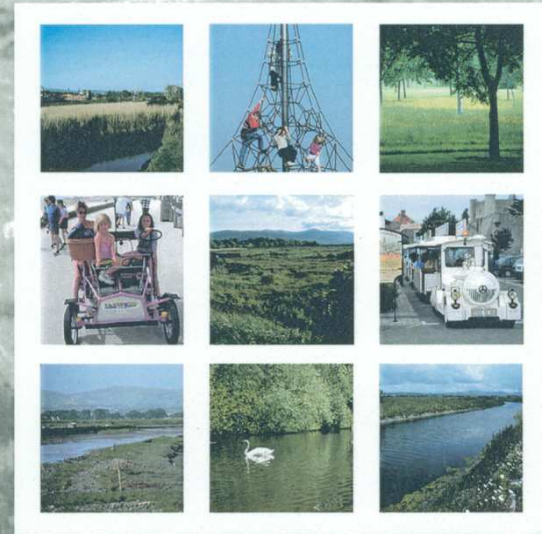


TRALEE LEE VALLEY

Land Use Development Masterplan



Prepared by:

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT INTERNATIONAL
IN
ASSOCIATION WITH
FERGUSON McILVEEN

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Tourism Development International in association with Ferguson McIlveen, were appointed to carry out a Scoping Study and Land Use Plan for Tralee Lee Valley. This area comprises a 170 acre site which is strategically located between the Tralee Aqua Dome and Blennerville Bridge. A significant portion of the land bank (including the former landfill) is currently in public ownership.

The Tralee Lee Valley is not a homogenous area. Apart from the aforementioned landfill, the area comprises the River Lee which is tidal and two (S.A.C.s) Special Areas of Conservation. The northern boundary of the site is determined by the Blennerville - Tralee Ship Canal, a strategically important feature, which is currently under renovation and is scheduled to re-open in 2001. To the south, the site boundary is determined in part by the line of the Blennerville Steam Train. The woodland belt at Ballyard also represents an attractive feature and backdrop.

At its eastern and western extremities, gateways to the site are provided by Tralee Town and Blennerville Village respectively. Significant investment in the tourism product has taken place at both locations over the past decade. Since 1990, over £55m has been invested in a range of tourism products. These include the following: -

- Blennerville Windmill
- Siamse Tire National Folk Theatre
- Geraldine Tralee Visitor Centre
- Kerry County Museum
- Tralee Blennerville Steam Train
- Tralee Aqua Dome
- Jeannie Johnson Reconstruction

The tourism development strategy adopted in relation to Tralee has been tremendously successful. As a result, the town now attracts over half a million visitors annually.

An opportunity now exists to further strengthen the tourism fabric and infrastructure in Tralee, through the implementation of a co-ordinated strategy for Tralee Lee Valley, one of the last remaining sites available for development.

In arriving at the recommendations for Tralee Lee Valley set out in Chapter 5 of this report, the consultants have not only taken into account recent developments as outlined, but have also examined plans for the regeneration of Blennerville Town and the future potential of the Jeannie Johnson sailingship, which is scheduled to sail to North America in the Spring of 2001.

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1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the this Scoping Study and Land Use Plan for Tralee Lee Valley were as follows: -

- The carrying out of a scoping study to identify a range of market led tourism related developments compatible with the characteristics of the site and existing facilities in the surrounding zone.
- The preparation of an overall land use plan, which will suggest the location, scale, budgetary costs and financing sources for the elements identified from the scoping study.

In undertaking the assignment, specific tasks were phased as follows: -

Phase 1

- An assessment of the capability of the existing product range in Tralee to exploit market opportunities.
- Review of potential for further development of tourism in Tralee in the context of projected market trends.
- Identification and prioritisation of potentially suitable products and facilities which are capable of addressing market goals and opportunities and which can be suitably located at this location.

Phase 2

- Based on the research carried out in Phase 1, an integrated land use plan for the development of the site was prepared.

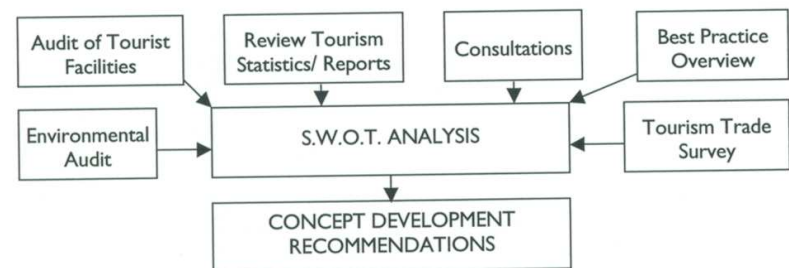
1.3 Methodology

Tourism Development International and Ferguson McIlveen adopted a two staged approach as follows: -

1.3.1 Stage 1 - Scoping Study

In order to fulfil the requirement for a market led approach, the consultants undertook a scoping study which comprised an environmental/ site appraisal of the study area, desk research, primary research with the travel trade, and consultations with the tourism industry and the main public sector development agencies.

Methodology Stage 1 - Scoping Study



On completion of the Scoping Study, the consultants set out preliminary concept development recommendations which were presented to the Tralee Task Force. Broad support for the concept development recommendations was received prior to proceeding with the preparation of the Land Use Masterplan.

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1.3.2 Stage 2 - Integrated Land Use Master Plan

The Integrated Land Use Master Plan for Tralee Lee Valley incorporates the following key elements: -

Methodology Stage 2 Integrated Land Use Master Plan



1.4 Report Format

This report outlines the results of the Scoping Study along with the Land Use Master Plan, and is presented under the following headings: -

- Chapter 2 : The Present Situation
- Chapter 3 : Market Research / Appraisal of Market Potential
- Chapter 4 : S.W.O.T. Analysis
- Chapter 5 : The Future - Development Master Plan
- Chapter 6 : Management Structure
- Chapter 7 : Action Plan

1.5 Acknowledgements

The consultants wish to acknowledge the co-operation of a number of individuals and organisations:

- Tralee Urban District Council
- Kerry County Council
- Tralee Task Force
- Shannon Development
- Kerry County Development Board
- Dúchas

Particular thanks are due to Tralee's hoteliers and representatives of the travel trade who generously gave of their time during this research phase of this project.

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2.0 THE PRESENT SITUATION

2.1 Introduction

While the Tralee Lee Valley has been used as an amenity by a small number of individuals (most notably for walks along the canal tow path), the results from the market research programme, as outlined in Chapter 3, clearly indicate that potential exists to develop the study area and, at the same time, cater for the needs of visitors to Tralee and local residents alike.

The preparation of the Tralee Lee Valley Land Use Plan presents an opportunity for a major sustainable product development initiative for Tralee which, when implemented, can complement existing tourism products, attractions and facilities, and enhance Tralee's appeal as a visitor destination.

In setting out proposals for the Tralee Lee Valley, the consultants also believe that the Land Use Plan for Tralee Lee Valley presents an opportunity for the provision of improved linkages between the two gateways of Blennerville and Tralee and the valley's main attractions.

2.2 Policy Context

As a key requirement in ensuring a market-led approach to the preparation of the Tralee Lee Valley Land Use Plan, Tourism Development International and Ferguson McIlveen undertook a comprehensive review of existing policies, strategies and research relating to Co. Kerry and Tralee in particular. Attention was focused on the following documents: -

- National Development Plan
- Kerry County Development Plan
- Review of Tourism Development Plan for Kerry
- Kerry Initiative for Tourism and the Environment
- North Kerry Enterprise Development Strategy

The key themes to have emerged from this review of policy that have a direct bearing on the preparation of a Land Use Plan for Tralee Lee Valley can be summarised under the following headings: -

2.2.1 National Context

- **Sustainable Tourism Development**

Landscape, heritage, culture, the environment, a relaxed lifestyle and a warm welcome will remain at the core of Ireland's attraction to tourists. The key to nurturing this attraction will be a policy of sustainable tourism development, involving local destinations and local communities.

- **Visitor Management and Spatial Spread**

National tourism policy over the next decade will focus on encouraging the emergence of alternative growth centres such as Tralee and promoting better management in established areas. Developing tourism centres like Tralee, have the highest potential for sustainable growth.

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- **Seasonal Extension**

Market opportunities exist to capitalise on special interest and activity tourism, which have the potential to extend the tourism season. Product gaps currently exist however and activities such as walking and cycling are likely to be important targets for grant aid.

- **Visitor Attractions**

Policies in relation to visitor attractions are more likely to focus resources on the improvement and upgrading of existing attractions rather than the development of new attractions. In this regard, there is a requirement for future investment to focus on communications, off peak opening and facilities that will appeal to families.

- **Infrastructure and Services**

There is an urgent requirement to improve environmental services, with litter and water quality being particular concerns. Infrastructural weaknesses are also evident, with scope existing to improve roads, signposting and traffic management.

2.2.2 Regional / Local Context

- A significant conclusion arising from the *Kerry Initiative for Tourism and the Environment* was that County Kerry currently does not meet with sustainable tourism criteria.
- There is clear evidence that tourists expectations are not being met and that tourism is not enhancing the standard of living of the entire community.

- There is an uneven spatial distribution of tourism in County Kerry.
- Ancillary facilities for specialist activity holidaymakers and visitors interested in participating in activities, do not meet international standards.
- Notwithstanding the significant levels of investment in the tourism product in Tralee that have taken place over the last decade, Tralee is not a particularly “user friendly” destination. Visitors are currently over reliant on cars to gain access to the town’s main attractions. Linkages between the main sites and attractions in Tralee and Blennerville are poor.
- The Jeannie Johnson Project and the planned refurbishment of the Tralee Blennerville Ship Canal are major developments that have the potential to further strengthen Tralee’s appeal as a visitor destination.
- Opportunities exist to establish Tralee as a gateway to North/West Kerry and provide visitors with an overview through high quality orientation facilities.
- There is need for a more co-ordinated approach to be adopted to the marketing of Tralee as a visitor destination. The development of the Tralee Lee Valley in a sustainable way will address current product gaps and broaden the appeal of Tralee as a visitor destination.
- A new organisational structure will be necessary to oversee the implementation of a sustainable master plan for Tralee Lee Valley and deliver a co-ordinated marketing strategy for Tralee.

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2.3 Tralee Visitor Attractions

In 1999, Tourism Development International carried out a fifth instalment of the *Visitor Attractions Survey*. Amongst the key findings to have emerged from this survey are as follows: -

- Visitor attendances nationally grew by 24% to 12.6 million visits between 1997 and 1999.
- Shannon region achieved above average growth (32%) thereby increasing its share of visits from 13% to 14%.
- Despite the increase in visitation to Tralee attractions between 1997 and 1999, Tralee's share of Shannon region visits has declined from 14% to 11%.
- There is some evidence of displacement, with visits to Jeannie Johnson occurring at the expense of other attractions.
- Changes in visitor profile reflect changes nationally, with growth in the North American and British markets.

Further investment is now required (in the Blennerville attractions in particular) and in the surrounding infrastructure, in order to facilitate the emergence of a visitor attractions portfolio with a more rounded appeal and one capable of recapturing lost market share.

2.4 SITE CONTEXT

2.4.1 Tralee's Lee Valley is an area on the periphery of the town. The flat floodplain is recognised by the Special Area of Conservation designation for its habitat value but is not fully exploited for its strategic location between the town, the port of Blennerville and the sea. The development of the Aquadome has put down a marker for the future recreation potential of the valley.

Looking to the future the development of housing south of the river and to the west of the town will put the valley in a different context. It will become a corridor between built up areas and can act either as a barrier to interaction between them or as a unifying component for the expanding urban area.

