



Chapter 3

Settlement Strategy

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3.1 Settlement Hierarchy

This Chapter identifies the different Service Centres throughout the County, their areas of influence and their strategic roles for the future. This ensures that a network of viable service centres is maintained throughout the County. The Settlement Strategy informs population growth allocation and infrastructural investment decisions in establishing and maintaining this network.

The Plan recognises that there are different categories of settlements throughout the County from the large Hub towns to small villages. All have complementary roles to play in the future growth and prosperity of the County. In recognition of this, a Settlement Hierarchy for the County is developed consisting of the Hub towns, regional/district towns, villages, small villages/development nodes.

The strategic aims of the Settlement Strategy are to:-

- Ensure the sustainable development of the Linked Hub towns of Tralee-Killarney to fulfill roles identified in the National Spatial Strategy and South West Regional Planning Guidelines.
- Ensure the sustainable development of the Regional/District Towns so they can act as adequate service and employment centres for the surrounding hinterland.
- Manage development outside the Linked Hub and larger Towns in a manner which is sustainable and that ensures the viability of rural communities but does not give rise to long-term problems such as climate change and water quality.
- Facilitate the provision of a suitable range of house tenure, type and size having regard to the demographic distribution and structure of the population throughout the County.

- Facilitate the sustainable future development of infrastructure into those settlements where there is demand.

A strong network of settlements is important for sustaining healthy population levels and enhancing quality of life. The functional relationships between the different types of settlements also need to be clearly understood. Urban Sprawl on the edge and environs of the Hub towns (and on the edges of settlements) should be discouraged and a clear character distinction between built-up areas and the open countryside should be maintained.

A clear strategy for the sustainable development of the towns and urban areas is important for the County to achieve its full economic potential. The towns and other main areas will play an important role in delivering jobs and services to the rural areas around them.

Settlements can be planned to encourage public transport provision. The settlement structure of County Kerry is highly dependent on car use as a consequence of its highly dispersed nature. This is likely to continue to be the case even though a high level of dependence is undesirable on social, environmental and economic grounds. However, significant change, leading to an increase in public transport, can be achieved by adopting a 'plan-led' approach.

The settlement strategy as a whole proposes the concentration of new residential development in designated settlements instead of a continuation of a general dispersal of growth. The general thrust of the Settlement and Spatial Strategy is to improve the conditions for the operation of public transport throughout the County.

The Settlement Hierarchy takes into account the Census of Population 2011 and those settlements that have available capacity in the wastewater treatment units or are on a priority list for wastewater treatment units and other environmental considerations.



The Settlement Hierarchy for County Kerry is outlined in Table 3.1 below. As per the South West RPGs, Tralee and Killarney are the highest ranking within this hierarchy.

Table 3.1 provides a brief summary of the role of the towns in each level of the hierarchy.

Hierarchy	Settlement	Function
Hub Towns	Tralee, Killarney	Key destination, economically active supporting surrounding area, located on multi-modal transportation corridor.
Regional Towns	Cahersiveen, Castleisland, Daingean Uí Chúis, Killorglin, Kenmare, Listowel	Smaller in scale than Hub towns but strong active growth towns and economically vibrant.
District Towns	Ardfert, Ballybunion, Ballyheigue, Ballylongford, Barraduff, Castlemaine, Farranfore, Fieries, Kilcummin, Milltown, Rathmore, Sneem, Tarbert, Waterville	Towns that serve rural hinterland as service centre and market towns.
Villages	Abbeydorney, Annascaul, Ballyduff, Beaufort, Baile an Fheirtéaraigh, Brosna, Causeway, Castlegregory, Ceann Trá, Duagh, Fenit, Fossa, Glenbeigh, Gneeveguilla, Kilflynn, Kilgarvan, Knocknagoshel, Knightstown, Lixnaw, Moyvane, Portmagee, Scartaglin,	Serve smaller rural catchments; provide local services with some smaller scale rural enterprises in a number of such villages.
Small Villages	An Mhuiríoch, Aughaclasla, Baile na nGall, Brandon, Boolteens, Camp, Caherdaniel, Cloghane, Castlecove, Chapeltown, Cordal, Currow, Dún Géagain, Knockanure	Same as Villages
Development Nodes	Remaining Settlements	Settlement Nodes serving the rural communities.

Table 3.1
Settlement Hierarchy



The key element of the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy is to continue to focus growth into the Hub and towns and to relate growth of the smaller towns and villages to the availability of infrastructure such as water supply and waste water treatment.

It is recognised that rural areas play an essential role in this settlement structure by developing sustainable development nodes within rural communities.

The provision of infrastructural services etc. in these areas, will be considered in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

The overall aim for development nodes in rural areas is to ensure that they retain their rural service centre function and develop sustainably as attractive locations for residents and visitors and that any future development preserves their existing character.

The aims of the Settlement Hierarchy are to:-

General

- Ensure the sustainable development of the Linked Hub and the Key Towns in the County.
- Manage development outside these towns in a way that ensures the viability of rural communities while ensuring environmental protection through the implementation of the objectives and Development Guidance document of this Plan.

Linked-Hub of Tralee-Killarney

- Support the sustainable development of the Linked Hub of Tralee-Killarney in order to meet the population target by 2021.
- Ensure that the towns are centres of sustainable economic growth to attract and support a wide range of services and amenities and deliver a high quality of life.

Regional Towns

- Promote and facilitate the growth and sustainable development of the towns towards achieving their population targets.
- Facilitate the provision of an appropriate and sustainable range of social and physical infrastructure, facilities and services, including retail and commercial and enterprise development to serve the inhabitants of the towns and their rural hinterlands.

District Towns

- Support the sustainable development and growth of the towns to the population targets set out below.

Villages, Nodes & Rural Areas

- Support the sustainable development of the countryside and rural villages in the County.

