inward investment more likely. The Tralee / Killarney hub and the regional and sub-regional road linkages are indicated on **Map 2.1**.



Map 2.1
Regional and Sub-regional Linkages

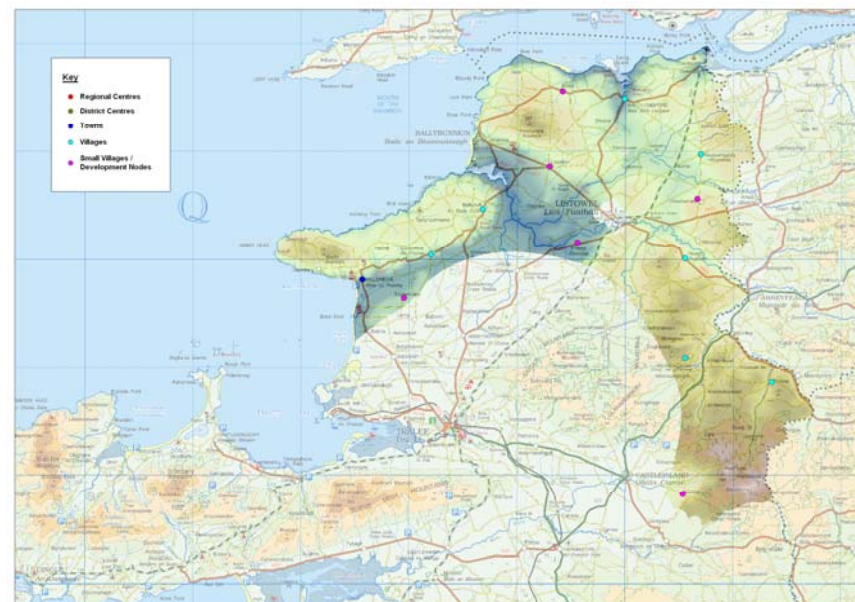
The distribution of growth throughout the county needs to be planned. This approach will facilitate the Local Authority in the future allocation of resources, and inform it with regard to policy decisions. To achieve this, a settlement hierarchy has been identified. This hierarchy is based on existing functions and services and also their functional relationships with other settlements in the locality. The improvement of linkages between these towns and the larger urban centres of the county as well as the development corridor region will strengthen the existing role of these towns and promote them as employment locations.

The strengthening of rural communities is fundamental to the development plan. Many of these areas have experienced significant population loss in the past. This is not due to planning restrictions in these areas but primarily to a lack of employment opportunities. The infrastructure and services needed to promote job creation cannot be provided in the countryside. It must be provided in towns and villages. The overall strategy for rural areas is therefore based on the strengthening of towns and villages and making them more attractive places to live.

2.8 North Kerry Land-Use and Transportation Study

As part of the review of the County Development Plan, the Council commissioned a series of strategic planning studies covering each of the Electoral Areas within the county. The preparation of these studies involved extensive public consultation and they are used in the formulation of development strategies throughout the county.

It is within the context of these policy documents that the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan and Local Area Plans have been formulated. These policies are intended to facilitate development throughout the county. They are not intended to limit development but rather to regulate it in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.



Map 2.2

3.0 Regional Context

The designation of the Tralee/Killarney Corridor as a Linked Hub under the National Spatial Strategy was a significant milestone defining the future development of the county. The recognition of the Hub at National Level has significant implications for financing the development of the region, promoting balanced regional development and, in the long term integrating the hub within the wider region. This is of particular importance for a county like Kerry, where its peripherality has always had a negative impact on development, if it is to realise its potential and fulfil its role as envisaged under the NSS.

The area covered by the North Kerry Settlements Local Area Plan, including its linkages to the Hub and the wider region, is illustrated in its regional context by Maps 2.1 and 2.2. The area includes the Regional Centre of Listowel, a key local business and service centre, with a well

established literary reputation, and a network of smaller settlements distributed throughout the plan area.

Listowel functions as the main service centre for the area servicing a network of relatively small towns and rural villages. The level of service provision in Listowel has increased significantly in recent years, which benefits the entire hinterland and makes the settlements in its hinterland more attractive to potential residents.

The N69 is the main national road running through North Kerry, and upgrading of this route is improving the linkage with the Hub for the towns and villages of the area.

In addition many of the villages to the north of the County are also in relatively close proximity to Limerick City and a higher order of service provision.

Of particular strategic importance within the County is the location of Kerry Regional Airport at Farranfore. This regional airport and the small port of Fenit serve the entire county and the importance of the infrastructural services they provide for the region cannot be overstated.

The success of the county is largely dependent of the future of the Tralee Killarney Hub. It is worth noting that the Tralee/Killarney hub lies outside the Atlantic Corridor linking the major cities of Galway, Limerick and Cork, and as a consequence the quality of the linkage between Tralee, Killarney, Cork and Limerick, and in particular the N69, N21, N22 and N23, is a matter of critical strategic importance.



Thus, the development pattern within the region is such that key functions are dispersed in different centres. These different centres are interdependent in that specialist services are available in one or more towns.

In a regional context the importance of tourism cannot be overstated. The Dingle peninsula, Ring of Kerry, Killarney National Park, Kenmare, Glengarriff and Bantry Bay (in Cork), in short many of the premier tourist destinations in the country are within an hour's driving time. Consequently, the future of the tourism industry will have important strategic consequences for future development. It is an element of the overall strategy for this plan to promote the tourism industry for the area.

4.0 North Kerry Settlements Development Strategy

4.1 Strategic Issues

'Linkage' is one of the key concepts outlined in the National Spatial Strategy, the others being potential and critical mass. Due to the **peripherality** of the area the provision of linkages is all the more important. These concepts have previously been defined in Section 2.2. Identifying the **Potential** of an area, the barriers to development and the

needs of the county in order to reach its potential, is a difficult task involving a wide spectrum of economic and cultural groups. However, work has commenced in co-ordinating these different sectors in order to develop an integrated, co-ordinated approach to achieving the potential of the county.