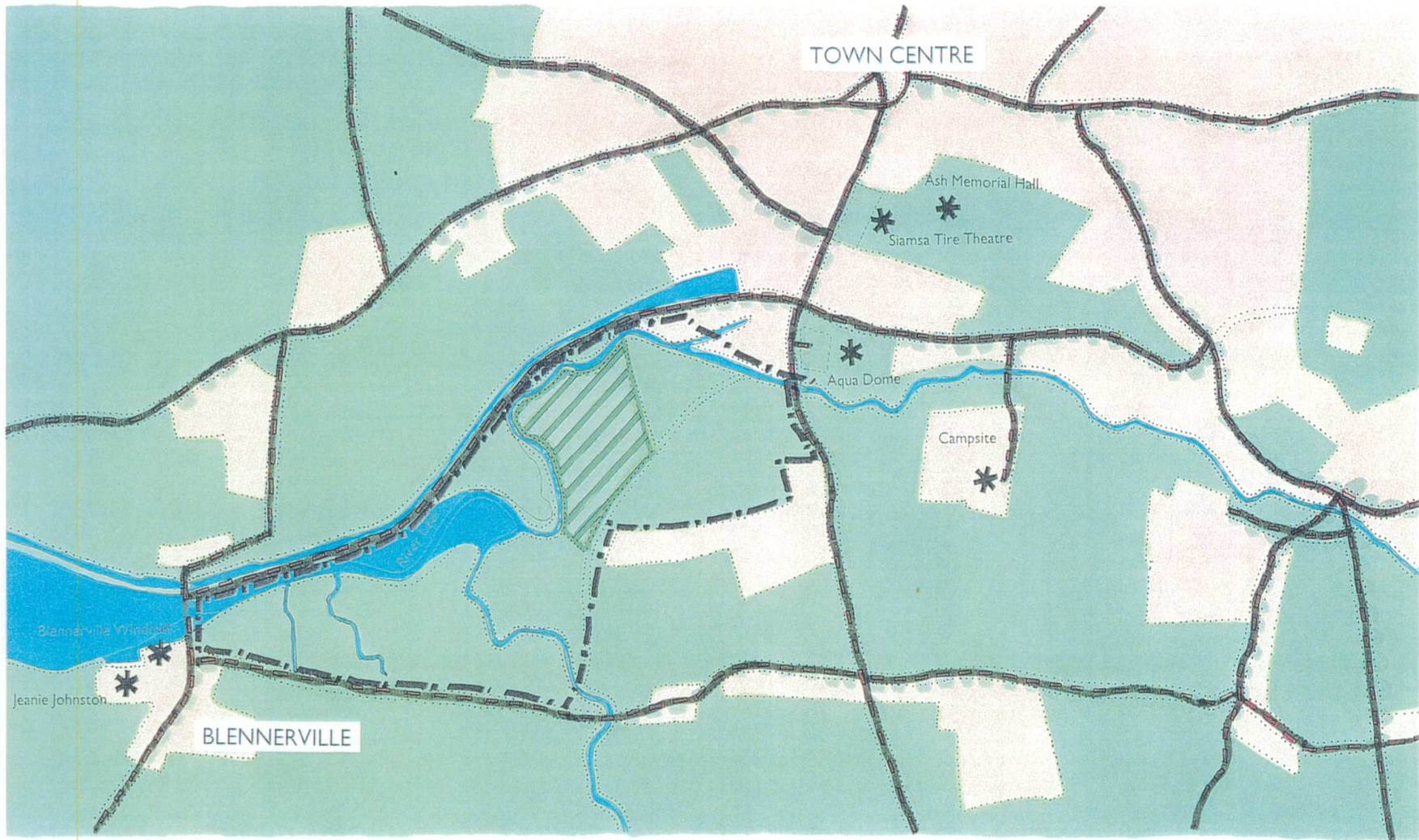
2.4.2 Key factors about the site that have influenced the masterplan proposals:

- The Special Area of Conservation, which is protected from inappropriate development but has the potential to be made more accessible and developed as an educational resource.
- The former landfill site, which lies above the floodplain and is visually intrusive. Development is restricted by the ground conditions but, once capped, the site has recreation/amenity potential.
- The woodland backdrop to the valley at Ballyard, which is a major site asset should be retained and reinforced.
- The land north of the canal, which is currently in agricultural use and offers the potential for formal recreation/sports provision.
- Land zoned for new development, which impinges further on the river setting and valley. The relationship between this development and the vision for the site is important.







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- The Town Park, which is a wonderful asset but is somewhat isolated. The opportunity to expand and integrate it into a wider open space network should be considered. Its civic and cultural role within the town could be enhanced.
- The River Lee Valley, The Town Park and the adjacent undeveloped land which offer an opportunity to create a network of open spaces and public thoroughfares linking housing with schools, the town centre and other facilities.
- Blennerville which is a distinct settlement and its character should be protected and enhanced. It is isolated from Tralee Town. The establishment of new linkages will be important.

EXISTING SITE CONTEXT



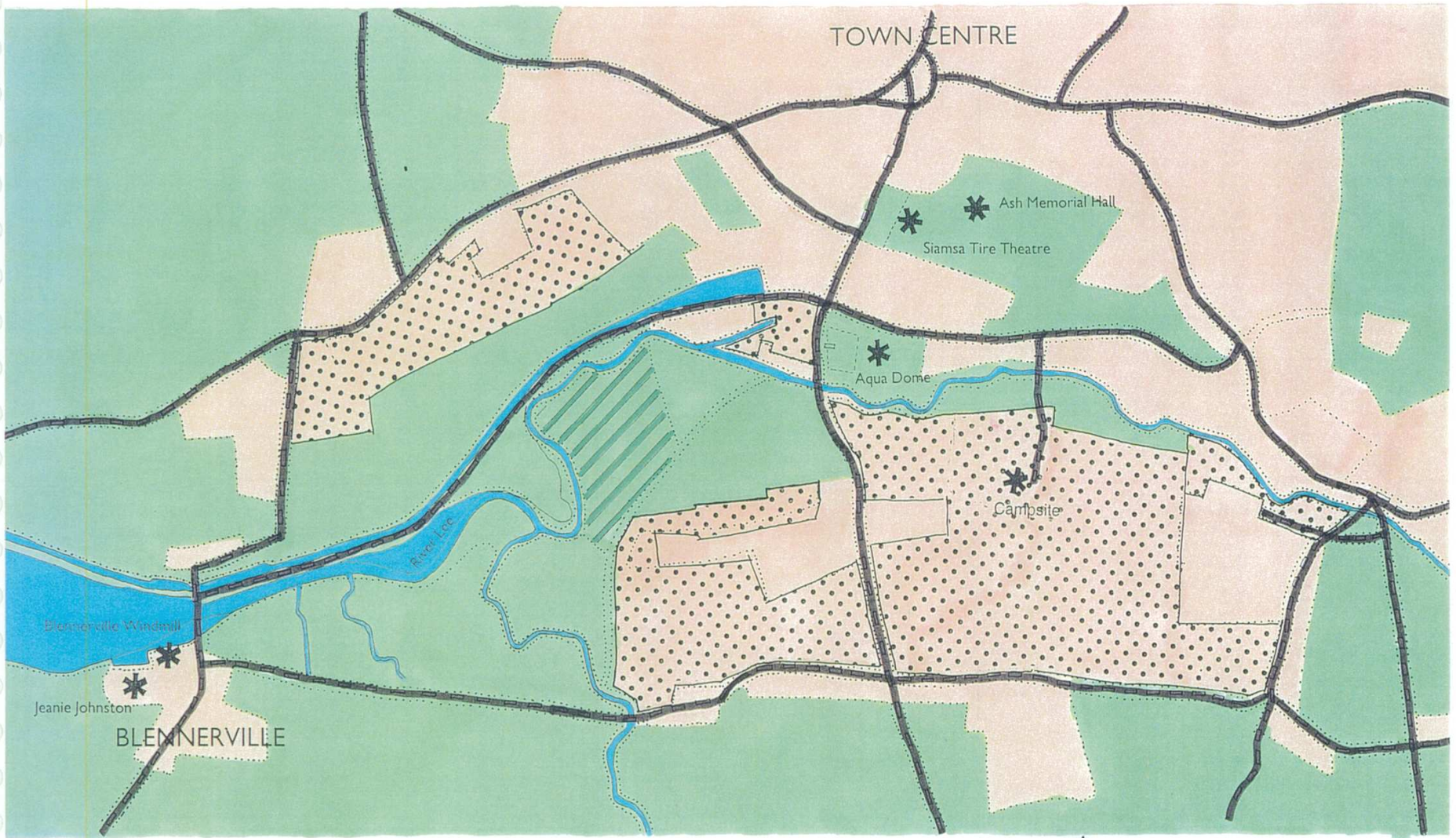
KEY

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
|  Open space |  Roads |  Landfill |
|  Built up area or being developed |  Key destinations |  Study area – Site boundary |



**FERGUSON
MCILVEEN**

FUTURE SITE CONTEXT



NORTH

FERGUSON
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3.0 MARKET RESEARCH / APPRAISAL OF MARKET POTENTIAL

The preparation of a Land Use Plan for Tralee Lee Valley called for a market led approach. The results of this research are set out below:

3.1 Consultations

There is widespread support amongst the main state agencies and tourism product providers in Tralee for the proposed development of Tralee Lee Valley. When presented with an outline of the concept development proposals at a focus group discussion, Tralee's hoteliers were strongly supportive of the proposed approach set out by the consultants.

The key issues identified in the course of the consultations can be summarised as follows: -

- Investment is required in activities and "more things to do" in order to retain visitors in the town and extend the average length of stay.
- At a broader level, there is a need to address the "software" aspects of tourism in Tralee (i.e. visitor arrival, streetscapes, signage, etc.) and address the problems of traffic congestion in and around the town.
- There is need for an integrated approach to the management and marketing of Tralee's Attractions.
- Future development of the tourism product and infrastructure must take into account the needs of the community, particularly in relation to the provision of amenities, recycling facilities and educational facilities.
- Resources should be allocated to strengthening existing tourism products in Tralee, rather than the development of new facilities.
- Development of the Tralee Lee Valley should have a strong environmental focus, and should seek to enhance its scenic appeal, which is currently quite unattractive in parts.
- An opportunity exists to strengthen linkages between Tralee and Blennerville through the provision of walking routes, cycle paths, a canal water bus, and the Steam Train.

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Travel Trade Survey

A survey of 20 travel trade executives in Ireland's Main Source Markets during the Spring of 2000. The objective of this survey was to establish trade perceptions and opinions of Tralee as a visitor destination, and to elicit opinion on ways in which Tralee Lee Valley could be developed to cater for the needs of visitors.

The key findings from the Travel Trade Survey can be summarised as follows:

1 Tralee as a Visitor Destination

- The strategic location of Tralee as a "gateway" to other parts of County Kerry, together with the town's compact size, were identified as its main strengths.
- The Rose of Tralee Association/Festival of Kerry, and Siamse Tire were identified as the unique aspects of Tralee as a visitor destination.
- By contrast, Tralee's proximity to the high profile tourism resort of Killarney, perceived weak accommodation base, and poor marketing were identified as its main weaknesses.

TRAVEL TRADE SURVEY

Tralee's Main Strengths as a Tourist Destination

	<u>Responses</u>
• Nice/Small/Compact Town	9
• Well Located	9
• Scenery/Dingle Peninsula/Ring of Kerry	6
• Good Facilities	4
• Traditional Culture	3
• Not Too Crowded	3
• Coastal Location	3
• Close to Airport	2
• Golf	2
• Access by Train/Bus	2
• Kerry the Kingdom Attraction	1
• Gaelic Football	1
• Suitable for Cycling	1

TRAVEL TRADE SURVEY

Tralee's Main Weaknesses as a Tourist Destination

	<u>Responses</u>
• None	5
• Proximity to Killarney/Competition with Killarney	5
• Poor/Little Accommodation - No 4/5 Star Hotel	4
• Poorly Marketed	3
• Few Bus Tours	1
• Poor Transport Facilities	1
• Litter/could be cleaner	1
• Heavy Traffic	1

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3.2.2 Rating of Tourism Product and Infrastructure

- While a majority of trade representatives commended Tralee for its overall atmosphere, there was a consensus that scope exists to improve aspects of the tourism product and infrastructure in the town.
- In terms of suggested products/infrastructural interventions which would enhance the overall visitor experience of Tralee, the main suggestions made by the travel trade relate to the provision of more accommodation, and more activities/attractions.
- The travel trade, however, cautioned against over development of Tralee, and urged protection of its more traditional features.

TRAVEL TRADE SURVEY

Rating of Aspects of the Tourism Product/Infrastructure in Tralee

	Overall Atmosphere	Accommodation	Visitor Attractions	Visitor Info Services	Events	Entertainment Provision	Signage
Very Good	14	7	8	5	8	4	0
Good	10	10	11	14	13	15	16
Fair	1	6	4	1	1	1	3
Poor/Very Poor	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
No Reply	-	-	-	4	2	3	5

TRAVEL TRADE SURVEY

Rating of Aspects of the Tourism Product/Infrastructure in Tralee (Cont'd)

	Coach Parking	Car Parking	Restaurants	Walking Routes	Shopping	Environment/Scenery
Very Good	1	0	4	5	3	19
Good	8	8	9	9	10	4
Fair	2	2	4	0	2	0
Poor/Very Poor	0	0	0	0	0	0
No reply	13	14	7	10	12	1

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3.2.3 Interest in Features, Visitor Services and Infrastructure

- Of the various features proposed for Tralee Lee Valley, the travel trade expressed the highest degree of interest in facilities for “activity” holidaymakers (i.e. equestrian, walking, angling, etc.) and boat trips on the canal.
- The provision of an integrated signage, visitor information, seating and picnic areas, and well maintained public toilets, were identified as the infrastructural features and visitor services which should be given priority at Tralee Lee Valley.
- There was broad consensus within the travel trade that the development of the Tralee Lee Valley according to the principles of sustainable development would greatly benefit Tralee, and strengthen its appeal as a visitor destination.
- In developing the study area, the travel trade urged that a balance be struck between the preservation and enhancement of the environment, and the provision of more activities and things to do for visitors.