3.1.1 Population Distribution

The distribution of projected population growth throughout the County is in accordance with the Core Strategy and the Settlement Hierarchy set out in Table 3.1 - Section 3.1. The population growth targets are allocated to the County's four Municipal Districts as set out below in Tables 3.2-3.5. It is recognised that population growth is usually employment led and is reliant on the availability of services and infrastructure. Consequently, the spatial distribution of population growth is supported by development policies related to employment, housing, retail, environment and the level of social and physical infrastructure as set out in the relevant chapters of this Plan.

The distribution of the population targets within each Municipal District will reflect the need to focus development in towns, in a sustainable manner, to create the critical mass necessary to support the existing level of services and to generate demand for new services commensurate with the functions of each settlement.



The distribution of the population targets to each Municipal District is outlined in Table 2.3, Chapter 2 - Core Strategy. Within each Municipal District a *minimum* of 60% of the targeted projected population growth will occur within the main towns. The remaining 40% is distributed to smaller settlements and rural areas. This will secure the development of vibrant towns and villages capable of servicing rural communities and will accommodate locally generated demand for housing in rural areas. In distributing population growth outside the district town there will be an emphasis on sustainable development in smaller settlements.

The population growth is allocated to each settlement based on the percentage population that each settlement has relative to the overall population of that area.

	Census Population	Growth Allocation
Killarney	12,740	1,781
Castleisland	2,513	237
Rathmore	778	74
Fieries	491	46
Barraduff*	370	35
Kilcummin	368	35
Farranfore*	200	19
Total Pop. of Settlements	17,460	2,227
Remainder of District	20,580	298
Total	38,040	2,525

Table 3.3
Population Allocation Killarney Municipal District
(* population estimate)

	Census Population	Growth Allocation
Tralee	20,814	2,969
Ardfert	800	185
Fenit	527	122
Total Pop. of Settlements	22,141	3,276
Remainder of District	17,910	204
Total	40,051	3,480

Table 3.2
Population Allocation Tralee Municipal District

	Census Population	Growth Allocation
Listowel	4,205	314
Ballybunion	1,354	101
Ballyheigue	628	47
Tarbert	551	42
Ballylongford	418	31
Total Pop. of Settlements	7,156	534
Remainder of District	21,382	356
Total	28,538	890

Table 3.4
Population Allocation Listowel Municipal District

	Census Population	Growth Allocation
Kenmare	2,175	173
Killorglin	2,082	166
Daingean Uí Chúis	1,965	157
Cahersiveen	1,168	93
Milltown	838	67
Waterville	465	37
Sneem	258	21
Castlemaine	187	15
Total Pop. of Settlements	9,138	728
Remainder of District	29,735	485
Total	38,873	1,213

Table 3.5
Population Allocation South & West Kerry Municipal District

3.1.2 The Zoning of Land for Residential Development

Kerry County Council has zoned land for residential purposes in each of the following Functional Area Local Area Plans:-

- Castleisland FALAP 2009-15
- Kenmare FALAP 2010-16
- Killorglin FALAP 2011-2017
- Dingle FALAP 2012-2018
- Cahersiveen, Waterville & Sneem FALAP 2013-19
- Listowel/Ballybunion FALAP 2013-2019
- Tralee/Killarney Hub FALAP 2013-2019

These will be replaced by local area areas for the four Municipal Districts during the lifetime of the Plan.

The amount of land to be zoned within Municipal Districts will reflect the targeted

population growth within the area over the lifetime of the plan (2015-2021). It is important that zoning is carried out in a logical and informed manner which will provide for the long-term sustainable development of the settlements and of the County as a whole. The following criteria will be used in deciding the extent and location of proposed zonings in the County.

➤ **Need and Policy Context**

- Ensure that the amount of land zoned for development does not exceed the calculated requirements of the Core Strategy for the County or the targets set out in the South West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022.
- Focus the supply of zoned land only in the main settlements of the Municipal Districts both where the infrastructure is available, and where it can be accommodated in a more balanced and cost effective manner.

➤ **Sequential Approach**

- Ensure that land use zonings promote the sustainable development of compact, livable, pedestrian/cyclist-friendly settlements, with a defined and healthy commercial/retail core.
- Ensure that zonings extend outwards from the centre of an urban area (i.e. 'leapfrogging' to more remote areas should be avoided).
- Ensure that residential zoned areas are contiguous to existing zoned development lands.

➤ **Capacity of Water, Drainage and Roads Infrastructure**

- Ensure that the zoning of land is dependent on the availability of sustainable water, drainage and roads infrastructure.

➤ ***Supporting Infrastructure and Facilities***

- Ensure that consideration is given to the future availability of or the capacity to provide, supporting infrastructure.

➤ ***Physical Suitability***

- Ensure that the form and location of land zonings offers the best “value for money” in terms of efficient use of existing infrastructure, while minimising the need for costly new infrastructure.
- Ensure that the Flood Risk Management considerations and assessment requirements are complied with.

➤ ***Environmental and Heritage Policy, including Conservation of Habitats and other sensitive areas***

- Ensure that River Basin Management Plans, Groundwater Vulnerability Maps and potential impacts on landscapes, built and natural heritage sites (including Natura 2000 sites) are taken into consideration when zoning lands.

3.1.3 Housing Land Requirement

The quantum of residential land required over the period of this development plan is calculated using population targets, household sizes and the proposed density of development.

The population growth target for the entire County for the period 2015-2021 is 8,108. The average household size is predicted to be 2.6 persons per unit. The proposed density, in accordance with the regional guidelines, is 12 units per hectare and 21 units per hectare in the towns of Tralee, Killarney and Listowel. In accordance with the Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG 2007) an additional headroom of 50% is included in the land requirements to allow for the provision of competition, the avoidance of market monopoly and the non availability of zoned lands.