In order for the area to provide the range of facilities and services desired by the population it needs to achieve and maintain a certain level of population. What is considered to be a **critical mass** of population will vary on the level of service required, so the critical mass necessary to maintain the traditional services of a small village is different to that of a larger town. It is important, however, that policies are in place to promote the critical mass necessary for each level of settlement within the settlement hierarchy. Promoting the growth of smaller towns and villages does not detract from the demand from the higher order services in larger towns as the population of the smaller towns will still use these higher order services such as swimming pools, hospitals etc.. Recognition of the '**Complementary Roles**' of settlements and acceptance that not every settlement can have everything is critical to the development of a coherent settlement strategy. This concept applies to the larger settlement within the county such as Tralee, Killarney and Listowel, as well as to the smaller settlements within the study area.

The publication of the **Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines** has required Planning Authorities to identify areas under urban pressure and develop policies to regulate development in these areas by reserving their development potential for persons from the area or having traditional links with the area. This policy is intended to limit ribbon development and urban sprawl as well as providing a more integrated, serviceable town structure. Much of the demand for one-off rural housing actually originates from deficiencies in the supply of sites and properties in the urban areas, in terms of both availability and cost. The long term costs of living further away from shops, services, schools and leisure activities in

terms of travel is often not considered. In addition other deficiencies within urban areas are also acting as ‘push factors’, such as existing congestion problems and insufficient public transport. As more people choose to live outside settlements, this situation self perpetuates as population declines and has a knock on effect on the overall quality of the built environment as well as the viability of shops and services. This is particularly true of the smaller towns and villages of North Kerry which have experienced population loss, contrary to the National trend of growth in villages. The obvious solution lies in addressing supply-side issues within towns and improving the components of urban living, which make urban areas attractive places in which to live. This means making homes available at affordable prices and directing investment into key urban infrastructure, such as roads, public transport, schools, shops, services and open space.

It is the intention of this plan to identify sufficient zoned lands within the settlements of the plan area to provide a **viable alternative to one-off rural housing**. It is intended that the densities specified will provide a range of residential options including larger detached residences while respecting the innate character of each settlement.

Much of the growth expected for the study area is dependant on inward migration. The population projections and **Critical Mass** of population necessary to lift the settlements to a higher economic and service provision level as envisaged cannot be achieved by the natural regeneration of its existing population.

The settlements of North Kerry, therefore, need to identify the reasons why it is better to locate there than in other competing areas. The main factor which is readily identifiable is “**Quality of Life**”. A clean environment, access to higher order retail provision, good educational facilities, good health services, high quality social and cultural facilities, beaches and amenities are readily available. These assets, however, cannot be taken for granted and ongoing efforts to maintain and expand the range and quality of these facilities must be continued. Combined with improved linkages and infrastructure these qualities will constitute the strength of the hub. If these strengths are to be capitalised upon they must be matched by an efficient, attractive urban environment. Nondescript housing estates, poor urban streetscapes and poor **Urban Design** standards do nothing to attract people to live in towns and villages. Design of housing within urban areas is a key consideration and standards need to encourage well designed housing areas, which fully integrate with the existing settlement pattern, develop neighbourhoods and provide a definite sense of place. Proactive measures, designed to develop neighbourhoods instead of housing estates, a sense of place and identity, instead of anonymous characterless streetscapes, are needed. A high level of design of the **Public Domain**, will increase the quality of the urban environment.

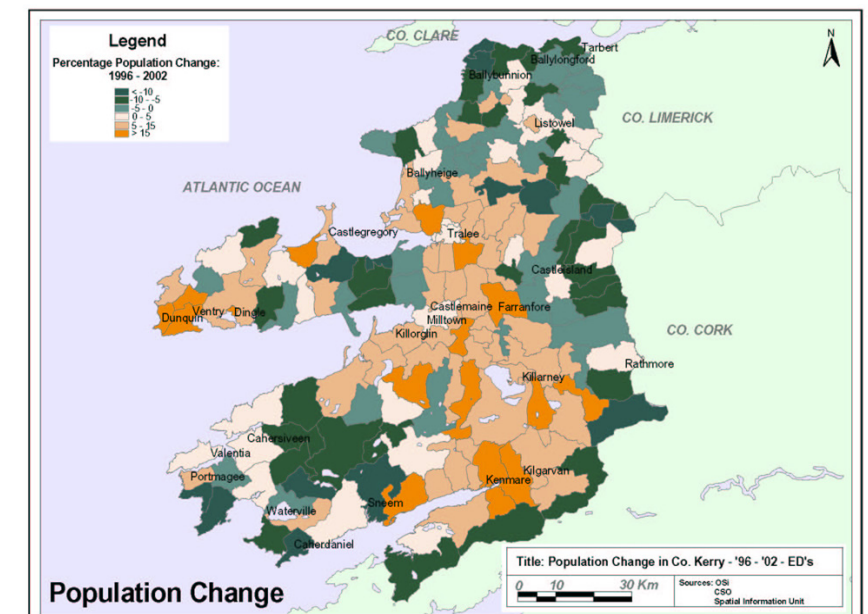
These qualities of identity, neighbourhood, high quality public domain and increased social capital will compliment the existing qualities of the hub and maximise its attractiveness as a location in which to settle.

Within the County Tralee is recognised as the main retail location within the Retail Hierarchy. This will continue to be so. The location of retail development within settlements shall be determined having regard to the **vitality, vibrancy and viability** of the villages as well as any infrastructural and availability restrictions which may arise.