TRAVEL TRADE SURVEY

Recommendations Regarding Visitor Services/Infrastructure

	Very Important	Quite Important	Not Interested/No Reply
• Visitor Information Point	9	13	2
• Interactive Information Point	7	15	2
• Static Interpretation	6	17	1
• Signage	15	9	-
• Seating	13	10	1
• Picnic Areas	10	6	8
• Litter Collection	24	0	-
• Toilets	24	0	-
• Electric Powered People Mover	7	8	9
• Park and Ride Facilities	5	12	7
• Creche/Childminding Centre	3	6	15

TRAVEL TRADE SURVEY

Types of Facilities/Features would like to see incorporated into Land Use Plan

• Good Shops/Restaurants/Parking	5
• Outdoor Activities - Golf/Fishing	4
• Craft Village/Heritage Sites	3
• Retain Traditional Culture	2
• Visitor Centre	2
• Traditional Look to Buildings	2
• Leave as a Park/Nature Park/Don't Over Develop	2
• Walking Trails	1
• Natural History	1

TRAVEL TRADE SURVEY

Interest in Features Proposed

	Very Interested	Quite Interested	Not Interested/No Reply
• Landscaped Parks/Gardens	6	17	1
• Formal Gardens	6	17	1
• Nature Reserve	8	10	6
• Visitor Farm (Organic Farm)	7	8	9
• Activities (i.e. Equestrian, Angling, etc.)	11	8	6
• Sports Facilities (e.g. Par 3 Golf, Tennis, etc.)	3	11	10
• Theme Park	1	9	14
• Water Park	3	11	10
• Canal Boat Trips	10	13	1
• Children's Play Area	6	14	4
• Outdoor Entertainment	4	18	2
• Model Village	4	12	8
• Restaurants/Bars	8	10	6
• Speciality Shopping	7	11	6

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3.3 Guide Books Review

It is clear from a review of the main guidebooks and tourist literature, that Tralee is perceived as a point of orientation and/or day visitor destination. The town's strategic location as a gateway is recognised, and offers an opportunity for further exploitation.

TRALEE - WHAT THE GUIDE BOOKS SAY

- "E.U. development funds have gone towards creating new splashy attractions"
Lets Go Ireland
- "Outdoor activities are very much a way of life in the South West and, like everything else around the region. Such activities are undertaken casually and informally, with a minimum of organisation"
Fodors
- "Tralee, the county town, is situated at the head of Tralee Bay, and the North East corner of the magnificent Dingle Peninsula".
Shell Guide to Ireland
- "Tralee is now an important gateway for local tourism"
Local Ireland Accommodation Guide
- "Visitors perceive Tralee as an unwelcome return to urban reality"
Lets Go Ireland
- "Tralee is neither especially charming nor picturesque"
Lets Go Ireland

TRALEE LEE VALLEY

W.O.T. ANALYSIS

Findings of the market research programme, environmental audit, and other findings are summarised below in the form of a SWOT Analysis that takes account of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relating to the study area.

Working out the optimum approach to the development of Tralee Lee Valley and the parameters for the Land Use Plan, two issues arise:

Firstly, how can the *Tralee Lee Valley Land Use Plan* serve to address Tralee's current weakness, and convert these weaknesses into strengths.

Secondly, how can the *Tralee Lee Valley Land Use Plan* best capitalise on Tralee's strengths by taking advantage of the market opportunities that currently exist?

Converting Weakness Into Strengths

Implementation of the Tralee Lee Valley Land Use Plan will not address all of the weaknesses as a visitor destination. However, given the optimum strategic approach, there are certain weaknesses that can not only be corrected, but, in the circumstances, can be converted into strengths.

It is recommended that the strategy should focus on the following weaknesses:

<u>Weaknesses</u>		<u>Measures to convert weaknesses to strengths</u>
poor signage	→	Integrated signage strategy for study area and Tralee town
poor linkages between Tralee and Blennerville	→	Development of walking trails, raised walkways over inter tidal areas, cycle paths, and canal boat trips between Tralee and Blennerville
limited scenic appeal	→	Landscaping of landfill, tree planting, creation of lake, nature /conservation zone.

STRENGTHS (Tralee)

- Strategic location
- Good facilities (attractions, pubs, restaurants)
- Compact town/size/good atmosphere
- Coastal
- Good access (air rail/road)
- Base for activities (golf, walking)
- Caters for a range of different market segments
- Nature and conservation
- Tralee Bay
- County capital
- Unified approach to tourism development

WEAKNESSES (Tralee)

- Marketing not co-ordinated
- Transport facilities
- Poor signage
- Poor linkages between Tralee and Blennerville
- Limited scenic appeal of Tralee Lee Valley/unattractive
- Poor road conditions (Tralee to Blennerville/Dingle)
- "Software" aspects of tourism (visitor arrival, streetscapes etc)
- Traffic congestion
- Accommodation
- Proximity to Killarney
- Underperformance of Blennerville attractions

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By addressing these weaknesses directly, using the measures outlined, the strategy will also go some way towards tackling other weaknesses. For example, strengthening the linkages between Tralee and Blennerville, will provide a boost to its visitor attractions. Similarly, the provision of walking routes and cycle trails for visitors (allied to the ample provision of parking facilities outside the town centre) will help alleviate traffic congestion in the study area.

TRALEE LEE VALLEY

! Matching Strengths with Opportunities

Tralee has a number of strengths which can be capitalised on to take advantage of opportunities in the market place.

<u>Strengths</u>		<u>Opportunity</u>
• S.A.C.s/nature/Tralee Bay	→	Growing interest in nature and conservation.
• Strategic location/base for activities	→	Growing interest in activity participation.
• Unified approach/track record in tourism development	→	Integrated management approach.

The study area has a number of S.A.C.s which combined with natural habitats of Tralee Bay represent distinctive assets. For Tralee to capitalise on these strengths and cater for the growing interest in nature and conservation, it will be necessary to improve visitor access to the relevant areas of interest and provide basic interpretation facilities.

Tralee is strategically located and has the potential to establish itself as a base for activity holidaymakers. (The town is already a popular base for visiting friends). To cater for the growing interest in activity participation by visitors and the local community, investment will be required to strengthen the infrastructure. In Tralee Lee Valley the promoters have an ideal opportunity to develop walking routes and cycle trails and dedicated facilities (ie equipment, maps, guides, orientation information) for specialist activity visitors.

Tralee Task Force has a successful track record in tourism product development. An opportunity now exists to extend this co-operation through the adoption of an integrated approach to visitor management.

The Development Master Plan for Tralee Lee Valley will address the issue of visitor management through a range of initiatives, including improved signage, parking provision and transport.

OPPORTUNITIES (Tralee)

- Environmental enhancement
- Strengthen linkages
- Growing interest in nature and conservation
- Strengthen activity provision
- Cater for community needs
- Gateway/orientation for Dingle/North Kerry
- Jeannie Johnson Project
- Canal/canal basin
- Visitor management solutions/sustainable development
- Integrated management approach
- Co-ordinated marketing
- Achieve extension to tourism season

THREATS (Tralee)

- Competition from nearby attractions
- Changing customer tastes
- Failure to take into account needs of host community
- Lifecycle of visitor attractions/failure to upgrade
- Failure to implement litter control/protect the environment
- Failure to upgrade infrastructure
- Inflation
- Staffing/customer care/service quality
- Funding availability

TRALEE LEE VALLEY

5.0 THE LANDUSE DEVELOPMENT MASTERPLAN

5.1 Introduction

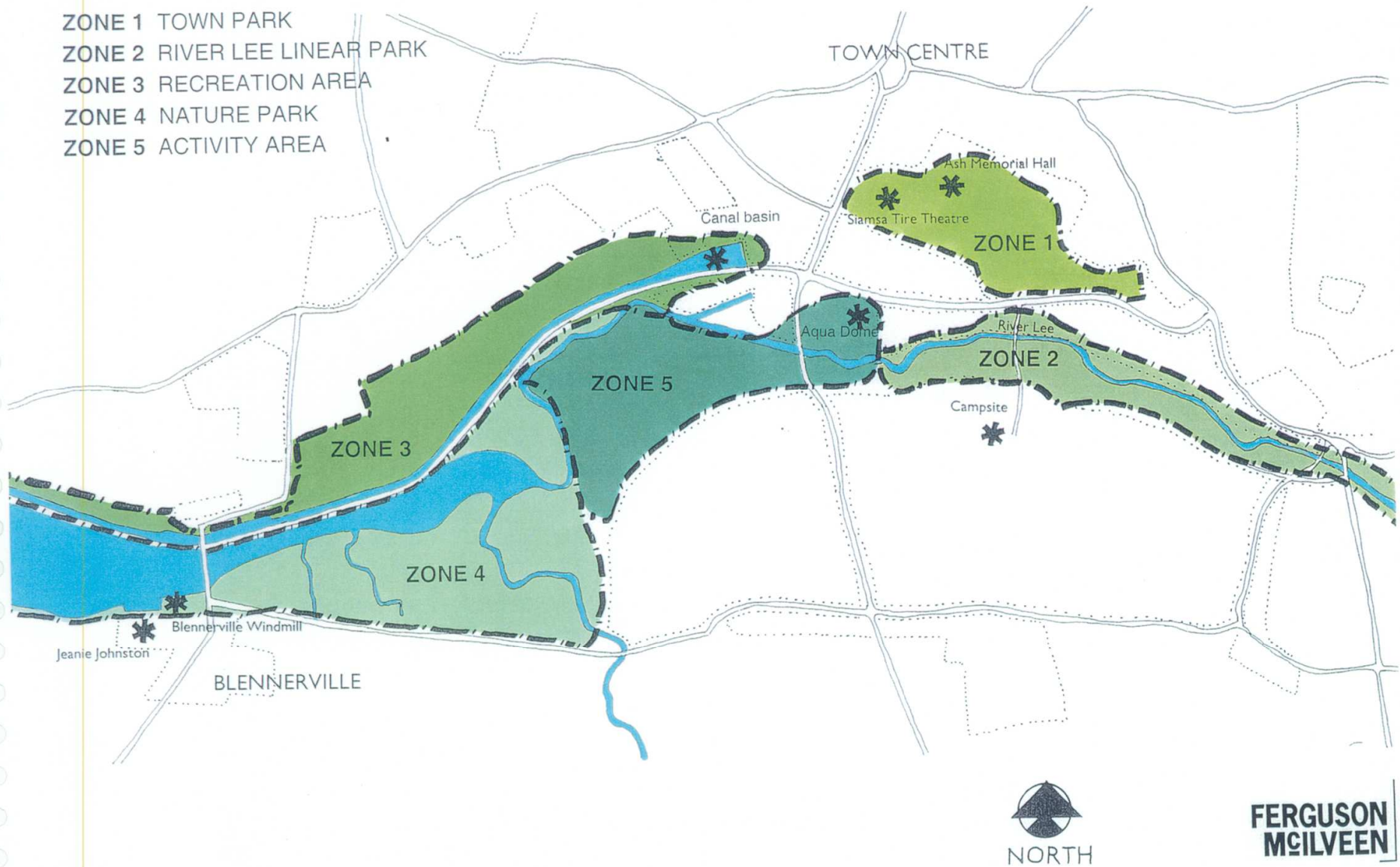
- 5.1.1 The masterplan has been developed in response to two key elements of this study. Market research, and a review of the existing natural and built environment.
- 5.1.2 The masterplan is intended to be flexible. It is not a rigid guide to development but rather a logical framework which can accommodate additional activities and change.
- 5.1.3 The market research and site appraisal identified a number of key objectives which have been incorporated into the plan.
- The need to improve linkages between key destinations.
 - The need to protect and enhance the environmental quality of the area.
 - The need to provide new facilities for children and families.
 - The need to provide facilities for both visitors and the host community.
 - The need for proposals to be both environmentally and economically sustainable.
 - The need to create clusters of similar activities, being mindful of long term maintenance and management.

5.2 Development Opportunities

- 5.2.1 The following key opportunities have been identified and incorporated into the proposals.
- To develop the natural resource of the river and estuary as a nature park and educational facility.
 - To create an environmental buffer zone on the landfill site between the estuary and the activity areas.
 - To develop the landfill site and adjacent lands for active play.
 - To link this area with the Aquadome and its new outdoor facilities.
 - To develop the canal and the flatlands to the north for formal recreational use.
 - To develop the river valley as a linear park, creating a public thoroughfare linking housing with schools, shops and community facilities.
 - To establish the Town Park as the focal point for cultural and civic events.
 - To establish a network of paths and cycleways linking key activity areas together, to the rest of the town and beyond.
 - To develop other forms of linkages between facilities including the possibility of a land train and canal waterbus.
 - To incorporate the principles of environmental best practice into the design and development of the area.

ZONAL PLAN

- ZONE 1 TOWN PARK
- ZONE 2 RIVER LEE LINEAR PARK
- ZONE 3 RECREATION AREA
- ZONE 4 NATURE PARK
- ZONE 5 ACTIVITY AREA



TRALEE LEE VALLEY

5.3 Zonal Approach

- 5.3.1 Clusters of similar activities, existing and new, should be established in response to the physical characteristics of the site and its surroundings. This allows for the best use of visitor services such as car parking, toilets, changing and refreshment facilities.
- 5.3.2 In clustering activities within the context of the site and immediate surroundings a number of distinct zones have been identified. These are:
- The Town Park
 - The River Lee Linear Park
 - The Recreation Area
 - The Nature Park
 - The Activities Area

These zones together make up “The Tralee Leisure Park” our working title for the overall project.