Table 3.6 below sets out the total land requirements and housing units required between 2015 and 2021, taking into account the population targets, household size, and density. The total number of residential units required to meet housing requirements, resulting from population growth for the County is 3,118 units and the corresponding residential zoned land requirement of 235.75



hectares.

When calculating the amount of proposed zoned residential lands in the Local Area Plans the number of existing vacant dwellings in unfinished estates in each settlement will be taken into consideration as it is the policy of Kerry County Council to seek the completion of these estates.



Municipal District	Settlements	Population Allocation 2015-21	Housing Requirement	Housing Land Requirement (Ha)*
Tralee	Tralee Ardfert Fenit Rural	2,969 185 122 204	1,142 70 46 77	81.50 8.75 5.75
Killarney	Killarney Castleisland Rathmore Fieries Bartraduff Kilcummin Farranfore Rural	1,781 237 74 46 35 35 19 298	685 91 28 18 15 13 7 115	49.00 11.50 3.50 2.25 2.00 1.50 0.75
Listowel	Listowel Ballybunion Ballyheigue Tarbert Ballylongford Rural	314 101 47 42 31 356	122 39 18 16 12 138	15.25 12.75 2.25 2.00 1.50
South & West Kerry	Kenmare Killorglin Daingean Uí Chúis Cahersiveen Milltown Waterville Sneem Castlemaine Rural	173 166 157 93 67 37 21 15 485	66 63 60 36 26 14 8 6 187	8.25 8.00 8.00 4.50 3.25 1.75 1.00 0.75
Total County		8,108	3,118	235.75

Table 3.6
Core Strategy Table
 (*Includes 50% headroom)



3.2. Housing

Aim: *To facilitate the provision of high quality residential developments to all households, in accordance with the County's settlement hierarchy, in sustainable residential environments.*

3.2.1 Housing Policies

The Council has a dual role as the Planning and Housing Authority. Through its statutory powers as a Planning Authority, the Council regulates and manages private housing development through the development management procedures as set out in the Planning and Development Acts. In its role as the Housing Authority, the Council provides dwellings for households in need of accommodation who are unable to provide such accommodation through their own resources and assists other agencies that contribute to the housing requirements of the County.

This Chapter sets out the policies and objectives for the provision of housing in the County and the creation of sustainable communities. The Housing Strategy included in Volume 5 is underpinned by all national policies and legislation and is applicable for the same timeframe as the Development Plan. It is in accordance with the core strategy and the settlement strategy set out in the Development Plan.

The overall aim of Housing Policy is to enable every household to have available an affordable dwelling of good design, suited to their needs, in a quality environment as far as practicable, at the tenure of their choice. This also refers to households with specific needs, e.g. older people or those who have a disability, either physical or intellectual. The Housing Strategy acknowledges the need to meet the housing requirements of those who are homeless and to provide suitable accommodation for Travellers who are indigenous to the area.

It is a policy of Kerry County Council to:-

- Encourage and foster the creation of attractive mixed use sustainable communities which contain a variety of housing types and tenures with supporting community facilities, public realm and residential amenities. Require a high standard of design in all new residential schemes that are built in a style and scale that is appropriate to the landscape setting.
- Integrate new housing into the existing social and urban fabric of the County's settlements detailed in the settlement hierarchy.
- Promote rainwater harvesting and energy efficiency both during the construction phase and during the lifetime of residential development by sensitive design and layout taking into account topography, orientation and surrounding features.
- Recognise the need for people with disabilities to enjoy a decent living environment in the County and to support local communities, health authorities and other agencies involved in the provision of facilities for people with disabilities including supporting the voluntary sector in the development of housing for people with disabilities.
- Support the concept of independent living for older people and people with disabilities and ensure where possible that housing for such groups is integrated with mainstream housing in their existing communities. Such housing shall generally be located close to existing or proposed community and convenience retail facilities, where possible.
- Pay special attention to the needs of older people on low incomes in substandard, privately rented accommodation when planning and allocating accommodation for older people.

- Provide appropriate accommodation for Travellers.
- Support proposals for day/resource centres for people with special needs within, or close to towns villages and neighbourhood centres, subject to normal planning requirements.
- Ensure that all new housing is designed in a way that is adaptable and flexible to the changing needs of the homeowner and has regard to the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities (2007).
- Support a sequential approach to residential development in which the first choice location for new housing is within the built up area of towns and villages maximising under-utilised and brownfield lands within and adjoining town and village centres in the first instance and thereafter moving sequentially outwards.
- Facilitate consultation with approved Voluntary and Co-operative Housing Associations on an ongoing basis in order to identify and agree opportunities for their participation in the provision of all social housing delivery options.



Housing	
<i>It is an objective of the Council to:-</i>	
HS-1	Reserve sufficient lands at appropriate locations to facilitate and implement the Housing Strategy and its policies in a sustainable manner.
HS-2	Facilitate the housing needs of people in their local communities through actively providing / assisting the provision of housing in settlements and as single rural houses as identified in the Settlement Strategy.
HS-3	Ensure, that arrangements for the provision of social housing are made having regard to the current Housing Strategy in accordance with Part V of the Planning & Development Act 2010 (as amended).
HS-4	Have regard to and promote increased residential densities in the towns and other appropriate locations in accordance with the 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' Guidelines 2009 (DoEHLG).
HS-5	Promote integration of social housing and ensure a housing mix within developments in order to promote a socially balanced and inclusive society.
HS-6	Provide adequate levels of social and affordable housing to ensure all sectors of society have access to housing (including a range of accommodation types for members of the travelling community, the homeless, people with disabilities and ethnic minority groups).



