

Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance Submission to Kerry County Council

in respect of the Local Area Plan for the An Daingean Local Electoral Area 2020 – 2026

September 2020

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1. Introduction

Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance welcomes the publication, by Kerry County Council, of the draft local area plan (LAP) for the An Daingean Electoral Area (2020-2026). The Chamber Alliance also welcomes the publication of the issues paper to inform the forthcoming County Development Plan (2022-2028). Above all, we welcome the consultative approach to planning, and we are grateful to Kerry County Council for engaging with us and for enabling us to undertake local-level research and consultations. The Chamber Alliance is committed to partnership, and to working in collaboration with all stakeholders.

While the process to formulate the LAP has been the primary driver of the consultation and community-led planning process that took place in Milltown, during 2020, the LAP is just one strand in the town's / locality's development trajectory. Thus, the Chamber Alliance notes the importance of a holistic and integrated approach to planning and development that goes beyond land use and transportation. We advocate place-making – harnessing local assets and potential and enabling Milltown to grow and develop as a place that is:

- liveable – with a high quality of life;
- economically vibrant;
- socially cohesive;
- well connected; and
- ecologically responsible.

This document represents the Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance's formal submission to Kerry County Council. As such, this submission:

- responds to the provisions set out in the draft LAP;
- takes cognisance of EU and government policy in respect of place-making and spatial planning;
- notes the content and priorities articulated in Kerry County Council's issues paper to inform the forthcoming county development plan;
- reflects the visions, expectations, hopes and aspirations of the community, and in particular those who participated in an extensive community consultation process that, notwithstanding COVID-19, took place between March and September 2020; and
- is informed by consultations with a range of statutory and non-statutory service providers and public bodies.

While the process to inform this submission has been wide-ranging, the Chamber Alliance notes, in this specific context, the need to focus on the LAP. Details of the consultation process, its outcomes and a vision for Milltown can be found in our Phase 1 Report. This was disseminated locally and furnished to Kerry County Council in July. The Chamber Alliance strongly recommends that both documents – the Phase 1 Report and this submission – be read together.

Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance respects submissions made by any other organisations and / or individuals from our locality.

2. Formulating and Developing our Submission

This submission is based on a bottom-up approach that has harnessed local knowledge and insights. It has been inclusive and participatory, and has sought to inform local citizens and organisations about the importance of spatial planning in general and the LAP in particular. Our Phase 1 Report (July 2020) provides the chronology of actions and the data garnered from the following:

- A demographic and socio-economic profile of the locality;
- The results of a survey using the Place Standard methodology; and
- Deliberations of four thematic workshops dealing with the following: mobility and accessibility; economy; community wellbeing; and environment.

This incremental three-stage approach enabled the community to:

- Identify the features / elements of Milltown's asset base;
- Identify challenges and possible obstacles to Milltown's sustainable development; and
- Articulate a vision and set out priorities for the community's development over the next six years.

Kerry County Council participated in Phase 1 – in an advisory and observer capacity, and the Council played a supportive and informative role in Phase 2.

Since July, the Chamber Alliance has coordinated Phase 2 of the local planning process. This has involved:

- A *Geoforage*¹ survey – open to the public and inviting respondents to suggest projects and initiatives that would respond to, and give effect to, the priorities and development trajectory articulated in Phase 1 (open during most of August)
- Two *Geodesign*² workshops (24 and 26 August);
- Consultations with public bodies and service providers (statutory and non-statutory);
- A feedback meeting and scenario mapping with the Chamber Alliance (21 September);
- A meeting with Kerry County Council's Forward Planning Unit (Tuesday, 22 September); and
- A feedback and final consultation meeting with the wider community (Thursday, 24 September).