5.4 Linkages

- 5.1.2 Tralee Town and Blennerville have a number of very distinctive and successful visitor attractions. Physical connections between them are however poor and the plan seeks to address this issue by the provision of an integrated network of linkages which will include:
- Pedestrian Routes
 - Cycle Routes
 - Canal Boats
 - Steam Train/Cycle Buggies
 - Land Train
 - Access Roads and Car Parks

These will be integrated with each other, with public transport and other local and national routes. The linkages are the arteries which connect the zones together drawing people between complementary attractions in a way that is both practical and enjoyable.

The key objectives of the linkages strategy are as follows;

- To encourage visitors to stay longer by improving the physical connections between the key visitor attractions.
- To encourage visitors to leave their cars/buses at one location and use a range of more sustainable travel options to move between attractions.
- To develop a network of safe pleasant pathways.
- To develop a network of safe pleasant cycleways.
- To consider the introduction of a land train/people mover.
- To consider the introduction of a waterbus on the canal between the canal basin and the Blennerville Bridge.
- To further develop the use of the steam train and tracks.
- To consider the use of pedal buggies on the existing tracks.
- To integrate the linkages strategy with other transportation nodes and with transportation policies within the town.
- To develop a clear comprehensive map of the town which indicates key destinations and links.
- To develop an integrated ticketing system linking visitor attractions and the use of the land train, waterbus or steam train.
- To encourage the private sector to provide bike hire facilities including four wheel bikes.
- To consider private sector involvement in some or all of the other links.

TRALEE LEE VALLEY

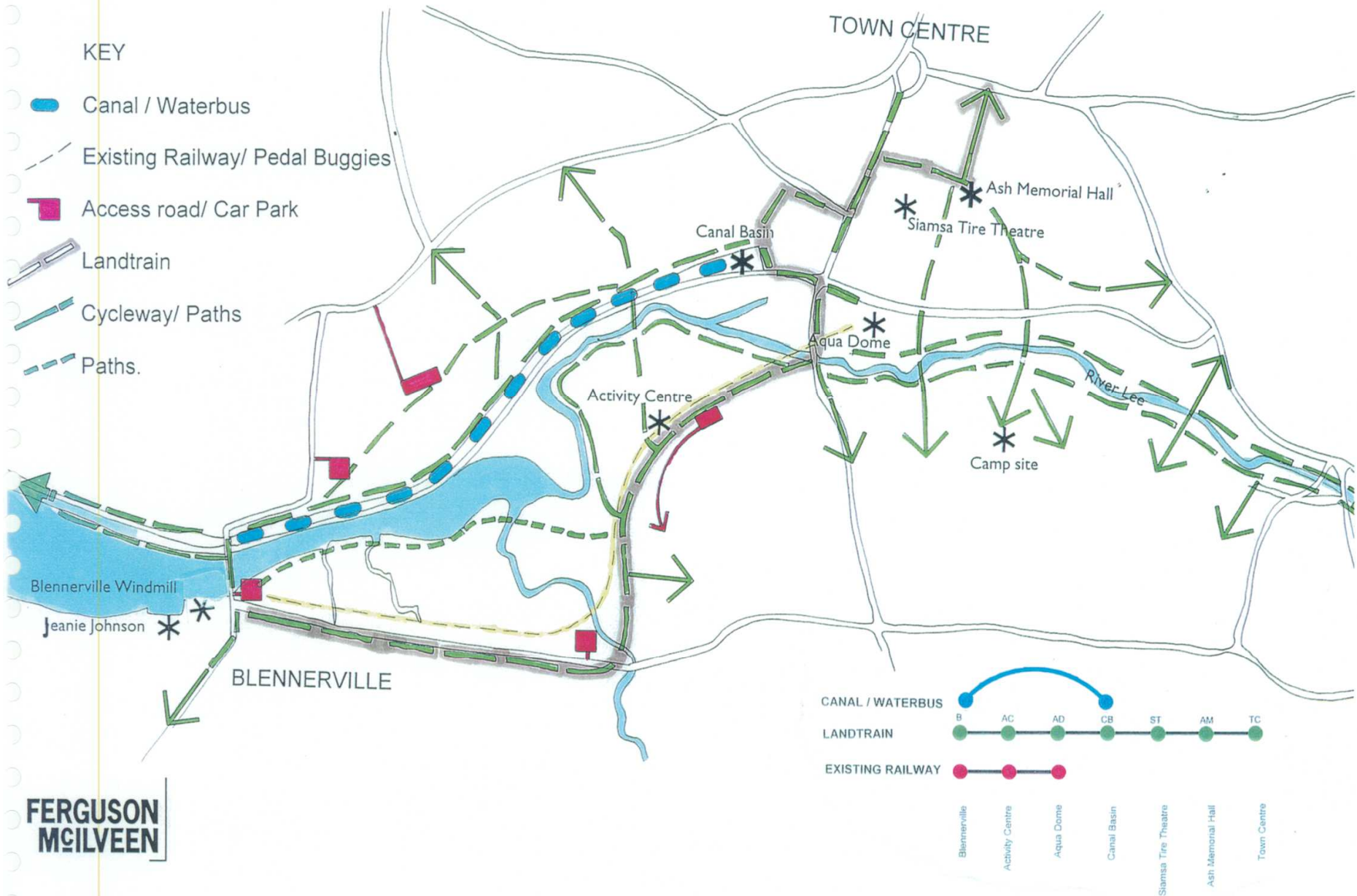


5.4 LINKAGES

- 4 Wheel Bikes
- Pedal Buggies
- Cycleways
- Land Train
- Canal Bus
- Steam Train
- Bridalway



PROPOSED ACCESS & CIRCULATION LINKAGES



TRALEE LEE VALLEY

5.5 Environmental Best Practice

5.5.1 This should be a national flagship project, in terms of environmental best practice. The highest standards should be incorporated into the project from the design stage throughout construction, and in long term maintenance and management. This will include:

- Use of renewable energy
- Use of local/indigenous materials
- Use of recycled materials
- Recycling of materials
- A biodiversity strategy

5.5.2 Energy

It is intended that the site should seek to generate all its own energy requirements. The use of a number of potential energy sources should be investigated further:

- Methane Gas from the landfill (short-term)
- Wind Power
- Solar Power
- Bio-Mass from willow production

The use of renewable energy is a natural continuation of the area's historic use of wind power.

5.5.3 The incorporation of a recycling facility within the site should be considered. Waste originating on the site should be recycled in situ. For example the use of reed beds has proved effective in dealing with sewage effluent.

5.5.4 All facilities require ongoing maintenance and management. This masterplan seeks to minimise on going cost and introduce environmentally sound best practice. The balance between "natural and maintained" needs to be clear or the perception will be one of neglect. "Ownership" of the project's objective by those who ultimately will be responsible for the long term management is essential. They must participate in the design and development process.

5.6 Education/Community

5.6.1 The site has great potential both as a visitor attraction and also as an educational resource for young and old alike. Some themes and links to be pursued include:

- Nature Conservation
- Renewable Energy
- Art and Culture
- Traditional Skills and Craft
- Recycling

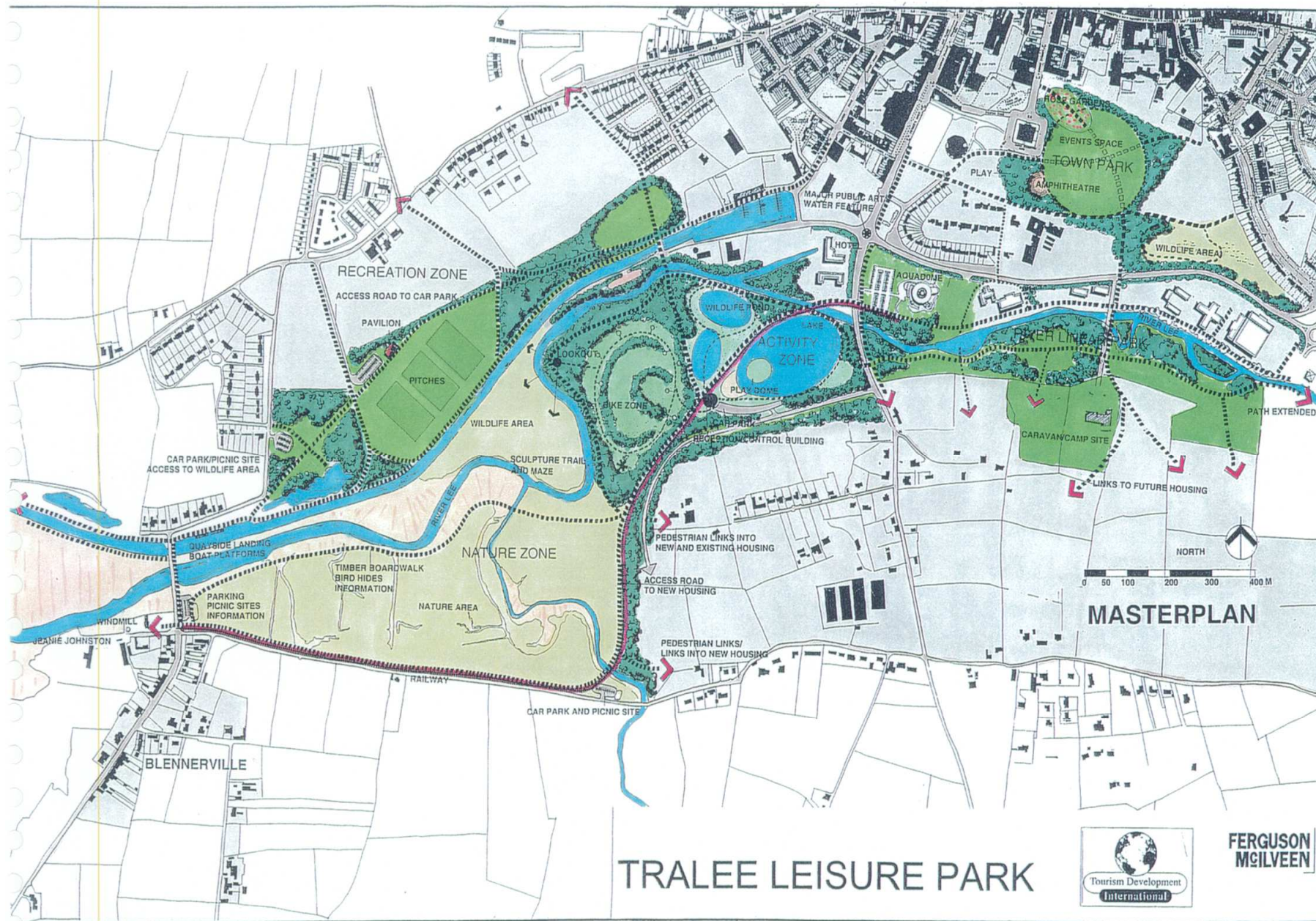
5.6.2 While many of the existing facilities have been designed and developed to meet the needs of visitors, the new facilities and linkages will also service the needs of the local community, making better use of the facilities on a year round basis. At all stages of the project the local community should be encouraged to participate in its development.

5.6.3 The requirements of disabled people should also be an integral part of the development process.

5.7 Private Sector

The proposals will create or further develop a number of opportunities for the private sector including:

- Bicycle Hire
- Accommodation
- Water Bus
- Catering
- Land Train



TRALEE LEE VALLEY



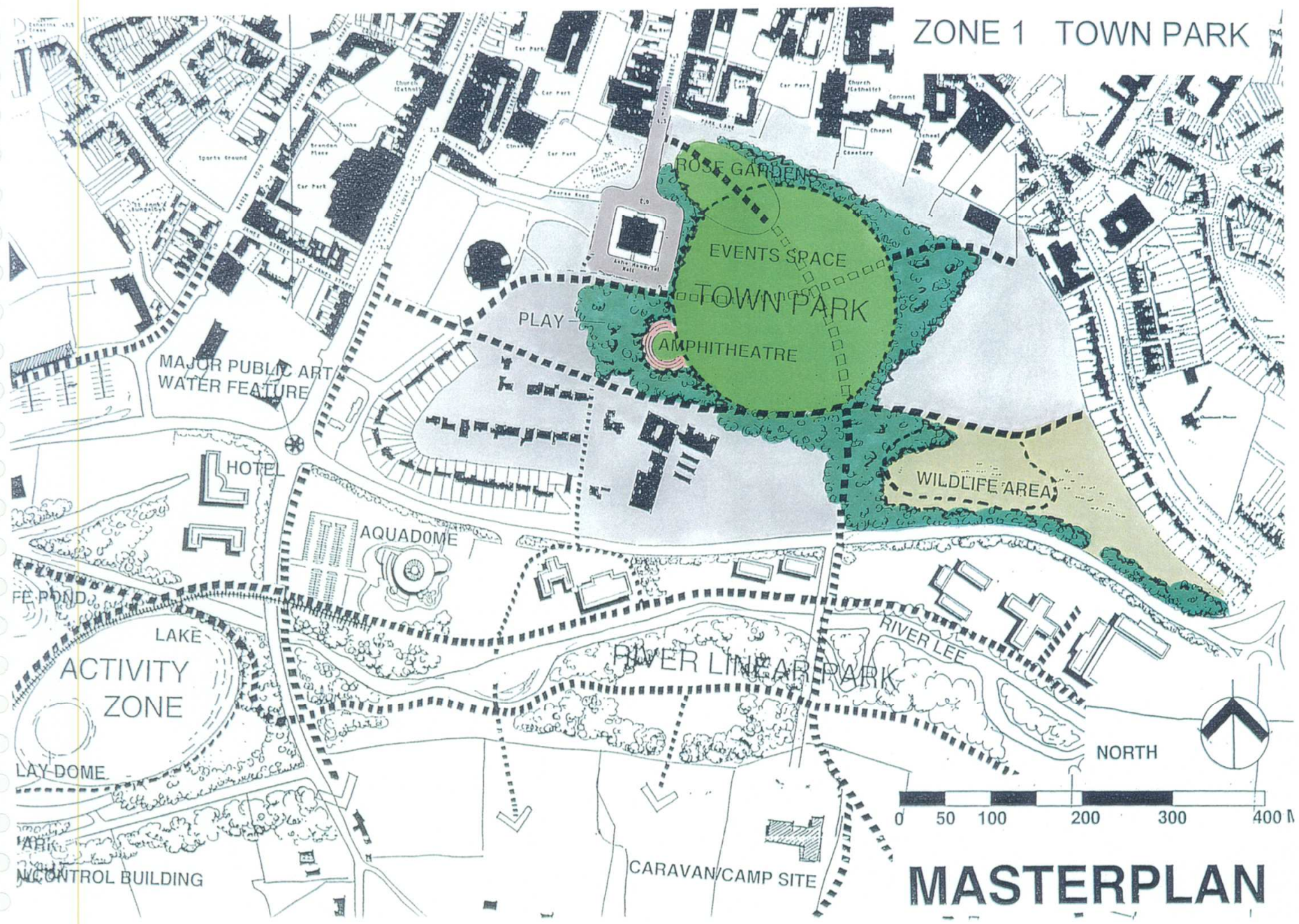
5.8 ZONE I TOWN PARK

This is the town's formal open space and appropriate location for horticultural displays. The town park should be very accessible and form part of the wider circulation network, as well as being a destination in its own right. The central open space should be emphasised, its margins reinforced with tree planting with selective felling and pruning in the centre to open up views. The rose garden deserves more prominence and should be on a main circulation route. New facilities might be added to the park such as an outdoor events space and new gardens. New pedestrian links to Zone 2 The River Linear Park should be established. Although much of the park requires intensive maintenance, more natural treatment is appropriate in certain areas. Increased use of the town park will be one of the best ways of protecting it against vandalism and misuse.

Key elements in this zone include:

- Major events open space
- Formal performance space
- Improved internal paths
- New gardens/hedged maze
- Extension of park to include wildlife area
- New link path to River Lee Linear Park
- Lighting
- Public Art / Water Feature
- New park furniture

ZONE 1 TOWN PARK



MASTERPLAN

TRALEE LEE VALLEY



5.9

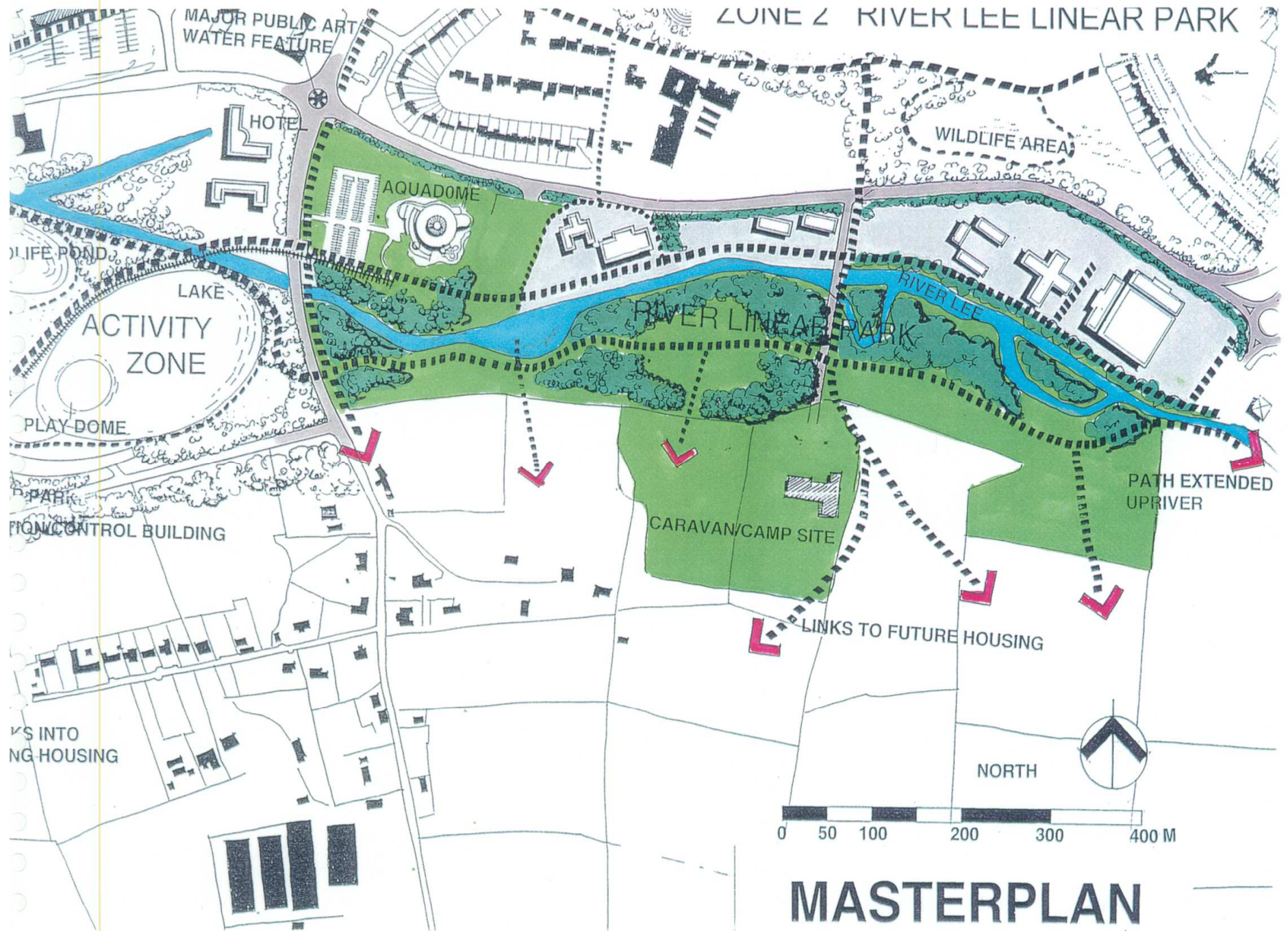
ZONE 2 RIVER LEE LINEAR PARK

This part of the Lee Valley River Corridor lies between the new development area and land zoned for housing south of the river. Its greatest potential lies in becoming a thoroughfare, providing pedestrian and cycleway linkages between surrounding landuses upstream and downstream. This will offer safe and easy access to shops, community facilities, schools and recreation areas. Links to the Town Park and Town Centre should be established.

Key elements in this zone include:

- Paths and cycleways along and across the river
- New bridges
- Native/Natural planting
- Sitting areas
- Lighting
- Furniture
- Public Art Trail
- Jogging Trail
- Nature Trail

ZONE 2 RIVER LEE LINEAR PARK



MASTERPLAN

TRALEE LEE VALLEY



5.10 ZONE 3 RECREATION AREA

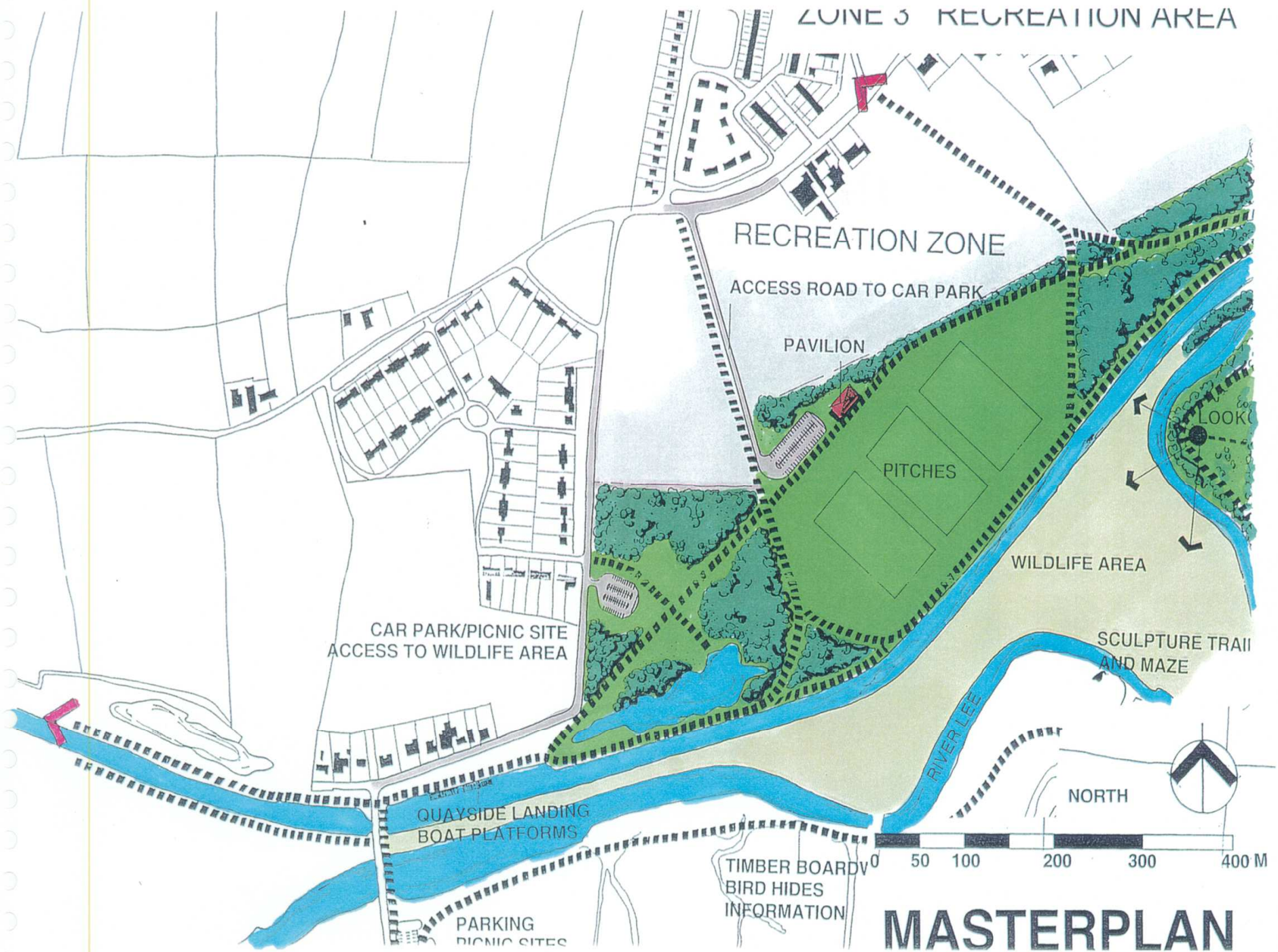
This is an area of comparatively flat land to the north of the canal. It is considered to be the best location for formal sports pitches which require good quality ground that can be readily drained and which will retain a level and even playing surface. The exact range of facilities to be provided needs further detailed consideration.

Key elements that may be included in this area are:

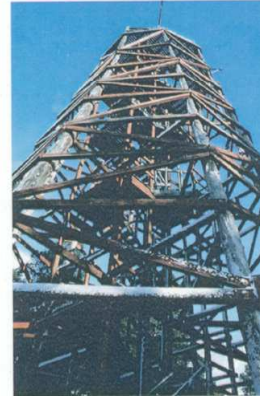
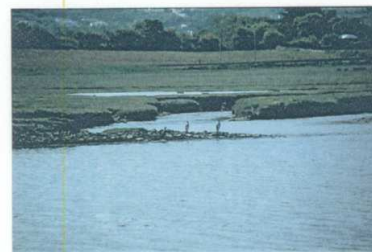
- Access road and parking
- Playing Pitches
- Pavilion/Changing Facilities
- Wildlife/Nature Areas
- Woodland
- Car Park and Picnic Site
- Jogging Trail
- Walks and Link paths

The recreational potential of the canal should also be developed. This may include a variety of water and land based activities.