		Traveller Accommodation
		It is an objective of the Council to:-
HS-7	Address the issue of unfinished housing estates in the County by implementing the guidance manual <i>Managing and Resolving Unfinished Housing Developments</i> (DoECLG 2011).	
HS-8	Ensure that all new multiple residential development(s) take place within the development boundary of the settlements/villages.	
HS-9	Support the development of housing for special needs, including the concept of independent living for older people and people with a disability and ensure where possible that housing for such groups is integrated with mainstream housing.	

3.2.2 Accommodation for Travellers

Kerry County Council recognises the distinct requirements of the Travelling Community in relation to the provision of accommodation and other facilities, the socio-economic issues relevant to the Travelling Community and the link between adequate accommodation, employment, health and education.

Kerry County Council acknowledges that the travelling community is a separate ethnic minority in Ireland. There are approximately 247 Traveller families living in County Kerry. The requirements on Kerry County Council under the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 ensure that significant steps will be taken to provide appropriate accommodation for Travellers within the County.





Elderly Accommodation		Housing
<i>It is an objective of the Council to:-</i>		
HS-11	Provide and facilitate the provision of suitable accommodation in appropriate locations to meet the needs of the elderly and to encourage the provision of a range of sustainable housing options for elderly persons in central, convenient and easily accessible locations and to integrate such housing with mainstream housing where possible.	HS-13 Provide and facilitate the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of those with disabilities through the provision and/or adaptation of suitable accommodation at appropriate locations.
HS-12	Ensure that granny/family flats are integral to the existing dwelling house, capable of being reintegrated to the main house, and subordinate to the main dwelling house.	

3.2.4 Accommodation for People with Disabilities

In considering housing for people with disabilities, location and accessibility are critical, particularly to those with a mobility related disability. The importance of access to public transport, local community services and facilities is a significant factor for a mobility-impaired person in improving quality of life. In terms of house design, compliance with part M of the Building Regulations, expands options available to people with a disability.

3.2.5 Housing Stock and Capacity/Vacancy

The 2011 census recorded 26.4% of houses were vacant on census night, which would account for 19,932 dwellings. The location of the vacant units within the County requires identification and monitoring to plan and manage the supply of housing to match need. It is evident from analysis undertaken that there is a widespread distribution of vacant properties in both the urban centres and across rural County Kerry. A flexible approach to the reuse of such buildings will be considered. Potential uses such as community facilities, educational, craft or commercial uses could be considered subject to development management standards being met.





	Occupancy/Vacancy		Housing
A	Occupied by usual resident(s) of the household	53,088	<i>It is an objective of the Council to:-</i>
B	Occupied by visitors only (Number)	665	
C	Unoccupied - residents temporarily absent	1,275	
D	Unoccupied - vacant house	9,860	
E	Unoccupied - vacant flat	1,657	
F	Unoccupied - vacant holiday home	8,202	
G	Total housing stock (A+B+C+D+E+F)	74,747	
	Vacancy rate (D+E+F) / G (%)	26.4	

Figure 3.1
Occupancy & Vacancy (CSO 2011)



3.3 Rural Settlement Strategy

Aim: *To sustainably manage the development of rural parts of the County; support the creation of employment opportunities for those living and working in the rural area; sustain established rural communities and conserve the qualities of the rural environment.*

County Kerry is essentially a rural county with circa 60% of the population recorded in the 2011 census as living in the rural area, which is much higher than the national average (38%). The countryside however is a finite resource and is a valuable asset both environmentally and economically. It is critical that the asset is protected and enhanced.

It is the policy of the Council to:-

- *Enhance the vitality and viability of rural towns and villages to strengthen their role as rural service centres and protect existing community uses and services in the villages.*
- *Maintain a stable population base in the rural areas with a strong network of villages and small towns.*



- Protect sensitive landscapes and other environmentally sensitive areas from unsustainable development.

3.3.1 Rural Area Types and Settlement

There is a tradition of dispersed settlement patterns in the countryside, however it is apparent that the recent rate of housing construction and scale of dispersed rural housing is unsustainable and is uneconomical in terms of infrastructure provision and quality of life.

It is the policy of the Kerry County Council to ensure that future housing in rural areas complies with the *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2005* (DoEHLG) and this will be achieved through greater emphasis on the following:-

- Establishing that there is a genuine housing need for permanent occupation.
- Giving priority to the reduction of residential vacancy rates in the *Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence and Stronger Rural Areas* in preference to new residential development.
- The replacement, renovation or modification of existing structures in rural areas for residential use.
- Encouraging people who wish to reside in the countryside to live in existing settlements or development nodes where there are services available.

Rural Housing

It is an objective of the Council to:-

RS-1	Ensure that future housing in all rural areas complies with the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2005 (DoEHLG) and the Development Guidance document of this Plan.
RS-2	Require the design of rural housing to have regard to the "Building a House in Rural Kerry; Design Guidelines" (KCC, 2009).
RS-3	Give favourable consideration to the sustainable development of permanent places of residence on vacant sites within existing cluster developments.
RS-4	Ensure that the provision of rural housing will protect the landscape, the natural and built heritage, the economic assets and the environment of the County.
RS-5	Ensure that future housing in all rural area complies with the EPA's 2009 <i>Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses</i> (p.e ≤ 10).
RS-6	Ensure that all permitted residential development in rural areas is for use as a primary permanent place of residence. In addition such development shall be subject to the inclusion of an occupancy clause for a period of 7 years.



3.3.1.1 Identifying Rural Area Types

The Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines (2005) stress the importance of “evidence based” research and analysis being carried out into population and development trends in rural areas. This analysis should include the identification of the location and extent of the rural area types set out in the National Spatial Strategy.