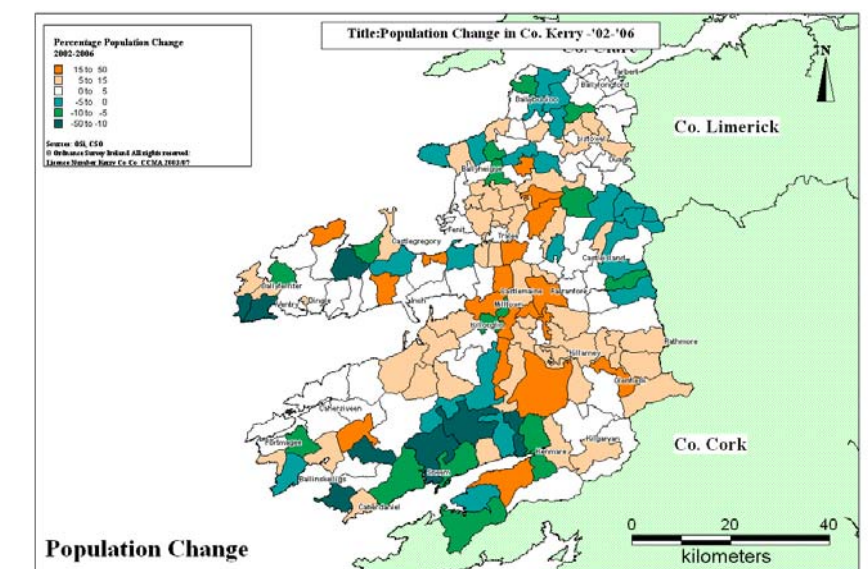
Settlements generally develop in response to their natural attributes, constraints and environment. The better the attributes, the more successful the settlement and its growth. The towns and villages throughout the County have evolved on this basis. One restriction which is of particular importance is the ability to dispose of treated effluent. Certain **dispersed rural settlements** have little or no capacity to dispose of treated effluent. It is considered that such settlements should maintain their existing character and settlement pattern rather than be developed with an individual housing estate which uses up all the existing capacity, with no long-term prospect of future development. Such development would alter the character of the area to an unacceptable extent and prove detrimental to the community in the long run.



There is a need for this local area plan to ensure a strong balance between all the employment generating sectors, which include agriculture, tourism and industry. In particular, industrial jobs are needed to offset loss in employment within the agricultural sectors and provide more stable employment opportunities than perhaps tourism, which is seasonal, competitive and highly sensitive to international events.



Population Change 1996-2002
(Darker Green = Greater population Loss)
(Darker Orange= greater Population Gain)



Many areas of the County have been affected by **rural depopulation** in the past. With recent economic growth many areas have managed to halt or reverse this trend but there are a number of areas where depopulation loss persists. Policies need to be developed to promote the strengthening

of settlements in these areas to act as a catalyst for reinvigorating them and creating the conditions and environment for population growth.

The long-term growth of the settlements is determined by the provision of sustainable employment opportunities. Competitive pressures from world markets are increasing, particularly with regard to labour factors. The provision of **high added-value knowledge based industry** is seen as forming a significant part in the provision of sustainable employment in the region. Emphasis on **Tourism growth** will continue to play a major role in the future development of the area. Adaptability and quality are two factors facing this industry as affluence among the indigenous population increases and competing markets become more accessible. While North Kerry does not have the magnificent scenic landscape of South Kerry, it is located in close proximity to this area. In addition the area has many indigenous attractions, including its literary and musical traditions. The development of walking as a leisure pastime is continually increasing and the gently sloping rural landscapes of North Kerry can capitalise on this strength.

Provision and security of **energy** supplies for the future is becoming increasingly uncertain. In addition the cost of fossil fuels is set to rise significantly in the coming years with a consequent impact on production costs and competitiveness. Reliance on renewable energy will increase and it is important, for the reasons mentioned as well as the employment opportunities in this sector, that the facilities and infrastructure to maximise production and access to these renewable resources are available within the plan area.

4.2 Summary

In summary the key issues for the Strategy are:

- To **develop linkages**, involving transportation, communications and power, into the North Kerry Region, in particular from the National ‘gateway’ of Limerick and the Tralee Killarney Hub, to ensure that the effects of **peripherality can be reduced**. In this way obstacles to development and employment in the area can be removed.
- To reinforce the social and economic strength of the area by building **critical mass** of population and jobs.
- To support the **development of tourism**, particularly year round tourism throughout the area.
- To recognise the **complementary roles** of the different settlements.
- To develop settlements in accordance with their long term **development potential** having regard to their natural constraints
- To promote the development of settlements as a strategic focal point for the provision of services and employment for their rural catchments and **halt rural depopulation**.
- To promote a high quality of **Urban Design** and urban environment throughout the settlements.

- To zone sufficient lands in the settlements at appropriate densities to cater for all sectoral demands in the **housing market** including housing at a density required to provide a viable alternative to one-off rural housing.
- To facilitate the provision of **high added-value knowledge based industry** throughout the area.
- To promote and facilitate **alternative energy** uses within the area, including domestic and commercial developments, in manner which minimises any adverse impact on the landscape.
- Through addressing these issues to provide a high **quality of life** throughout the settlements of North Kerry.
- Through a combination of these policies to increase the **pull factor** of the North Kerry area in order to attract the inward migration, investment and employment necessary to enable the area to grow and maintain the healthy communities of the area.

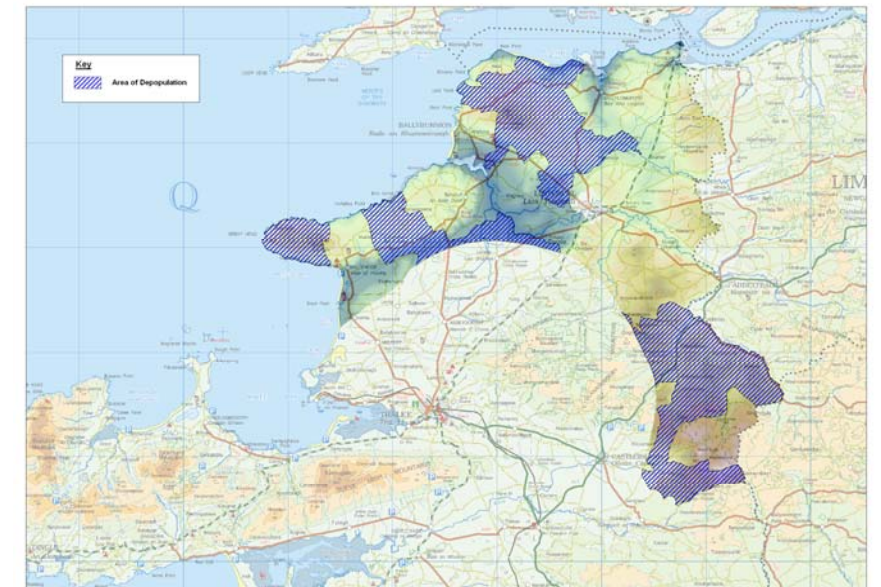
4.3 Overall Strategy

The strategy for the North Kerry settlements is dependent on the growth of the settlements. This can only be achieved through attracting people to live in the settlements, thereby strengthening their urban structure and creating a demand to support local services.