The Geodesign workshops afforded participants the opportunity to identify the optimum locations – notwithstanding land / site ownership considerations – for the various projects and proposals that had emerged from Phase 1 and from the Geoforage survey. The emergent maps were then put on public display (on line), and Milltown Chamber and Community Alliance wishes to acknowledge *The Kerryman* and *Kerry's Eye* newspapers and other media for advising the public about the Geodesign process. Once the maps were on display, members of the public had two weeks during which they could vote on the proposals. Over seven thousand votes – when counted on the basis of the total number of reactions to each individual proposal – were received, from at least 260 individuals / organisations. The results were presented to the Chamber Alliance (September 21) and to the public meeting (September 22).

¹ Geoforage is an on-line survey-based mapping tool that allows stakeholders to propose projects / initiatives for a dedicated area. The survey was open to people living and / or working in Milltown and the surrounding areas for a number of weeks in advance of the Geodesign workshops.

² Geodesign is a mapping tool that promotes dialogue and collaborative planning. For details, see www.geodesignhub.com. Those who participated in the Milltown Geodesign workshops were provided with Geodesign account.

During August and September, we undertook consultations with several public bodies and service providers, namely:

- South Kerry Development Partnership;
- Maine Valley Family Resource Centre;
- Kerry County Council (Heritage / Conservation);
- Kerry Diocesan Youth Services;
- Diocese of Kerry / Milltown Parish;
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland;
- Bus Éireann;
- Local Link Kerry; and
- The Health Service Executive (HSE).

Fexco, the largest local employer, also participated in these consultations and attended the Geodesign workshops. South Kerry Development Partnership and the Maine Valley Family Resource Centre contributed to all stages of the planning process, and the Chamber Alliance and wider community deeply appreciate their ongoing support.

The consultations with the bodies listed here afforded opportunities to:

- Make them aware of the broad content of Milltown's submission and preferred development trajectory;
- Invite them to make observations, suggestions and recommendations and to play their part in Milltown's holistic and integrated development over the coming years; and
- To enable them to respond to the specific proposals and ideas emerging from the community consultations and specifically from the Geodesign strands.

Our local schools were informed about the planning process, and while staff and members of the boards of management participated in workshops and through the various surveys (Place Standard and Geoforage), we lack direct input from young people (those aged under 18). Our schools were very open to enabling young people to participate directly in the planning process. Unfortunately, however, due to public health guidelines, they were forced to close. Other community venues were also closed, and activities generally attended by our young people ceased. These circumstances have caused a shortcoming in our consultation process, and the Chamber Alliance commits to supporting direct and specific engagement with young people in all future processes, specifically the formulation of a masterplan for Milltown, as referenced in the draft LAP.

The various strands of Phase 2 noted that during the lifetime of the LAP:

- There is a need to invest significantly in local infrastructure, as current provision (including public / community facilities) has not kept pace with population growth and Milltown's infrastructural deficits are a barrier to sustainable development;
- Milltown has a distinctive set of natural, heritage and ecological resources that need to be more fully harnessed and conserved – as part of the promotion of an asset-based approach to development;
- Collaboration with other communities and with agencies is essential – this needs to be strengthened and sustained; and
- Milltown should not be a dormitory town / bedroom community, but a vibrant place with its own sense of purpose and vision – as part of a strong network of communities in Mid-Kerry.

3. Asset Mapping and Landscape Change

Phase 1 of the community-led planning process noted Milltown's many assets, particularly its central location in Mid-Kerry and its local social capital. Contributors noted the work of community and voluntary groups and the supports provided by South Kerry Development Partnership in catering for Milltown's population. In this context, the Nagle Rice Centre, the community playground and local sporting bodies were specifically mentioned. In contrast, members of the public perceive significant infrastructural deficits in many of the areas that are the responsibilities of statutory bodies. Specifically, it was noted that Milltown has excellent schools, with dedicated staff and active boards of management, but that the schools are unable to cater for all local children. Both schools were constructed during the last decade, at a time when Milltown's population was growing and was projected to grow further. The opportunity for forward planning that existed at the time was missed. Thus, there is now an onus on the Department of Education and Skills (DES) to make the required retrospective investments in education provision in Milltown. The DES needs to work immediately with the school, the local community and the County Council in ensuring that both schools have sufficient places for all students who want a place (most especially all families in the parish), have proper green / playing spaces, and are safe for drop-off / collection.