The Planning Authority has carried out an assessment in accordance with the approach outlined in these Guidelines:-

- Analysis and mapping of the data on planning applications for one off rural housing submitted since 2005 (applications lodged, granted, refused etc.).
- Analysis of housing development using the An Post Geo Directory.
- Analysis of Census data on population and household trends. (2002-2006-2011).

This data provides information on population change, population density, planning application numbers and distribution of one off houses granted permission.

An analysis of this data identifies three of the four different types of rural areas. From the analysis carried out, areas under strong urban influence, stronger rural areas and structurally weaker rural areas have been identified and are shown on Map 3.1(pg.40).

The following text summaries the characteristics of these areas and the settlement objectives pertaining to them.

AREA 1

Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence

These are areas which exhibit characteristics such as proximity to the immediate environs or close commuting catchment of the Hub Towns and larger towns, rapidly rising population, evidence of considerable pressure for development of housing due to proximity to such urban areas, or to major transport corridors with ready access to the urban area and pressures on infrastructure such as the local road network.

Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence	
<i>It is an objective of the Council to:-</i>	
RS-7	Ensure that favourable consideration is given to individual one – off house developments for immediate family members (sons, daughters or favoured niece/nephew) on family farms and land holdings; subject to compliance with normal planning criteria and environmental protection considerations.
RS-8	Give priority to the completion of unfinished dwellings and the occupation of vacant units in preference to new residential development for persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community in which they are proposed, subject to compliance with normal planning criteria and environmental protection considerations.
RS-9	Facilitate the housing requirements of the rural community as identified while directing urban generated housing into the towns and villages.



AREA 2

Stronger Rural Areas

In these areas population levels are generally stable within a well-developed town and village structure and in the wider rural areas around them. This stability is supported by a traditionally strong rural/agricultural economic base. The key challenge in these areas is to maintain a reasonable balance between development activity in the extensive network of smaller towns and villages and housing proposals in wider rural areas.

Stronger Rural Areas

It is an objective of the Council to:-

RS-10	Facilitate the provision of dwellings for persons who are an intrinsic part of the rural community in which they are raised, subject to compliance with normal planning criteria and environmental protection considerations.
RS-11	Consolidate and sustain the stability of the rural population and to promote a balance between development activity in urban areas and villages and the wider rural area.

AREA 3

Structurally Weaker Areas

These areas generally exhibit characteristics such as persistent and significant population decline over an average of two census periods (2002-06-11). These areas have low population density averages and few planning application numbers. Many of these areas, by virtue of their location and topography are isolated. In these areas, the challenge is to stop sustained population and economic

decline with a focus on both key villages and rural areas.

Structurally Weaker Areas

It is an objective of the Council to:-

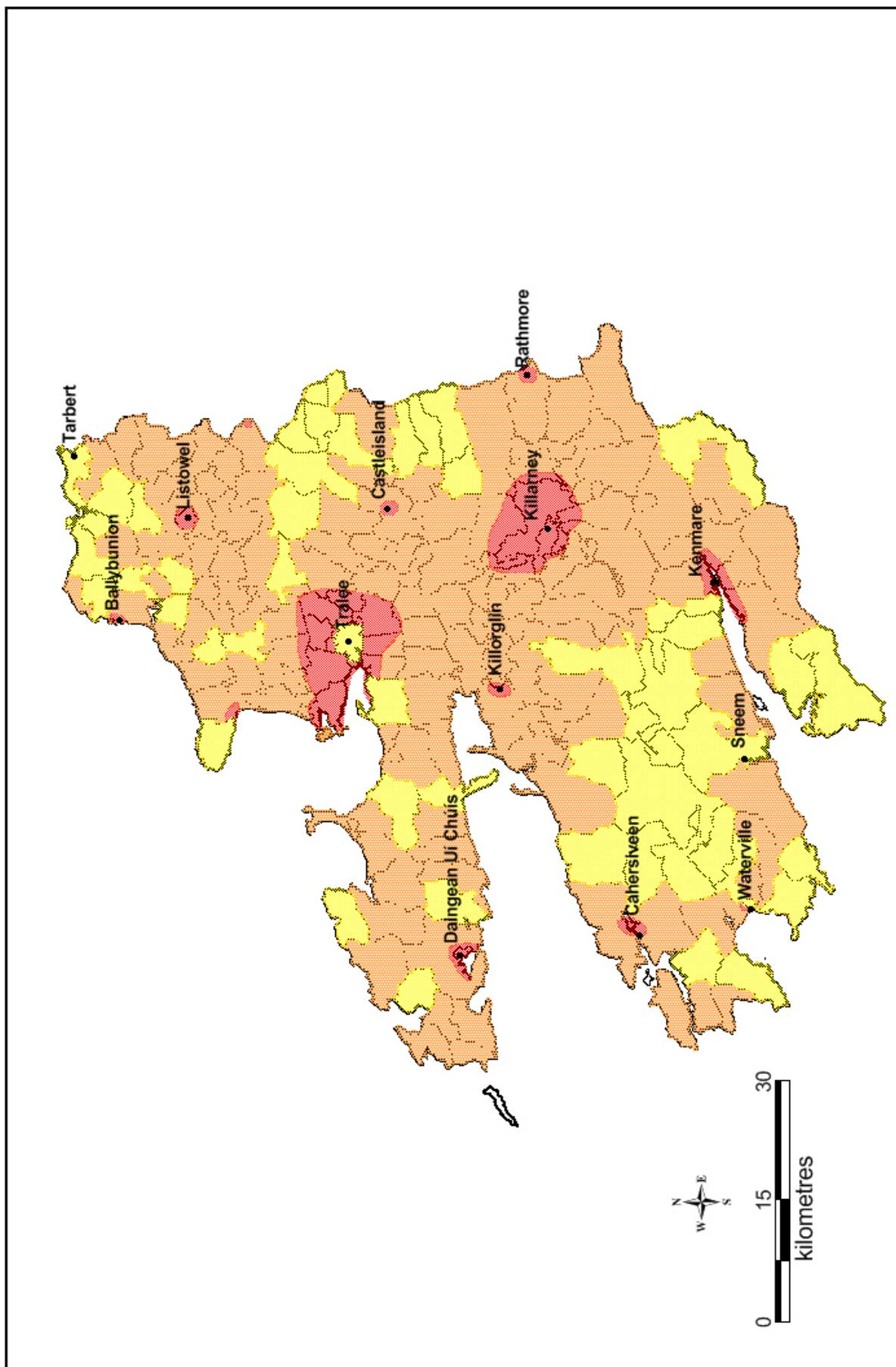
RS-12	Accommodate demand for permanent residential development as it arises subject to good sustainable planning practice in matters such as design, location, waste water treatment and the protection of important landscapes and environmentally sensitive areas.
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AREA 4