The North Kerry Settlements will be settlements where:

- Their intrinsic qualities, including social, recreational, cultural and environmental assets, combined with high quality employment opportunities will provide a unique location and quality of life for their residents and visitors.
- Access will be provided into the Kerry Hub and to the Limerick ‘Gateway’ through high quality road links with the national network
- The settlements will be vibrant and distinctive communities that have individual roles and provide for the social, economic and employment needs of their residents and rural catchment. They will develop as attractive locations in which to live and work and will provide a broad range of residential option as alternative to urban-generated rural housing.
- New development will contribute to the goals of sustainable development, including: respecting the existing natural, built and cultural character, including the open countryside, making best use of existing social and physical infrastructure, contributing to the provision of high quality social and sporting infrastructure within settlements, and reducing the need to travel.
- The high quality of urban design, and the multi-disciplinary input required, shall be such as to create a high quality working, amenity and residential environment for the occupants of each settlement. In addition development shall serve to enhance the urban environment and make the settlement more attractive for its residents and visitors.

- Rural depopulation will be countered through the provision of a network of viable vibrant settlements providing the services necessary to sustain the rural population.



- The provision of adequate water and wastewater infrastructure will facilitate the sustainable development of villages without adverse impact on the environment.
- Retail provision will be commensurate with the size of the settlement and the demand arising





- The infrastructure, environment and the coordinated support of all actors for the creation of employment opportunities, particularly in indigenous and knowledge based industries, will be a priority underpinning the future development of the Hub.

The overall strategy for North Kerry is therefore based on the strengthening of towns and villages and making them more attractive places to live.

4.4 Overall Objectives

Objective No.	Overall Objectives
	It is an objective of the Council to:
OS 4-1	Provide an improved quality of life for all the citizens of the area by promoting the area’s economic potential, protecting its natural and built environment and safeguarding its cultural heritage.
OS 4-2	Provide for the development of the area in a manner which is sustainable and protects its social, cultural, environmental and economic assets for future generations.
OS 4-3	Provide for balanced growth throughout the area by promoting the strengthening of rural communities and provide the infrastructure to facilitate job creation in these areas.
OS 4-4	Strengthen towns and villages throughout the area, improve the infrastructure provided, develop the critical mass necessary to maintain and expand the service provision within them, and make them more attractive places in which to live.
OS 4-5	Promote the development of the settlements as a means of strengthening the economic base of North Kerry and acting as a focus for inward investment.
OS 4-6	Zone sufficient land throughout the settlements to cater for demand from all sectors of the housing market.
OS 4-7	Provide a high quality of urban design in private and public development, increasing the quality of the public domain and the urban environment.
OS 4-8	Provide the infrastructure and support for the development and expansion of employment opportunities, including indigenous knowledge based industries.

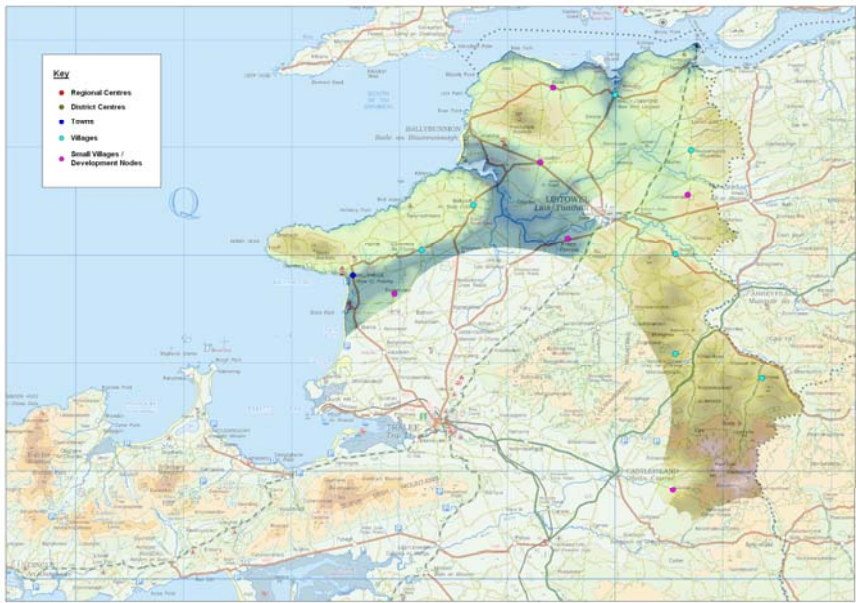
5.0 Settlement Strategy

5.1 Settlement Hierarchy

The Kerry County Development Plan outlines the hierarchy of settlements throughout the county. These settlements are categorised as follows:

- **Regional Centres** are settlements with a strategic location relative to the surrounding area. They have populations in excess of 3,500. They possess good social and economic infrastructure and support services. They have the ability to energise their surrounding areas of influence through strong linkages, enhanced by transport, which will enable other centres to play a complementary role in their development. Listowel is the regional centres for the North Kerry area.
- **District Centres** are large settlements that provide a range of services to the towns, villages and rural areas in their catchments. They have populations in excess of 1,000. Their functions are complementary to the regional centres and each other. They also have an important regional employment function within their surrounding catchment. Ballybunion is defined as a district centre in the Settlement Hierarchy of the County Development Plan.
- **Towns** cater for the daily and weekly needs of their inhabitants and provide a range of employment opportunities appropriate to their size and function. Towns also provide a range of community services, sporting facilities and medical centres that meet the needs of the surrounding catchment area. Ballyheigue is the only town within the plan area.
- **Villages** provide for convenience and daily needs and small scale employment opportunities for their residents and surrounding rural population. They also provide local level community services, such as primary schools, churches, local sporting facilities and a community hall. The villages of Ballyduff, Ballylongford, Brosna, Causeway, Duagh, Knocknagoshel and Moyvane constitute villages within the plan area
- **Small Villages/Development Nodes** are localities with a scattered development pattern providing a range of local community facilities, such as a primary school, sporting club or a general shop or post office. The settlement pattern is not cohesive, but they are often characterised by strong geographic communities. Within the plan area the following are included:- Asdee, Cordal, Finuge, Kilmoyley, Knockanure, Lisselton.