- Canal and access platform
- Fishing
- Canoeing/Rowing
- Waterbus



TRALEE LEE VALLEY



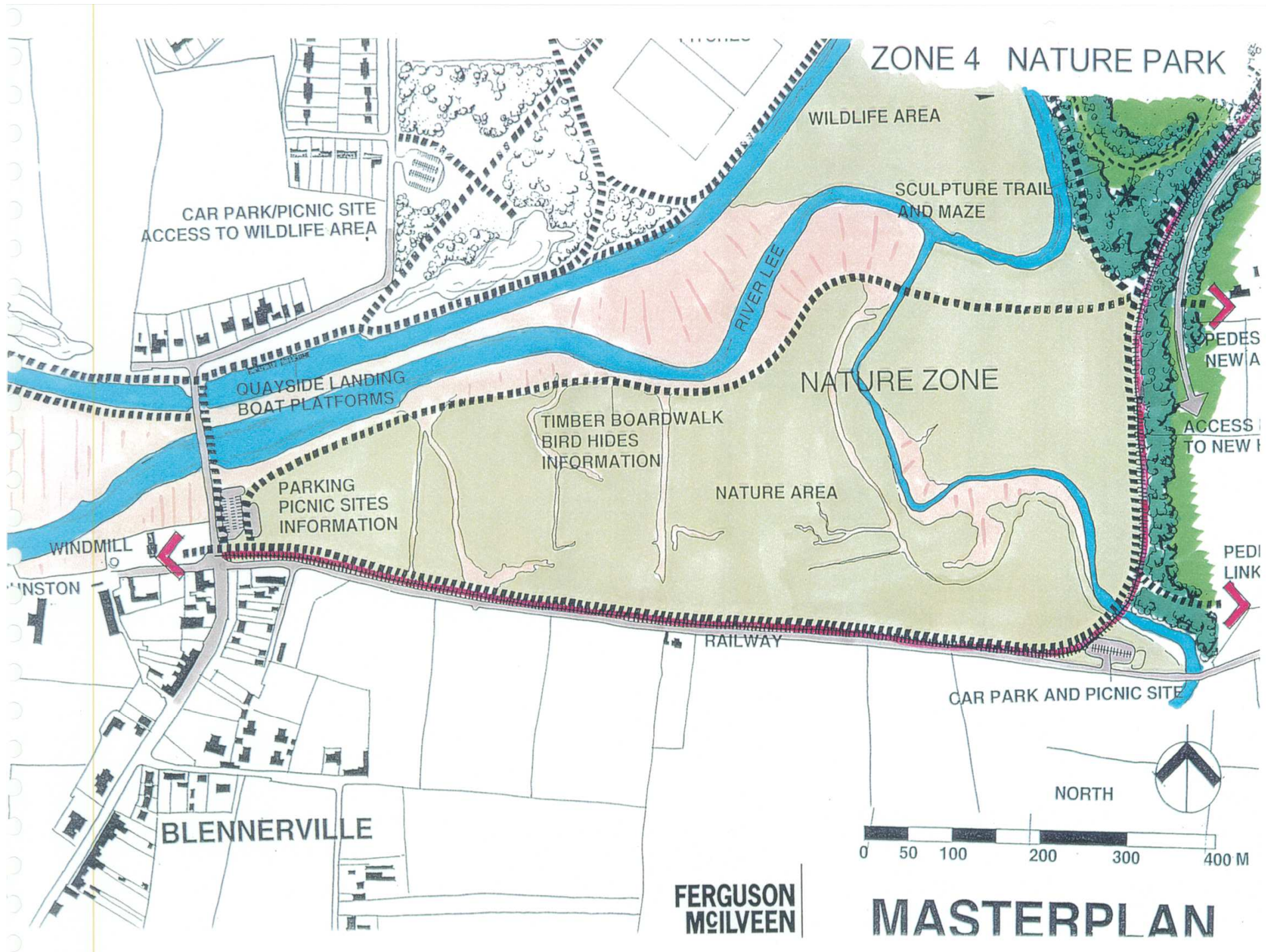
5.11 ZONE 4 NATURE PARK

The floodplain along the River Lee is designated a Special Area of Conservation and is therefore protected from development that would threaten its wildlife value. Currently access is very limited, though the area can be viewed from the train that skirts its southern edge and the adjoining roadway. A walkway along the raised redundant flood defence would give people a better appreciation of the area whilst providing an attractive and interesting walk between Blennerville and other zones in the landuse development plan. Links between this area and the main estuary should be further explored.

Key elements included in this area are:

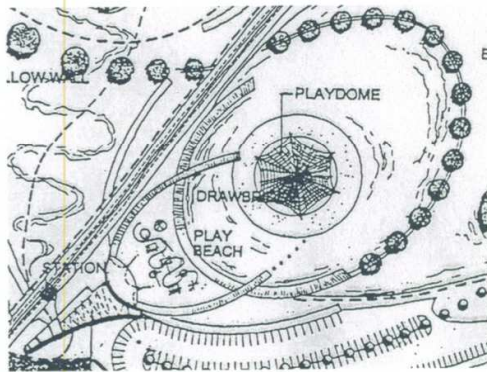
- Car Parks/amenity/picnic sites
- Timber Boardwalks
- Interpretive Panels
- Bird Hides and Lookout Point





MASTERPLAN

TRALEE LEE VALLEY



5.12 ZONE 5 ACTIVITY AREA - Play for all ages

This area adjacent to the Aquadome will be the hub of activity within the Lee Valley. The range of things to do, all set within an attractive setting of water, woodland and meadow should make for an extended visitor stay as well as increasing recreation provision for local people.

The activity zone is linked by paths and land train to all parts of the Lee Valley including Blennerville, the Town Centre and housing areas. By car it is reached off the proposed new access road. Surrounded by acoustic willow walls, the screened car park is an attractive place in its own right. The reception building (with wind turbine) is the focal point at the end of the car park. All routes lead to the building which acts as the hub of the Zone.

Designed in accordance with environmental best practice, the low energy building sits in the landscape as an extension of it. The earth embankment willow walls extend out and enfold the terrace and play beach area beyond. Visitor needs are catered for by toilets, shops, café, meeting room, exhibition/community space and station for the train. It is the control point for all activities both on the lake and for bike hire etc. The building would run on energy from renewable sources.

The play beach caters for young children who can be closely supervised from the terrace. A range of quality sand activities with play boats and willow houses create a stimulating environment for play.

The main island houses the play dome and is accessed via a drawbridge from the play beach. Out in a world of its own the dome will keep older children and adults alike amused for hours. The play equipment is suspended from a giant timber dome structure creating different levels of activity up to 8m high. What is offered is a unique play facility in Ireland which is physically challenging and superb fun.

Trampolines suitable for all age groups will be provided beside the beach and these can be hired from the reception building.



ACTIVITY ZONE



NORTH



TRALEE LEISURE PARK



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ACTIVITY AREA - Boats and Frozen Pond

Beyond the beach is a newly formed lake provides the focus for a range of boating and play activities. Divided into 3 areas the lake offers the opportunity to segregate different modes of fun boats and water bikes whether electric or pedal powered. Islands with landing and picnic areas offer the potential to extend both the scope of interest and the length of stay.

Near to the Lake is the 'frozen pond' an exciting artificial ice rink laid out in a natural free form shape. Skates can be hired at the reception building and children of all ages will have endless hours of fun.



TRALEE LEE VALLEY



ACTIVITY AREA - Nature (Fun and Learning)

Around the lake are pleasant walks linking the car park, barbecue areas and reception building. They also lead to the nature area where reed beds filter and treat the building effluent. Attractive boardwalks cross the reeds and lead to smaller ponds where a range of habitats encourage resident populations of common birds such as, moorhen, mallard and tufted duck. Children's bird hides, pond dipping areas and informative interpretive panels help stimulate interest in wildlife generally. Dragonfly and butterflies will thrive. This is the centre of the nature area which acts as an introduction to the untamed natural ecosystem of the Lee itself.

The nature maze made from living willow walls will draw in unsuspecting visitors and keep them there until they discover the secret exit.



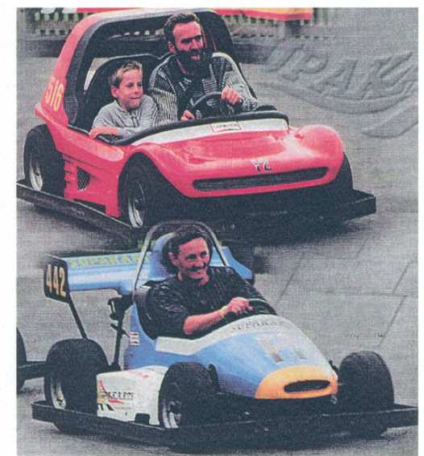
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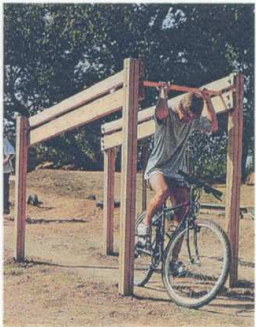
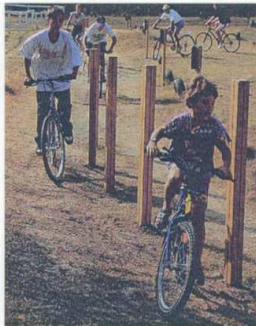
ACTIVITY AREA - Bikes

Located on the landfill site and linked to the reception building by a ramp and bridge is the biking area. An exciting cluster of high intensity activity for older children and adults. Quad bikes and Go-carts powered by electricity generated on site will be available for hire. The only noise will be the sound of children and adults enjoying themselves. Mountain bikes will also be available to take children on a trail over, around and through a landscape of hills and valleys, woodland and a variety of man made features such as bridges and ramps.

The activity zone offers high quality activities suitable for a wide age range set within a new sustainable landscape which will contribute to the ecology of the wider Lee Valley.



TRALEE LEE VALLEY



5.13 TRAILS

A series of short medium and long distance trails will be provided throughout all the Zones. Trails can be joined at any number of locations and will have a variety of themes. Waymarkers and information sheets will be provided at key locations.

- A fitness trail with a series of exercise stations located alongside pathways.
- An environmental sculpture trail with an ever changing array of features strategically located at key locations.
- A nature trail with interpretive information which ends with a chance to enjoy the spectacular views over the Lee Estuary from the timber lookout tower.
- An historic trail.
- A childrens discovery trail.
- A musical trail.

TRALEE LEE VALLEY

5.14 THE BUILDING

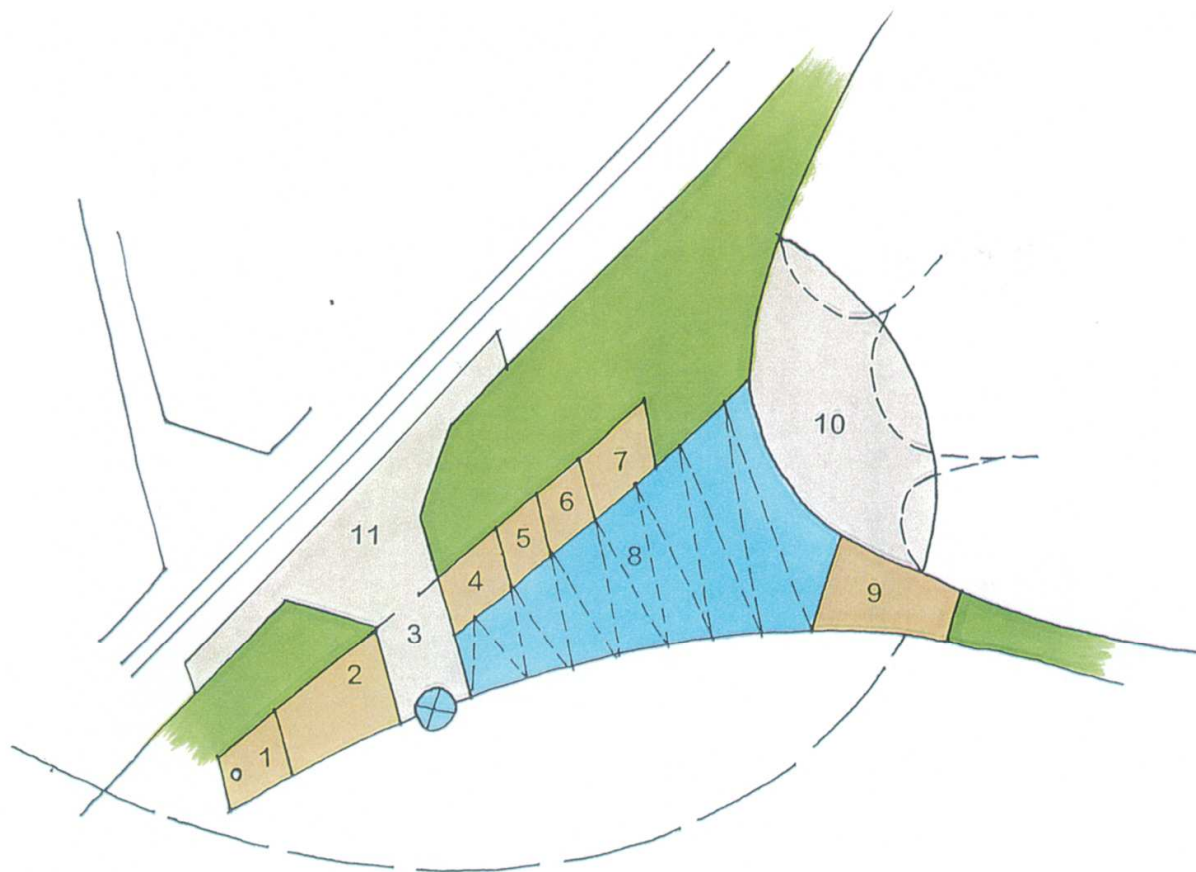
5.14.1 The Building's main functions are:

- To act as control point for the activities area.
- To provide toilets.
- To provide public shelter and refreshment facilities.
- To provide space for community events, exhibitions etc.
- To provide space for private sector services such as bike hire.
- To provide facilities such as showers, lockers and information for specialist activity participants such as hikers.