Rural Areas With Distinctive Clustered Settlement Patterns

These are rural areas which feature distinctive clustered settlement patterns in the traditional clochan/cluster form. Such settlements are a feature of the Corca Dhuibhne Gaeltacht, but they can also be found in relatively small numbers throughout the County. It is intended that these types will be identified as they exist through the Local Area Plan process.





Map 3.1

Rural Area Types
Cineálacha Ceantar Tuaithe
Léarscill 3.1

Rural Areas under strong urban influence.
Ceantar tuaithe faoi thionchar láidir uisceach.
Stronger Rural Areas
Ceantar tuaithe níos láidre.

3.3.2 Development in Amenity Areas

As outlined in Section 3.3 and in accordance with Objective RS-4 the protection of the landscape is a major factor in developing policies for rural areas. It should be noted that the landscapes and scenery are not just of amenity value but constitute an enormous economic asset. The protection of this asset is therefore of primary importance in developing the potential of the County.

Therefore in addition, to the type of rural areas defined in Section 3.3.1, this Plan also identifies areas which due to their landscape characteristics need an additional policy response. While all landscapes have an amenity value certain landscapes are more sensitive to development than others.

It is important to note that these designations primarily relate to impact on landscape. Other environmental considerations will also have to be taken into account when formulating and assessing development proposals, including the potential for impact on flood risk management, biodiversity, water quality and road safety.

Where there is an overlap between the Rural Area types and the Amenity Areas the policies relating to the Amenity areas shall take precedence.

3.3.2.1 Rural General

These areas constitute the least sensitive landscapes throughout the County and from a visual impact point of view have the ability to absorb a moderate amount of development without significantly altering their character. Residential development in these areas shall be regulated in accordance with the provisions of Section 3.3.1 and objectives RS-1 to RS-4 and Table 3.7 below.

3.3.2.2 Secondary Special Amenity

Areas of Secondary Special Amenity constitute sensitive landscapes which can accommodate a limited level of development. The level of development will depend on the degree to which it can be integrated into the landscape. Residential development in these areas shall be regulated in accordance with the provisions of Section 3.3.1 and Table 3.7 below.

The following provisions shall apply:-

- Individual residential home units shall be designed sympathetically to the landscape and the existing structures and shall be sited so as not to have an adverse impact on the character of the landscape or natural environment.
- Any proposal must be designed and sited so as to ensure that it is not unduly obtrusive. The onus is therefore on the applicant to avoid obtrusive locations. Existing site features including trees and hedgerows should be retained to screen the development.
- Any proposal will be subject to the Development Management requirements set out in this Plan in relation to design, site size, drainage etc.

3.3.2.3 Prime Special Amenity

Prime Special Amenity areas comprise of the outstanding landscapes throughout the County. Rugged mountain ranges, spectacular coastal vistas and unspoilt wilderness areas are some of the features within this designation.

The County enjoys both a national and international reputation for its scenic beauty. It is imperative in order to maintain the natural beauty and character of the County, that these areas be protected.

It is the policy of the Council that development in relation to Prime Special Amenity areas



shall be regulated in accordance with the policies outlined in Section 3.3.1 and Table 3.7 below. For dwellings located on family lands the onus will be on the applicant to satisfy the Planning Authority, with supporting documentation in relation to length of tenure etc.

The following Principles shall apply:-

- The new dwelling shall be located adjacent to, or in suitable location as close as possible to the existing farm structure or family home. Individual residential home units shall be designed sympathetically to the landscape, the existing structures and sited so as not to have an adverse impact on the character of the landscape or natural environment. Existing site features including trees and hedgerows shall be retained to form a part of a comprehensive landscaping scheme.
- Any proposal must be designed and sited so as not to adversely impact on the visual and scenic amenities of the area. The onus is therefore on the applicant to avoid obtrusive locations.
- Any proposal will be subject to the Development Management requirements set out in this plan in relation to design, site size, drainage etc.
- Relevant supporting documentation is required to be submitted.

Subject to the provisions of sections 3.3.4 and 3.3.5, all residential development in rural areas will be for the use as a primary permanent place of residence. In addition it shall be subject to the inclusion of an occupancy clause for a period of 7 years.

PRIME SPECIAL AMENITY	Farm family member engaged in agriculture or horticulture.
SECONDARY SPECIAL AMENITY	Sons and Daughters of the traditional landowner, or a favoured niece or nephew, the land having been in the ownership of the family for in excess of 10 years while being the location of the principal family residence. or The applicant shall demonstrate a genuine rural employment need. or The applicants family shall have lived in the immediate locality prior to Jan 2003 with the applicant having been reared in the locality.
RURAL GENERAL	The proposed dwelling shall be used as a permanent place of residence.