For ease of reference these settlements are indicated on Map 5.1



Map 2.2

5.2 Development Strategy

The settlement strategy promotes the regional centres as the main focus for development within the hub offering the greatest potential for economic, social and cultural development. Listowel will effectively fulfill this function.

Ballybunion will play a major role in the region as a District Centre, complementary to Tralee and Listowel, but with its own identity, providing vital services to its rural catchment.

Ballyduff, Ballyheigue, Ballylongford, Brosna, Causeway, Duagh, Knocknagoshel and Moyvane are considered important local service centres that have the capacity to absorb further development and act as stabilizing service centres for their rural hinterlands.

The smaller settlements will continue to fulfill their existing role as focal points for the existing rural communities and will not be targeted for priority infrastructural development or growth over the six year period of the plan.



5.3 Growth Strategy

Population projections are necessary in order to accurately assess the future demand for housing, amenity, infrastructure and employment. The period of this plan is until 2013 and population projections for the period of the plan have been prepared.

The South West Region currently has a population of 620,525 with the Regional Planning Guidelines currently making provision for a population of 700,000 by 2020. In light of recent census reports and government policies this figure has now been revised upwards. The population is projected to grow to 679,749 by 2011 and to 784,354 by 2021. (DEHLG Feb 2007). At 139,385 County Kerry currently has 22.5% of the population of the region. It is anticipated that this proportion of the regional population will be maintained. In the period to 2020, the RPGs will be reviewed at least twice (e.g. 2010 and 2016), and these review will provide opportunity to revise regional objectives, growth strategies and programmes.

Growth prediction for smaller towns and villages is difficult due to their lower population base. Prescriptive growth figures can act as a barrier to development. Assigning growth figures based on a traditional demographic analysis of the existing population size (births over deaths etc.) or the existing population as a proportion of the overall area population can lead to very small growth figures and do not take account of historic barriers to growth such as market inertia and lack of infrastructure. These factors are likely to decrease in the future. Furthermore the period of this plan is for a period of 6 years and the quantities of land zoned using traditional techniques would not facilitate the longer term development of the villages considering the need for amenities, public space and attractive streetscapes.

It is considered therefore, that rather than applying descriptive growth predictions for these settlements, that managing the growth in a manner which will retain their character and create functional, attractive and well designed communities is a preferable approach.

The number of dwellings is forecast to grow at a greater rate than population due to falling household sizes, which means that there will be more houses required per head of population. The current household size is 3.2 persons per household and this is forecast to decline to around 2.7 persons per household by 2021. This means that a proportion of the additional growth in households results from the housing needs of the existing population, as opposed to being purely generated by additional population growth.

6.0 Economy and Employment

The growth of the local economy and the provision of employment opportunities are crucial to the success of the North Kerry area. Much of the population growth needed, if the projections set are to be achieved, will be from inward migration and this will not occur in the absence of sustainable employment opportunities.

There is a need to ensure a strong balance between all the employment generating sectors, including retail, tourism, industry and the services sector. In particular, industrial jobs are needed to offset loss in employment within the agricultural sectors and provide more stable employment opportunities than perhaps tourism, which is seasonal, competitive and highly sensitive to international events, or the building industry which is unlikely to maintain its current buoyancy in the long-term. The provision of appropriate indigenous manufacturing and service industries providing employment in rural areas is an important part of the overall strategy of strengthening the settlements.

Foreign competition for labour-intensive industries means that such industries are unlikely to locate to the Area in the immediate future. Emphasis therefore needs to be put on the development of industries which can capitalize on the indigenous strengths of a well educated workforce. Developing and exploiting this intellectual capital through diversification and innovation within the local economy by promoting knowledge-based industries, telecommunications, research and development, precision engineering, agriculture and tourism employment presents the greatest challenge for future development.

There has been significant growth in retail provision throughout the area in the last ten years. The majority of this growth has taken place in the larger settlements and despite increases in population in rural areas the growth in retail provision of the smaller rural settlements has not been significant. It is important that the overall retail provision of the area continues to grow and that the range of retail providers available is increased. The location of retail provision within the settlements will

depend on the particular characteristics of the settlement but will be determined by the objectives of the County Development Plan to maintain the vibrancy and viability of the town centre. This is particularly important for smaller settlements where the development of new shops in out-of-centre locations can shift the focus of the village centre to an unacceptable extent.



In addition to the geographic advantages of many of the settlements from the perspective of developing their tourism potential, every settlement has in addition local attributes comprising natural and built environmental characteristics as well as local historical and cultural resources. It is an objective of this plan to identify these attributes and develop land use policies to ensure their continued development and protection.

	It is an objective of the Council:
HE-1	To promote and facilitate the provision of local manufacturing and service industries throughout the plan area.
HE-2	To promote the development of the settlements throughout the area in a manner which respects and capitalizes on their natural, built, cultural and historic attributes. Development should seek to protect and highlight these attributes in a local context.



7.0 Housing

Recent trends in housing development have moved strongly towards the development of one-off rural housing in the open countryside, particularly around the smaller settlements and along the main road network. At the same time many smaller settlements are struggling to maintain population and service provision levels.

The policy will be to target resources towards making the smaller towns, villages and settlements more attractive places in which to live by providing the infrastructure, the amenity facilities and services that will increase their vibrancy, vitality and importantly their viability. It is important to ensure that adequate new housing is provided for all sectors of the community, including families, single people, the elderly and those in need of affordable housing and to ensure a range of housing choice to provide a viable alternative to the urban generated demand for one-off rural housing.