The community feedback on the Phase 1 report noted the need to map landscape change and land use in Milltown, as a contribution to better harnessing the totality of local resources. In response, the following set of maps and observations seek to enable an appreciation of Milltown's historical evolution and to envision its development trajectory over the coming decades.

Plate 1 (Milltown's contemporary landscape) shows the town's strategic location at the junction of the N70 (Tralee – Killorglin) and R659 (Dingle – Killarney). As the map also illustrates, Milltown's landscape includes a number of natural and historical amenities, including deciduous woodlands, the Maine River Valley and access to the sea (at Castlemaine Harbour / Callinafercy Pier). Access to these amenities and to green spaces in general is essential in ensuring that Milltown is a liveable community and a healthy place. Further investment in green infrastructure, in tandem with, and based on, a strategic harnessing of natural and heritage resources, will become even more important as the locality's population grows further. Thus, the Chamber Alliance recommends a detailed mapping of actual and potential green resources and the development of an action plan, based on such resources, involving Milltown and our neighbouring communities. Our members and local residents are willing to share their knowledge and expertise in such an endeavour.

As the map (Plate 1) also illustrates Milltown is the main service centre for an extensive rural area. Indeed, people from beyond the catchment shown here access services in Milltown and sustain the town's economy. Thus, collaboration between town and countryside and investments in rural resources, as advocated in the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), are essential to ensuring Milltown's integrated sustainable development.

Milltown is geographically close to Castlemaine (2.5km), Listry (4km), and Killorglin (7km), and there are strong economic, socio-cultural and familial relationships with these communities in particular. We advocate the promotion of inter-community collaboration, pooling of resources and knowledge transfers (between communities and with external stakeholders) over the lifetime of the LAP and beyond.

Plate 1: Milltown's contemporary landscape (2017 image)



As the following maps (Plates 2 and 3) clearly illustrate, Milltown's built environment has changed very considerably over the past decade. The urban footprint has expanded considerably, and it is evident that the town is sprawling to the southeast. Milltown's contiguous urban area has extended by over 200% in twenty years, and while the town has contributed significantly to meeting County Kerry's housing needs over the past two decades, this has, to a considerable extent, been to the detriment of quality of life and the environment. The spatial pattern of development has led to increased car dependency as many of the estates on the outskirts of the town are beyond walking distance of amenities, and housing is for commuters, rather than for local workers. Moreover, Milltown's recent development pattern and the acceleration of suburbanisation have led to a hollowing-out of the town core. Thus, the town centre has become afflicted by dereliction, and there are several vacant buildings and brownfield / in-fill sites in prominent locations in Milltown's historic core. The nature, layout and quality of the built environment, in many part of Milltown, as has evolved over the past twenty years, have led to the town being seen as a transitory place – somewhere in which to gain a foothold on the 'property ladder', before moving on to the community of one's choice. Thus, addressing the quality of the built environment is important in growing social and cultural capital in the community over the coming years. Apart from housing, the other built-environment changes, since the year 2000, are the construction of the primary and post primary schools and the development of the Nagle-Rice (Community) Centre.

Indeed, it is fair to observe that Milltown is exhibiting the characteristics of developer-led planning, rather than plan-led development. The forthcoming local area plan and county development plan afford opportunities to address legacy and residual issues and to promote a more sustainable trajectory.

The maps (Plate 2 and 3) illustrate that there have been negligible changes in the built environment in the surrounding townlands. The most notable change has been the increase in the land under coniferous (rather than native) forestry.