Table 3.7
Amenity Zoning Settlement Policy

3.3.3 Ribbon Development on Approach Roads

Undesirable ribbon development on the approaches to settlements should be avoided in order to protect the fabric of settlements by restricting development on the outskirts of towns and villages. Provision will be made for farmers, members of farm families and people that have spent substantial parts of their lives as part of the established rural community building their first home.



3.3.4 Holiday / Second Homes

For the purpose of this policy, the term holiday home shall refer to all dwellings / residential units / second homes, which are not occupied as the primary place of residence.

The County has experienced extreme pressure for holiday / second homes in recent years, particularly in visually sensitive landscapes.

It is apparent from the Census 2011 that the level of holiday homes in some areas far exceeds the local indigenous population. The overall result of this sporadic one-off development is an incremental deterioration of the visual and in some cases, the ecological qualities of the landscape.

In order to underpin the basis for sustainable long-term economic development of the County, particularly in the rural areas, holiday home developments shall be concentrated in and adjacent to existing towns, villages and settlements thereby minimising the impact on the open landscape. Such developments should respect the existing fabric of the settlement, both in scale and design. The level and scale of development permitted shall relate to the availability of infrastructure and services and to the scale of the existing settlement.

One-off holiday / second homes will not be permitted in rural areas. The replacement, renovation and restoration of existing premises will be considered and encouraged where appropriate.

There is a long established tradition of people who have family ties to rural areas in the County and who return on a frequent basis for weekends, holidays or longer periods. It is considered that these people have established a need for a dwelling in the area.

Consequently, objectives **RS-13, RS- 14 & RS-15** will not apply to:-

- A person who is either a son/daughter of a landowner who was reared in the area.
- Additionally, in the context of the promotion of agri-tourism, consideration will be given to units of holiday accommodation on agricultural holdings which will remain an integral part of the land holding. These units shall be sited within or adjacent to the existing farm complex.

Holiday & Second Homes

It is an objective of the Council to:-

RS-13	Ensure that holiday / second homes are not permitted in the rural landscape.
RS-14	Ensure that holiday / second homes shall be located in established settlements, villages or towns.
RS-15	Ensure that individual holiday home units shall be designed and sited so as not to have an adverse impact on the character of the entire settlement, village, town or natural environment.

3.3.5 Renovation and Restoration of Existing and Vacant Buildings Situated in Rural Areas.

The Planning Authority shall give positive consideration to the renovation and restoration of existing structures and to the completion of derelict and vacant buildings in the rural countryside for use as permanent primary residences and as holiday home accommodation. Consideration will be



related to the specific location and condition of the structure and the scale of any works required to upgrade the structure to modern standards.

Replacement of an existing dwelling house will also be considered where the renovation or restoration of the building is not feasible for structural reasons. The Planning Authority will require a Structural Engineers Report to support this position.

In Prime Special Amenity Areas, however, the renovation or restoration will be confined to dwellings which are to be occupied by a person as their primary place of residence and who are sons and daughters of traditional landholders, the landholding having been in the applicant's or applicant's family's ownership for a period in excess of ten years while being the location of the principal family residence.

The following provisions shall apply:-

- The structure to be restored/renovated shall constitute an identifiable dwelling, with the walls being generally intact.
- In the case of refurbishment and extension proposals, the scale and architectural treatment of proposed works shall be sympathetic to the character of the original structure and the surrounding area including adjoining or nearby development.

Restored or renovated dwellings shall be located where safe access, acceptable wastewater disposal arrangements can be put in place and where specific development objectives outlined in the County Development Plan are not contravened. Where necessary surveys on protected species may need to be undertaken in order to assess the impact of restoration and renovations on these protected species.

The Planning Authority will also consider the limited conversion of outhouses and other structures attached to country houses or other heritage structures where acceptable conservation practice is observed in line with

the other policies and objectives of this Plan, where relevant protected species have been assessed.

The site will be assessed in terms of acceptable site suitability in terms of access, car parking, open space, wastewater disposal and of maintaining the setting and amenities of the main structure.

Any proposal will be subject to the Development Management requirements set out in this Plan.

Restoration & Renovation

It is an objective of the Council to:-

RS-16	Give favourable consideration to applications for the conversion and reuse of existing traditional farm buildings or rural houses. These properties should be structurally intact and exhibit essential physical characteristics of a dwelling house.
RS-17	Resist the demolition and replacement of traditional or vernacular rural housing, whose character merits retention.

3.3.6 Vacant and Incomplete Dwellings in Rural Areas

There are a considerable number of vacant or incomplete one-off houses in rural areas due to the economic downturn and lack of availability of finance. It is a priority of the Council to see the completion and occupation of these dwellings. In order to ensure that these houses are occupied during the lifetime of the Plan, the Council will consider a relaxation of the "occupancy criteria" for such houses in the following circumstances:-

- The owner can satisfy the Planning Authority (in confidence) that financial difficulties exist which require the disposal of the house.
- The intended purchaser can satisfy the Planning Authority that the house will be used as a permanent place of residence.
- The purchaser does not own a house already.
- The sale does not give rise to unsustainable travel, i.e. the purchaser must be within a reasonable distance from place of work.
- This policy will only apply to fully and partially complete houses. Furthermore the sale should not give rise to a subsequent application for another house on the same land holding.

3.4 Urban Settlement Strategy

Aim: To support and enhance the role of towns, to protect their diversity, economic vitality and environmental attributes, which are important for the identity and distinctiveness of towns. To create quality urban places where people want to live, work, visit and socialise, by applying the principles of urban design to the planning and management of urban areas.

3.4.1 Role of the Settlements

Concerns have been raised about the impact of rapid development and expansion on the character of smaller towns and villages through poor urban design and particularly the impact of large housing estates with a standardised urban design approach on the character of towns and villages that have developed slowly and organically over time.