Housing Density

Housing density is an important element in housing design as it has the potential to contribute to the aims of sustainable development. The importance of density is highlighted by the DoEHLG’s document, Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Residential Density, which highlights the benefits of increased residential density as being:

- more economic use of existing infrastructure and serviced land;
- a reduced need for the development of greenfield sites, urban sprawl and ribbon development;
- reduced need for investment in new infrastructure;
- better access to existing services and facilities; and
- more sustainable commuting patterns.

Densities must not, however, be achieved at the expense of good quality living spaces or at the expense of the traditional character of rural villages. In addition, it is important that appropriate density standards are applied within urban settlements in particular, so that people are provided with an attractive and realistic alternative to building in the open countryside.

New residential development within settlements should:

- not contribute to ribbon development.
- be of a high quality design (See Sec. 10.0).
- reflect existing character.
- be of an appropriate density to make best use of social, transport and utility infrastructure whilst reflecting location.
- be located close to existing facilities and transport.
- provide well designed amenity space and landscaped areas.
- provide identity and a sense of place.
- promote the concept of neighbourhoods.

Open Space

The provision of open space is an important part of any community. Generally two types of open space are required, the first is communal or neighbourhood open space, which provides for local use opportunities. This open space is normally provided within the developments and should form an integral part of the development catering for local amenity, design and landscape needs. Every development however does contribute to the requirement for formal public open spaces such as town parks and playing pitches etc. The requirements for these types of open space are outlined below:

- 64m² of communal open space / additional household; and
- 25m² of formal open space including sports fields/additional household.

Affordable Housing

Many people who traditionally could afford to own their own home cannot do so in the present climate of rising house prices. This has led to increasing pressure on the demand for social housing. It is unclear, however, what proportion of this demand would prefer or could afford affordable housing were it to become available. It is important during the period of the plan that measures are implemented to identify and provide affordable housing. 20% of land zoned for new residential development or for a mix of residential and other uses will be reserved for social and affordable housing in accordance with the provisions of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Objective No.	Housing
	It is an objective of the Council
H-1	That housing developments shall make provision for a range of densities catering for all sectors of the market
H-2	That 20% of the land zoned for residential development or a mix of residential and other uses shall be reserved for the provision of social and affordable housing in accordance with the provisions of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).



8.0 Education, Health and Community Facilities

Good Education, Health and Community Facilities are a strong attraction for any settlement, contribute to the amenity of an area and are a necessity for a vibrant community to develop and function effectively. In planning for growth it is important to make sufficient land available for either the provision of new or the expansion of existing facilities. Schools, Community/youth centres, sports facilities and formal open spaces within the settlements need to be planned for in advance of development proposals being submitted. Therefore, in order to ensure that the vision of creating vibrant and distinctive communities that

provide for the social needs of their residents and rural catchment will be achieved, land will need to be reserved for community uses. These lands will be identified within the zoning maps for each settlement.

It is considered reasonable that as the increased demand for such services is provided by new development and the absence of such facilities can lead to social problems and a degradation of the quality of life, that new residential and commercial developments should include proposals for the provision of social, cultural and sporting facilities within the settlements, reinforcing their roles and meeting the needs of residents. This may involve the adoption of a supplementary development contribution scheme or the provision of public facilities by the developer.

Sports and recreation facilities should be located in strategic locations, close to housing and safely accessible by foot, where they are easily accessible to everybody and form an integral part of the urban structure. In addition the dual use of facilities should be promoted in order to maximize the efficient use of the facility. This might include the siting of facilities adjacent to schools or other existing facilities.



With regard to educational facilities it is clear, in view of the level of development proposed in certain settlements, that existing capacity does not exist to cater for future demand arising from the increase in population generated by new development. It will be the policy of the planning department that all new applications for development will be required to demonstrate how the demand for educational facilities arising as a result of their development will be satisfied.

Objective No.	Education, Health and Community Facilities
	It is an objective of the Council
HCF-1	That the provision of amenity, community and sporting facilities should be facilitated and where possible that these facilities should be designed for a range of activities and shared between organisations.
HCF-2	That significant applications for residential development in these settlements shall include an analysis of educational facilities to cater for the increased demand arising from such developments.

9.0 Sustainability and the Environment

The land use plans for the settlements within the North Kerry Plan must incorporate the promotion of long-term sustainable development of the communities. There are numerous definitions of what constitutes a sustainable community including the following:

“A sustainable community is one in which improvement in the quality of human life is achieved in harmony with improving and maintaining the health of ecological systems;”
“A sustainable community uses its resources to meet current needs while ensuring that adequate resources are available for future generations. It seeks improved public health and a better quality of life for all its residents by limiting waste, preventing pollution, maximizing conservation and promoting efficiency, and developing local resources to revitalize the local economy.”
“the deliberate effort to ensure that community development not only enhances the local economy, but also the local environment and quality of life.”

‘Sustainability’ is in fact a difficult concept to define as it refers more to an ongoing process and the principles involved rather than actually achieving an endpoint. In general though, all of these definitions recognize the principle of the ongoing improvement of the quality of life of the residents without harming the environment. Well-designed

developments incorporating good urban design principles can enhance the appearance and functionality of a settlement. These benefits can be achieved in a manner which is not detrimental to the environment and very often can contribute to environmental improvements. Energy efficient design and materials can provide long-term benefits to residents and the environment at no additional cost. Well designed landscaping, parks and open spaces can promote biodiversity as well as providing more interesting spaces. Unfortunately many of the developments in recent years have not produced tangible improvements in this regard. Policies are needed to ensure that all new development enhances the existing character, environmental resources, heritage and community/cultural facilities of the area. Development should be high quality and be integrated with other uses so as to facilitate walking, cycling and the use of public transport. A combination of strategic land-use zoning, high environmental standards and an emphasis on well developed multi-disciplinary urban design concepts at the initial planning stage will serve to promote sustainable communities.

The Objectives of the Kerry County Development Plan regarding environmental protection are comprehensive and shall apply to the development of these settlements. Section 10.0 of this document relates to requirements regarding urban design.

It is the aim of the County Council to be a leading proponent of energy efficiency in the country and it is an objective of the council to have regard to the principles of energy efficient buildings and sustainable building design. In order to ensure a more sustainable approach to residential development, it is proposed that the Council adopt a range of sustainable building requirements to ensure energy efficiency, healthy and low environmental impact buildings for all new residential development.