5.14.2 An opportunity exists for the building to illustrate best practice environmental construction techniques to complement the ecological design approach to the overall project.

- Solar gain would be optimised by utilising glazing on the south side of the building possibly incorporating photovoltaic panels to provide a natural source of power.
- Solar control blinds and natural ventilation would provide cooling.
- Earth berming and tree planting on the north side would enhance shelter and provide a high degree of insulation whilst uniting the building with the surrounding landscape.

- A wind turbine would provide natural power combined with solar panels.
- Choice of building materials would minimise volatile organic compounds and also be based on a total life cycle analysis to assess sustainability.
- Rainwater would be collected, and recycled foul water would be filtered and treated through reed beds.
- The building could become an attraction and educational facility in its own right. Construction layers could be left visible as a part of an exhibition illustrating environmental best practice and complementing other environmental features, of the overall project.

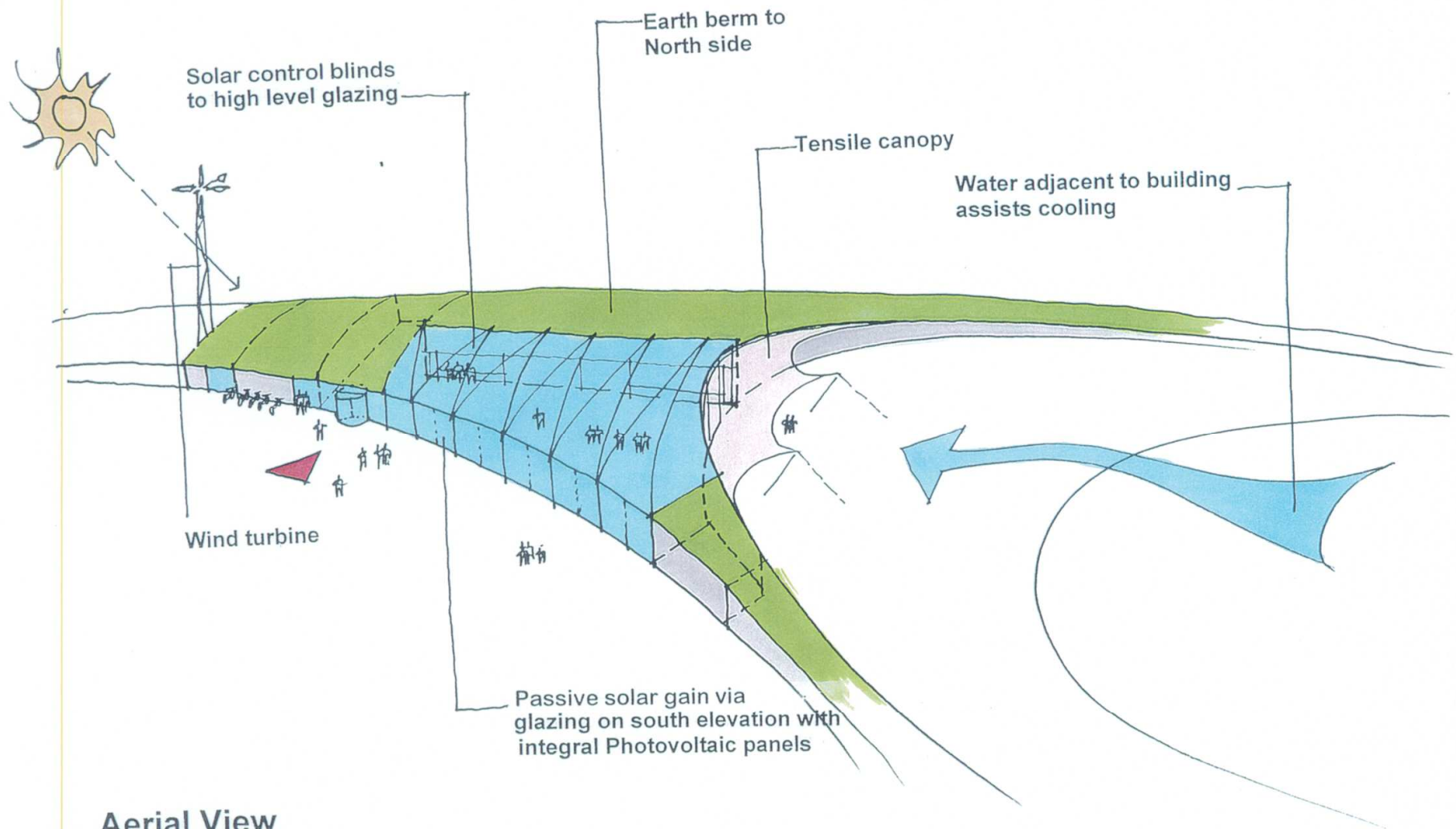


- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Plant / Wind Turbine | 7 Serving |
| 2 Bike Hire | 8 Café/Exhibition/Multi purpose area |
| 3 Lobby /Orientation | 9 Lockers/Shower |
| 4 Reception | 10 Tensile Canopy |
| 5 Shop | 11 Train Platform |
| 6 Toilets | |

Plan view

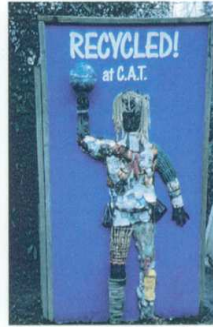


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Aerial View

TRALEE LEE VALLEY



5.15 INFORMATION AND SIGNAGE

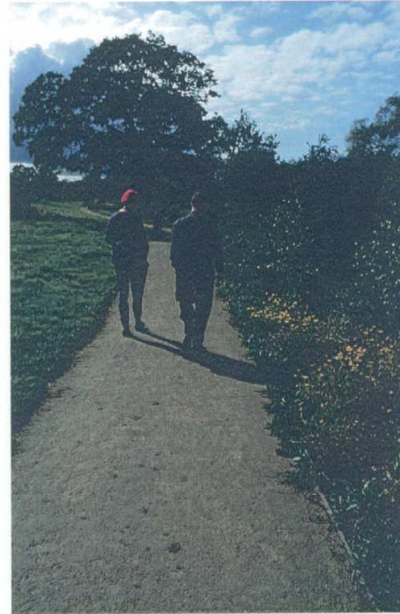
- A significant contribution to the successful development of the area will derive from the production of a family of signs and information boards which will be common throughout the area.

These will include:

- Entrance Signs
- Direction Signs
- Information/Interpretation Boards
- Trail Markers
- The use of common materials, natural or recycled, along with lettering, colours and standard symbols will make orientation easier.
- The signage will need to be easily read by the vehicle driver, the cyclist and the pedestrian and by those with visual impairment.
- Information and interpretive boards should incorporate illustrations and not be too wordy.



TRALEE LEE VALLEY



5.16 MATERIALS

In line with the environmental theme materials should, where possible, be indigenous. Local stone should be used for walls and paths, and home grown timber for buildings and fences.

The use of recycled materials should also be encouraged.

Material excavated to create the lakes and ponds should be retained on site to cap the landfill area.

TRALEE LEE VALLEY



5.17 FURNITURE

- A suite of furniture, including litter bins, seats and bollards, should be designed and developed for common use throughout the site. This will help establish a sense of place and identity.
- The design should be developed in conjunction with those who have responsibility for long term maintenance and management.
- The use of natural (from a sustainable source) or recycled materials should be encouraged.
- Opportunities should be taken to combine Art and furniture.



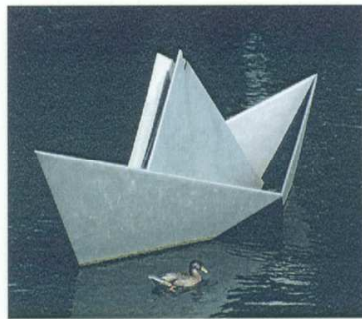
TRALEE LEE VALLEY



5.18 LIGHTING

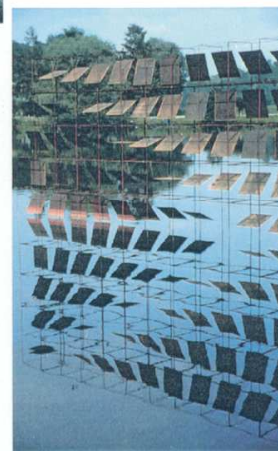
- In order to extend the use of the facilities into the evening, lighting will be required to make such use comfortable and safe.
- A number of factors need to be considered including the colour and intensity of the light, the light fixtures and fittings and the source of energy.
- In a natural environment white light is more attractive. The intensity of light should vary in relation to usage.
- Light sources should be screened to reduce light pollution.
- Power for the lighting should ideally come from a renewable source.

TRALEE LEE VALLEY



5.19 PUBLIC ART

- Public art should form an integral part of the development, linking with other elements of the design and the environment.
- Art can be temporary, related to infrastructure provision such as gates, fences and seats, or permanent set pieces.
- Themes can vary but should relate to the local area and its people.
- Local people and particularly children should be involved in creating pieces thereby linking art with education.
- The use of natural or recycled materials should be encouraged.
- A themed sculpture trail should be developed.



TRALEE LEE VALLEY



5.20 FOCAL POINT

The roundabout adjacent to the Aquadome is a significant focal point within the town and has the potential to act as a gateway to the Leisure Park. A significant piece of public art incorporating a fountain and decorative planting would be appropriate at this location.



TRALEE LEE VALLEY



5.21 Planting

- The use of native and locally grown plant material will help ensure successful establishment. Plants could be contract grown in the area or raised in an on-site nursery.
- Planting will increase biodiversity by providing different habitats plus feeding/roosting and nesting areas.
- Planting will help enhance the wildlife environment by providing shelter. It can also separate different landuses and screen off areas. 'Soft' barriers such as living willow walls are cost effective and attractive features in their own right.
- Art and planting can be combined to create sculptural forms.
- Decorative and high maintenance planting should be restricted to areas next to buildings or in locations of high visibility.
- Reed beds are not only appropriate planting for waterside areas but can also be used for treatment of sewage effluent.
- Planting and woven hurdles can protect river banks from erosion.
- Willow planting can be coppiced and the biomass used for energy production or on site structures.



TRALEE LEE VALLEY



5.22 EVENTS

People make parks. In addition to providing the highest quality facilities, a programme of events and activities will enhance the ambience and quality of community and visitor experience. Considerations should be given to the following events throughout the year:

- Talks and Walks
- Bird Watching
- Tradition/Craft and Skills
- Music/Concerts
- Art in the Park
- Games/Competitions
- Orienteering
- Childrens Parties
- Canal Festival
- Pond Dipping
- Orienteering

TRALEE LEE VALLEY

5.0 FINANCIAL

6.1 Economic and Social Benefits to Tralee

6.1.1 The implementation of the Tralee Lee Valley Land Use Master Plan will result in economic/monetary and non-monetary benefits for the town of Tralee and the village of Blennerville.

6.1.2 The economic/monetary benefits arising from the project will be as follows:

- Additional visitors to Tralee resulting in increased demand for tourist products and services.
- Extended dwell time by existing visitors to Tralee (ie conversion of day visits to overnight stays).
- Seasonal extension through the provision of high quality facilities for activity/special interest holidaymakers.
- Strengthen the overall Tralee/Blennerville attractions 'cluster' thereby enhancing viability.
- Provide direct employment arising from project.

6.1.3 Non-monetary benefits arising from the implementation of the Tralee Lee Valley Land Use Plan will also be significant. Most important, in this regard, will be the creation of a more attractive living and working environment for the residents of Tralee. The new facilities are being provided for the benefit of both visitors and the host community.

6.1.4 A detailed Feasibility Study and Business Plan will be required to examine the overall financial viability of the project and measure the economic and social impact.

6.2 Outline Capital Costs

6.2.1 Outline capital costs have been prepared for all 5 zones. The proposals and costs for zones 4 and 5 (the original study area) have been developed in more detail.

6.2.2 The figures are based on current construction costs and no provision has been made for future inflation. The costs are exclusive of VAT.

6.2.3 The cost of land acquisition has not been included.

6.2.4 The following are some of the key issues not examined in detail in this study that may have an impact on the final cost estimates:

- (i) Ground conditions
- (ii) Water quality and supply
- (iii) Flood protection
- (iv) Energy provision
- (v) Land acquisition

6.2.5 Zone 1 – The Town Park

The proposals include for the refurbishment and extension of the park. A detailed 10 year management plan should be prepared following the production of an agreed development masterplan.