The Local Area Plans for each Municipal District will give guidance on the scale, character, layout and design appropriate to each town and on the timely delivery of both physical and social infrastructure required for the town to achieve its target population and

develop in a sustainable manner.

It is the policy of the Council to prioritise the sustainable development of the main towns in the County to achieve their target populations and enhance their capacity to attract new investment in employment, services and public transport for the benefit of their own populations and that of their rural hinterlands.

Many of the settlements in the County contain areas where flood risk management needs to be taken into consideration when formulating or assessing development proposals. Guidance in relation to this is contained in the 'Natural Environment and Flood Risk Management' Chapter of this document and in the 'Development Management Guidance'.

Urban Housing

It is an objective of the Council to:-

US-1	Ensure that future housing in urban areas in the County is located on lands zoned for residential use. In towns and villages residential development shall be located in town/village centres or immediately adjacent to town/village centres (based on the sequential approach); on serviced lands; and in accordance with the Development Guidance document of this Plan.
US-2	Ensure that any new development in villages and development nodes respects the scale and character of the existing settlement.



3.4.2 Sustainable Residential Communities

It is recognised that the creation of sustainable communities requires more than the provision of housing. While the overall quality of the housing environment is critical, sustainability must also extend beyond the physical environment to embrace the concept of stable, integrated communities.

The Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas DoEHLG (2009), identifies sustainable neighbourhoods as areas where an efficient use of land, high quality urban design and effective integration in the provision of physical and social infrastructure combine to create places people want to live in. In planning for future development through the Local Area Plan process and in assessing future development proposals the Council will seek to implement and promote the series of aims outlined in these Guidelines.

US-4

Promote development which prioritises and facilitates walking, cycling and public transport use in a sustainable manner, both within individual developments and in the wider context of linking developments together and providing connections to the wider area, existing facilities and public transport nodes.

The Guidelines also provide guidance on the appropriate scale of development in towns and villages. Any proposal for development in towns and villages should have due regard to these Guidelines.

3.4.3 Urban/Settlement Regeneration

The 2011 census indicated decreasing population numbers in the urban core areas of both Tralee and Killarney; this is similar to the national trend. In the more remote areas of the County, which tend to have a weak urban fabric of towns and villages and a wide dispersal of housing in the agricultural hinterland, the inherent problems of the current settlement pattern are emphasised. To counterbalance these effects, a very strong network of inter-dependent settlements must be promoted throughout the County in a proactive way.

It is the policy of the Council to recognise and emphasise the potential for greater residential and commercial use within the historic cores of the towns and villages where many opportunities for intensification of residential uses exist.

Sustainable development practices require vacant or derelict sites within urban areas to be developed prior to greenfield sites on the outskirts of urban areas where development of such sites is achievable. The development of derelict sites and under utilised sites and buildings will be encouraged in urban areas in the interest of achieving

Housing

It is an objective of the Council to:-

US-3

Ensure that all new development within the County supports the achievement of sustainable residential communities. The Council will have regard to the provisions of the Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and the accompanying Urban Design Manual.

the most efficient use of urban lands and to stimulate regeneration. It is a policy of the Plan to identify sites in a poor state of repair or neglect under the Derelict Sites Act.

Housing

It is an objective of the Council to:-

Regeneration & Renovation

It is an objective of the Council to:-

US-5	Encourage and stimulate the sustainable re-development and renewal of the town and village cores.
US-6	Support the sustainable development of derelict sites and infill sites in towns and villages and encourage the use of upper floors of retail premises as residential accommodation as a means of providing additional housing and revitalising settlements. Ensure that any such proposals would include adequate provision for waste storage and disposal.
US-7	Ensure that all new urban development is of a high design quality and supports the achievement of successful urban spaces and sustainable communities. The Council will have regard to the provisions of the Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and the accompanying Urban Design Manual.
US-8	Provide additional guidance, including principles and policies, on urban design issues at a local level. Where appropriate Local Area Plans will provide additional guidance in the form of design briefs for important, sensitive or large scale opportunity & development sites.
US-9	Require the submission of design statements with all applications for residential development.

3.4.4 Urban Design

As the majority of future population growth will need to be accommodated in urban areas, it is critical that the Hub towns and the other main towns of the County are in a position to sustain balanced regional development by attracting people and investment.

The quality of the urban environment on offer in these urban areas is critical in this regard and urban design has a key role to play in creating and maintaining successful places. The defining qualities of successful urban places include a pride of place, ease of movement, quality of the public realm and inclusivity.

3.4.5 Village Design & Enhancement

Kerry County Council has sought to improve the overall appearance of the County's towns and villages in recent years through Pride of Place Initiatives, Tidy Towns Initiatives and through policies contained within Local Area Plans and through effective development management and enforcement.

It is the policy of the Council to work closely with local communities in implementing village design plans that have been prepared in a public consultation process whilst ensuring that such plans are consistent with adopted Local Area Plans and development objectives contained in the County Development Plan.



There is need to improve village design in the smaller rural settlements and retail centres. The role of urban design in creating sustainable communities with particular reference to design and layout of housing schemes needs to be promoted. It is an objective, in conjunction with Local Area Plans to produce indicative village design statements in order to encourage sympathetic design of new buildings into established villages or village nuclei.

There is a need to create an overall urban design framework for the (re)development of settlements within the County and the potential for non-statutory guidance – such as design briefs and village design statements – to supplement the Local Area Plans for the County.

Village Design & Enhancement

It is an objective of the Council to:-

US-10	Facilitate and support the implementation of village design statements and other community led projects, in a sustainable manner, to enhance village environments that have been prepared through a public consultation process.
US-11	Produce indicative village design statements in order to encourage sympathetic design of new buildings into established villages or village nuclei.
US-12	Facilitate the inclusion of the principles of inclusiveness, accessibility and “Age Friendly Counties & Towns” in the village design plans.