It is proposed that all dwellings will be required to conform to the European A-type standard rating in accordance with the forthcoming Energy Performance of Building Directive (EPBD Directive 2002/91/EC). In essence, this requirement will ensure that the annual space and water heating requirements for all buildings does not exceed 90kWh/sqm. Each buildings energy performance must be calculated using an approved method (e.g. EN832) and carried out by a qualified or accredited expert.

Objective No	Energy Efficiency in Buildings
	It is an objective of the Council:
EE-1	Ensure that the annual space and water heating energy requirements for all dwellings shall not exceed 90kWh/sqm.
EE-2	Encourage the incorporation of sustainable design principles and energy efficiency into the building process.

10.0 Urban Design

Urban design is the process of shaping the physical environment for life in cities, towns and villages. It is the art of making places. It involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, and establishing the processes that make successful development possible.

Urban design is essential in creating community identity and making places that are successful both socially and economically, good to live in, and attractive to visit. It is effective planning in the widest sense, and it can help to deliver better public services.

The challenge is to create a place that will be used and enjoyed by a wide range of people for different purposes, not only now but in years to come.

The key to good urban design is the adoption of a multi-disciplinary approach from the initial stage of a project. This will involve the use of landscape architects, planners, architects and engineers working in a planned coordinated fashion to produce a safe attractive and functional development which capitalises on the assets of a site, integrates with the surrounding character of an area and produces a development with a sense of place, identity and character.

The Landscape Architect should be involved in analysing and understanding sites from the start of the planning and design process, rather than being brought in at a late stage to disguise ugly buildings with some planting. Similarly roads engineers should use their skills to make places that are pleasant to be in and to walk through, rather than focusing narrowly on keeping the traffic moving.

The design of the open space, its functionality and its quality is critical. Once this space has been properly designed and detailed the structures enclosing it can be seen in a more contextual setting and be designed appropriately.

It is the intention of the planning authority in promoting good design for the North Kerry Settlements to rely less on prescriptive standards and to assess development proposals on their individual design merits. In order to promote this aim it is the intention of the planning authority that applications for development within the settlements will be accompanied by Urban Design Statements. Every development either detracts from or contributes to the Urban Environment and, while the detail of the Urban Design Statements will vary according to the size of the proposed developments, each application should be accompanied by a design statement including a site analysis and design assessment.



Objective No	Urban Design
	It is an objective of the Council
UD-1	To ensure that a high quality urban environment is provided in each settlements.
UD-2	To require Urban Design Statements for large or significant developments within the Settlements and for all residential developments in excess of four houses.
UD-3	To require that all applications for new development should be accompanied by a design statement.

Urban Design Statements should address the following issues:

- Site Context / Site Analysis
 - Context relative to existing urban area
 - Mapping
 - Topography
 - Vegetation
 - Services
 - Site Features
 - Orientation
 - Adjacent Developments
 - Zoning Provisions
- Overall Design Vision
 - What is the main objective of the development?
 - How will it relate to the town?
 - How will it contribute to the town?
 - Will it incorporate Environmental Sustainability?
 - What are its Civic Aims?
 - Will it meet the needs of the residents?
 - Will it have distinctive character and a sense of place?
- Design Objectives
 - Appropriate location And density
 - Distance from town centre
 - Integration
 - Sense of Place
 - Community/ neighbourhood
- Architectural Objectives

- Respect existing Scale and Character
- Integration
- Proportion
- Active street frontages
- Detailing and Finishes
- Sustainability

Sustainable Design

- Provision for urban transport
- Maximise sunlight
- Heating
- Design
- Energy Efficiency

Landscape Objectives

- Overall landscaping vision
- Hard Landscaping
- Materials / furniture
- Permeability and Accessibility
- Character
- Safety
- Public domain / Private divide

Public domain

- Design of the open space
- Permeability
 - Pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular access
- Uses
 - Meeting/ circulation area
 - Passive recreational area
 - Active sport area
 - Combination
 - Suitability for all year use
- Safety
- Ownership
- Clear public/ private divide

Applications should show how the proposed development fulfills the design objectives of the Urban Design Statement.

11.0 Transport, Traffic and Infrastructure



The lack of adequate infrastructure has been a barrier to the development of smaller villages in the past. In addition this lack of infrastructure, particularly adequate wastewater treatment facilities, has had an adverse impact on settlement patterns where developments proposed do not reflect the existing compact form and density near the village centres due to the need to provide on-site effluent disposal options. Kerry County Council are progressing plans for the provision of wastewater treatment facilities in the smaller towns and villages throughout the County and it is intended that a number of these schemes will be constructed during the period of the plan.

Objective No.	It is an objective of the Council:
HT-1	To provide adequate wastewater treatment facilities within the settlements to cater for projected growth.
HT-2	To require developments to incorporate sustainable storm water management systems for the disposal of surface water arising from the development.
HT-3	To ensure that development within the settlements does not lead to deterioration in the quality of surface or groundwater.
HT-4	To ensure that adequate measures are taken to prevent contamination of surface waters, by silt run-off or otherwise, during the construction period.

In order to protect the hydraulic capacity of treatment plants, developments should where possible provide for the separation of surface water. In addition developments should be designed having regard to the Sustainable Urban Design Systems, SUDS, currently in use.

The use of advanced communication and information technology has become central to everyday work and leisure activities. The ability to work and communicate from home, the capacity to provide employment in high tech industries in peripheral areas and the educational opportunities afforded by this technology make it a vital element of infrastructure for any area if it is to function efficiently, without disadvantage, in a modern society. Kerry County Council will facilitate and promote the provision of this infrastructure throughout the settlements.

While it is acknowledged that the growth of the smaller rural settlements will have significant beneficial impacts for their communities, this growth in population will have impacts for commuting patterns throughout the area. Rising fuel prices in the coming years will mean that the provision of public transport to serve the smaller settlements will increase in importance. Provision shall be made in the settlements for safe, central, public transportation stops with good pedestrian linkages serving the residential areas.