Work included:-

- Paths, lighting, site signage, furniture.
- Extension to park.
- Arena/gardens.
- Planting

TRALEE LEE VALLEY

6.2.6 Zone 2 – The River Lee Linear Park

It is recommended that discussions be undertaken as soon as possible with adjacent developers in order to ensure pedestrian routes, boundary planting and fencing are appropriate and acceptable. A masterplan and design guidelines should be drawn up and used in discussion with the other developers whose land adjoins the park. The costs are for the section of the park illustrated. Further extension upstream of the park may be possible.

Work included:-

- Paths and bridges.
- Lighting, signage and furniture.
- Planting.

6.2.7 Zone 3 – The Recreation Area

In developing the budget costs we have included for the provision of an access road, pavilion and three grass pitches, associated paths and planting. Clearly the mix and range of facilities provided need to be examined in much greater detail. The access road might also service future housing provision and therefore be funded by others.

Work included:-

- Access road and car park.
- Pavilion.
- Pitches.
- Amenity Site/paths.
- Furniture, signage and lighting.
- Planting.

6.2.8 Zone 4 - The Nature Park

Car Park Picnic Site – Blennerville	£ 95k
Car Park Picnic Site – Hilliards Bridge	£60k
Timber Boardwalk	£290k
Paths/Cycleway/Fencing	£175k
Interpretive Panels/Hides etc	£90k
Signage Furniture	£50k
Planting	£40k
	£800k
Contingency/Fees	£110k
	£910k

6.2.9 Zone 5 - The Activity Area

Car Park	£150k
Control Building	£950k
Water Supply/Quality/flood control	£275k
Energy Supply/General Infrastructure	£300k
Lake/Island	£750k
Playdome	£750k
Play Beach/Trampolines/Frozen Pond	£550k
Nature Area Pond/Boardwalk/Maze	£250k
Bike Activity Area/lookout tower	£225k
Paths/Bridge/Cycleway/Picnic sites	£250k
Fencing/security	£300k
Signage/Furniture/Information	£150k
Equipment	£200k
Planting	£400k
	£5500k
Contingency/Fees	£950k
	£6450k

TRALEE LEE VALLEY

6.2.10 Summary of Outline Capital Costs

Zone 1	£ 770k	Town Park
Zone 2	£ 700k	River Lee Linear Park
Zone 3	£2300k	Recreation Area
Zone 4	£ 910k	Nature Park
Zone 5	£6450k	Activity Area

6.3 Outline Revenue Projections and Overheads

6.3.1 It is currently estimated that Tralee attracts of the order of 500,000 visits annually. Current annual attendances at tourist facilities which are adjacent to Tralee Lee Valley are as follows:

Annual attendance

> Tralee Aquadome	210,000
> Blennerville Windmill	47,000
> Blennerville Steam Train	41,000

6.3.2 In order to obtain an accurate indication of the visitor potential of the Activity Area (in terms of attendances and income), a detailed feasibility study will be necessary. This feasibility study would seek to identify and quantify the likely user groups/target markets for the Activity Area component of the project. It would also be essential for this feasibility study to examine the operating costs associated with the Activity Area and the non-income generating areas.

6.3.3 Taking into account current visitor flows and assuming that the facilities are developed to a very high standard the following visitor numbers may be attracted and income generated:

> Playdome/Playbeach	50,000 @ £3	£150,000
> Trampoline	20,000 @ £1	£ 20,000
> Boats, Pedaloes	40,000 @ £3	£120,000
> Frozen Pond Skating	40,000 @ £2:50	£100,000
> Go-carts/Quad Bikes/Bikes	50,000 @ £3	£150,000
> Cafe	(Profit)	£ 10,000
		<hr/>
		£550,000

6.3.4 The main project overheads are likely to be as follows:

> Staffing	£270,000
(based on 20 week season)	
> Maintenance	£ 50,000
> Insurances	£ 40,000
> Marketing	£ 50,000
> Utilities	£ 25,000
> Depreciation	£ 60,000
> Other overheads	£ 25,000
	<hr/>
	£520,000

6.3.5 In addition to core visitor income from admissions to the Activity Area, opportunities will exist for a small number of private sector operators to provide services and facilities on site (eg cycle hire) limited space, in the form of small enterprise units, could be made available in the control building. It is recommended that rents be set at competitive rates in order to encourage private sector participation in the project.

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5.4 Funding

There are a number of potential funding sources available for the recommendations outlined in Chapter 5 including funding for capital works, marketing and administration. Detailed information regarding funding criteria has yet to be announced for many of the European programmes. However, the aim of this section is to provide a flavour of the number of types of funding available. It is strongly recommended that a dialogue with potential funders commence once the new organisation has been established in order to explore further, the likelihood of securing funding.

Details regarding the allocation of funding under the National Development Programme are likely to be made known in November 2000.

6.4.1 Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation

Tourism

The Department has been allocated £300m for Tourism Product Development, Marketing and Training under the National Development Plan (2000-2006). There will be no tourism O.P. this time.

The funding allocation will be as follows:-

➤	Tourism Product Development	£100m
➤	Destination Marketing	£150m
➤	Training	£ 50m
		<hr/>
Total		£300M

The Product Development allocation will come in under the Regional Operational Programme, which will be allocated as follows:-

➤	South and East Region	£ 60m
➤	BMW Region	£ 40m
		<hr/>
Total		£100m

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The provision of funding for attractions/clusters and special interest activities will be included in the tourism sub-measures. There is also likely to be support for developing Tourism Areas like Tralee. Under the National Structural Plan, it is envisaged that environmental enhancement/protection, sustainable development and niche marketing will be given priority.

Sport

The Sports Capital Programme is also administered by the Development of Tourism, Sport and Recreation. Funding under this programme is allocated on an annual basis. Details for 2001 will be announced in November.

The objective of this programme is to enhance the provision of facilities for local communities. Under this programme £800,000 was allocated to 30 community/sports organisations in Kerry in 2000.

6.4.2 Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and Islands

Wildlife and Conservation

The Dúchas Wildlife Service has responsibility for the management and protection of Ireland's National Parks. Liaison with Dúchas will be important, and it is recommended that the organisation be represented on the proposed new management structure for the Tralee Leisure Park.

Dúchas Wildlife Service is unlikely to be in a position to provide capital funding for the project. However, the organisation would be more likely to provide technical support (ie information, advice etc) during the development phase. Future liaison with Dúchas Wildlife Service should take place through their Regional Management Structure.

Arts & Culture

The Arts and Culture Capital Enhancement Support Scheme (ACCESS) represents another potential source of funding for this project.

Strand 3 of this scheme, Community Based Projects, may be appropriate as it has been established to assist in the development of smaller scale culture and arts facilities at a local and community level.

6.4.3 Department of Education

Youth Education

Responsibility for the provision of youth services is spread across six government departments, with the Department of Education having a co-ordinating role.

Capital funding for youth education facilities is available under the "Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund". The objective of this programme is to provide facilities for youth grants.

To secure funding from this source, it will be necessary to establish a partnership with local youth organisations (eg the Tralee Youth Information Centre; Kerry Diocesan Youth Services Board; Foroige etc).

Adult Education

The Department of Education also allocates funding for adult/further education. All funding for adult education is administered through the Vocational Education Committee Network.

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6.4.4 European Union Life Programme

The E.U. Life Programme is an initiative to support three major areas of action; the environment, nature and Third Countries. It is administered in Ireland by the Department of the Environment.

Actions eligible under the Environment measure include 'innovative and demonstration actions by industry; demonstration and technical assistance action for local authorities; and preparation actions to support community policies'.

Support is also available for nature related actions aimed at the conservation of natural habitats.

The Life III regulation was adopted by the European Parliament in July 2000.

6.4.5 Local Development Agencies

Opportunities may exist for small scale funding from local development agencies (eg. Leader, County Enterprise Board.) The role of these organisations and specific funding schemes are currently under review.

6.4.6 Sponsorship

It is envisaged that opportunities will exist to attract private sector sponsorship to the Tralee Leisure Park. The strong environmental focus of the project is likely to appeal to the corporate sector.

Companies will be targeted to sponsor specific features within the Leisure Park (eg. Wildlife Pond, Sculpture Trail, Interpretative/Directional Signage etc).

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7.0 MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

7.1 Outline proposal

In order to realise the specific objectives outlined in the Development Masterplan for Tralee Leisure Park, it is essential that an appropriate management structure be established. This structure, once established would oversee the implementation of the Development Masterplan, and represent the interests of the organisations associated with the study area.

In setting out recommendations for an appropriate management structure, account has been taken of existing structures to avoid duplication of responsibilities. The objectives outlined can best be realised through the establishment of a Tralee Leisure Park working party.

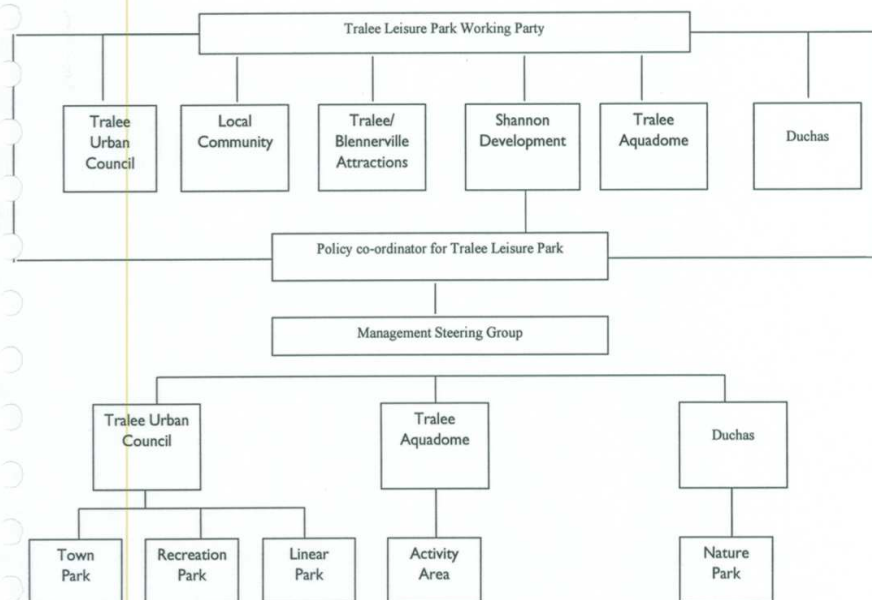
It is essential that the Tralee Leisure Park Working Party has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the proposals set out under the Development Masterplan, and, once established, takes responsibility for the co-ordination of policy in relation to Tralee Leisure Park. The key organisations and bodies that might be represented on the working party could be as follows:

- Tralee Urban Council
- Local Community
- Tralee Aquadome
- Shannon Development
- Tralee/Blennerville Attractions
- Dúchas – The Heritage Service

In addition to the larger working party, it is recommended that a smaller management/steering group be established with responsibility for overseeing the implementation of policy as set out by the working party.

Responsibility for the day to day management of the Tralee Leisure Park should be allocated on a zonal basis to existing organisations. For example, Tralee Urban District Council would retain responsibility for the Town Park. It is also suggested that the Urban District Council be given additional responsibility for the operational management of the Recreation Zone and The River Linear Park.

Tralee Aquadome has recently expanded its portfolio of visitor facilities. Given the proximity of the Aquadome to the Activity area, combined with the fact that management skills are already in place, it is possible that responsibility for the day to day management of the activity area, might be entrusted to Tralee Aquadome.



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Responsibility for the management and maintenance of the Nature Park could come under the jurisdiction of Duchas – The Heritage Service (Wildlife Division). Discussions with Duchas should be initiated as soon as possible.

Consideration should also be given to involving Birdwatch Ireland in this project. This organisation is likely to be in a position to provide specialist advice in relation to the Nature Zone.

A Project Manager should be appointed to oversee the implementation of the Development Masterplan. This individual would report directly to the Management Steering Group.

The Management Steering Group should retain responsibility for marketing Tralee Leisure Park and establishing a vibrant identity. It is recommended that the Management Steering Group work closely with Shannon Development in the framing and implementation of a co-ordinated marketing strategy.

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8.0 ACTION PLAN

8.1 Early Actions (January 2001 – June 2001)

This table attempts to set out a logical sequence of some of the actions required in order to turn this vision into a reality. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list at this stage.

- Adopt this land-use plan.
- Undertake detail feasibility study and development plan incorporating concepts in this report.
 - Technical Issues
 - Viability of specific proposals
 - Visitor financial projections
 - Operating overheads
 - Capital costs
 - Marketing
- Finalise plans for capping landfill site.
- Consider the management/working party structure.
- Consider landownership/acquisition.
- Discuss and agree management proposals of the Nature Zone with Dúchas.
- Discuss and agree management proposals of the Canal with the Office of Public Works.
- Initiate funding search and applications.

8.2 Project Development (July 2001 – May 2002)

- Establish new operational structure/working party.
- Appoint project manager.
- Review implication of detail feasibility study.
- Funding applications.
- Land acquisition.
- Confirm implementation programme.
- Initiate detail design.
- Advance marketing.
- Obtain planning approval.

8.3 Project Implementation (June 2002 – December 2002)

- Initiate capital works programme.
- Appoint contractors.