Plate 2: Milltown in 2000

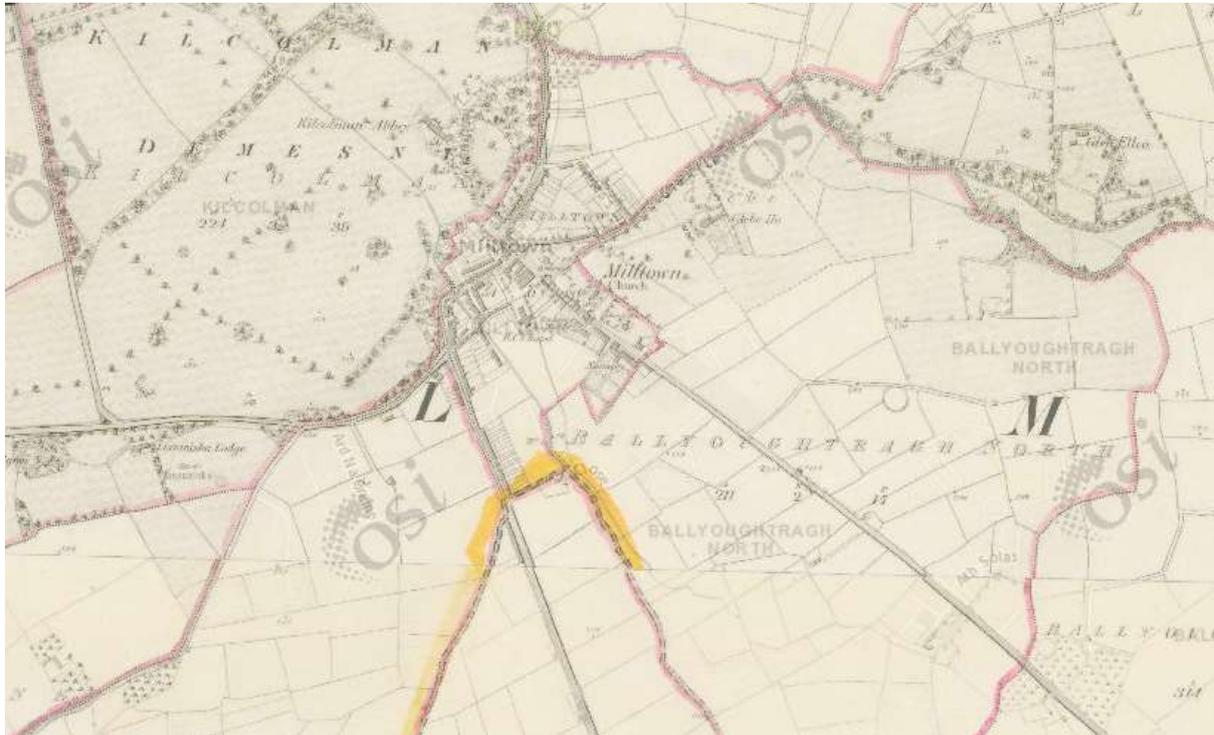


Plate 3: Milltown in 2017



The following historical map (surveyed between 1837 and 1842) illustrates that Milltown’s core has a strong historical legacy; the town centre’s layout derives from careful planning that took place in the mid to late 1700s. The efforts and investments that were made over 250 years ago have conferred a distinctive streetscape on Milltown. The layout of the streets, lanes and connecting roads, the quality of the built environment and the purposive planting of trees give the town and its environs valuable assets that are on a par with those of heritage towns.

Plate 4: Milltown (1837 – 1842)



Milltown’s morphology is closely associated with Kilcoleman Abbey. Knightly (2020³) describes Kilcoleman as one of the finest surviving relic 18th century demesne landscapes in Kerry. O’Callaghan (2016⁴) refers to the manmade landscapes to the west of Milltown - associated with Dutch engineers’ and local efforts to promote land reclamation and improve navigation on the River Maine. In his account of the development of Kerry’s towns, from 1580 to 1840, O’Flaherty (2020⁵) notes two significant waves of growth in Milltown. The first of these took place in the early 1700s, and was initiated by the Godfrey family. He notes, of the second wave, that:

“The reconstruction of Milltown was undertaken despite an inexorable spiral of debt and encumbrances. The market house was repaired, and Alexander Nemo, the engineer who was responsible for the second wave of road-building in the county, produced a plan, which involved removing cabins, building a new mill and re-routing roads. The corn mill was financially successful... and led to the construction of a new quay to support the growing trade. The main street was extended, the town square remodelled, and an impressive Gothic-revival gateway to the demesne was constructed, in keeping with the remodelling of Bushfield House as Kilcoleman Abbey” (2020: 256-257).