12.0 Zoning

The zoning of residential land should be implemented and based on a sequential approach. This will ensure that development occurs in a

logical way and priority sites that will facilitate the implementation of the wider strategy can be brought forward at an early stage. This approach will vary according to the type and size of settlement and for rural and urban areas, as follows:

Large Urban Areas

1. Development of priority sites, such as those with designated Action Areas or Town Renewal Plans
2. Town centre opportunity sites
3. Brownfield opportunity sites
4. Sites that are zoned and serviced
5. Greenfield sites

Smaller Towns and Villages

1. Village centre/edge of village centre sites
2. Medium density edge of village sites that consolidate the settlement pattern
3. Lower density edge of village sites.

12.1 Land-use Zonings

This section outlines the development envisaged within each of the zoning categories mentioned. While it is unlikely that all these categories will be present in every village, most villages will be zoned using a combination of these uses as required.

Where zoned land is adjacent to any category of open space or pedestrian route, provision shall be made for the overlooking of such spaces in the design and layout of new development. This will increase safety levels and encourage the appropriate uses of public areas.

Residential Zoning

The quantity of land zoned for development is in excess of the exact calculated demand. This is to account for the infrastructural land requirement and the non-release of zoned land onto the market.

The residential density zonings are intended to provide for the full range of housing types required to meet demand and changing demographics. It is intended that higher densities, subject to good design, will be accommodated closer to the town and village centres, while lower density development shall be provided at the periphery of the town.

The range of additional uses open to consideration within the residential zoning include community, social and medical facilities as well as shops, restaurants and public houses where it can be demonstrated that there is a need for such facilities and that it will not affect the predominantly residential nature of the area.

Where land is indicated as “Residential Urban Streetscape” new development must incorporate the traditional architectural values of the existing village in the conception of proposed massing, scale, form, and street frontage. Local architectural elements shall be incorporated in the design of structures. Proposed development shall incorporate pavement building lines, contribute to the public realm and provide rear parking in its design and layout where site characteristics allow.

Institutional and Community Facilities

Community facilities including schools, churches and hospitals with their associated lands will normally be permitted. Limited residential or business uses are open for consideration, where they can be accommodated in the same zone without undermining the essential community use and potential of the zone. Business uses will only be permitted where they are functionally related and ancillary to community facilities. It is the objective of this zone to protect community facilities and amenities and to allow the expansion of those community facilities.

Light Industrial

Special Industries that are not compatible with urban areas by virtue of noxious or dangerous processes, such as noise, or pollution will not be

permitted. In order to preserve this land for light industrial use, uses that do not directly relate to industrial activities, such as housing or community uses will not be permitted. Uses shall not be injurious to the residential amenity of the area.

Mixed Use Development

Mixed use areas have a wide variety of benefits including the viability of existing commercial centres, a reduction in the need to travel, providing new uses for redundant buildings, creating a vibrant mix between the working and living environment and improving the quality of residential neighbourhoods by introducing a local focus for activity.

Mixed-use sites have been identified within or adjacent to the town centres in order to allow an increase in provision of retailing and services. On these sites retail commercial uses, office, recreational and housing uses will be permitted. In order to promote the viability and availability of land zoned for mixed use, the Council will require a mix of uses. Individual applications will be assessed on the basis of the proposed development as well as existing uses and other proposals in the vicinity. Proposals for retailing developments will normally be permitted, subject to development control criteria, as such developments will serve to upgrade the town’s retail range.

Where land is indicated as “Mixed use urban streetscape” a range of town centre uses will be considered. New development must incorporate the traditional architectural values of the existing town centre in the conception of proposed massing, scale, form, and street frontage. Local architectural elements shall be incorporated in the design of structures where appropriate. Proposed development shall incorporate pavement building lines and rear parking in its design and layout where site characteristics allow.

As well as normal design criteria, in these areas emphasis must be placed on diversity and adaptability. Diversity should be considered on a horizontal as well as vertical scale. Longer single use developments provide less character and less opportunity for diversity and mixed uses which contribute to the vibrancy of a street. Vertical diversity incorporating a mix of retail, residential and commercial uses also increases the mixed use potential and the extent to which the area is used by different sectors.

It is recognised that in many smaller towns and villages the current demand for retail and commercial uses may be limited. On these streetscapes the emphasis must be on adaptability and the potential for the future organic growth of the commercial and retail sectors as demand arises. In considering mixed-use urban streetscapes, designers should consider plot width, floor-to-ceiling heights etc. and the capacity of the structure to be converted to different uses in the future.

Amenity

In many settlements the amenity potential of some areas and features of notable amenity value are vulnerable to incursions from inappropriate development, in the absence of an amenity policy.



The objective of the amenity zone is to preserve and improve existing public open space as well as to provide for additional open space. Only uses consistent with the preservation of amenity and the recreational character of these areas will be considered. The Council will seek ways of improving public access to and within these areas, and the enjoyment of the same.

This zoning is intended solely for recreational use, both passive and active. Active uses include the provision of playing pitches etc. and passive generally relates to use as town parks and children’s playgrounds. Unrelated uses, such as shops and houses, will not be permitted. The development of recreational buildings and car parks necessary for the use of the amenity will be considered. These uses, however, shall not detract from the primary use as amenity.

Public Utility.

It is crucial in zoning for future expansion that land is zoned for the provision of adequate public utilities. These could include the provision of water and wastewater facilities, public buildings, toilets, car parking, pumping stations etc.

Leisure:

Leisure uses comprise uses which include commercial and non-commercial sports related and recreational uses, and uses such as tourist facilities/attractions but does not include holiday homes.

Streetscape Improvement areas

Environmental improvements designed to up-grade the streetscape and add continuity to an otherwise disjointed streetscape will be encouraged. Large and small scale development proposals shall be designed to secure this objective. Hard and soft coordinated landscaping such as formal tree planting and pavement materials shall be used throughout the area.

Objective No.	It is an objective of the council
HZ-1	That all development should comply with the zoning provisions indicated on the maps for each settlement.
HZ-2	That all development should comply with the zoning provisions outlined in section 12.0 unless specific provision or modifications have been made in the individual settlement plan.