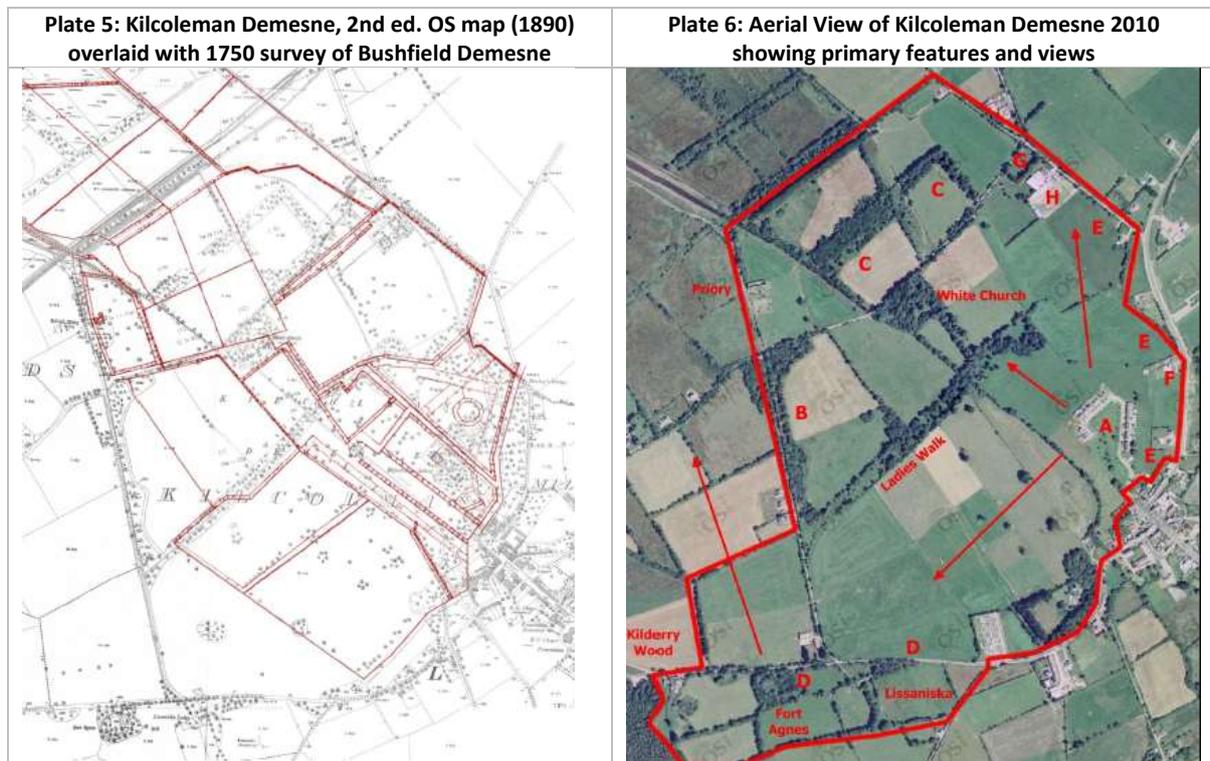
³ Knightly, J. (2020) ‘The evolution of a Kerry demesne, 1730 – 1830: Kilcolman Abbey, Milltown’ in Bric. M.J. (Ed.) *Kerry – History and Society*. Dublin: Geography Publications.

⁴ O’Callaghan, T. (2016) *The Kerry Coast*.

⁵ O’Flaherty, E. (2020) ‘Urban Kerry: the development and growth of towns, c.1580 – 1840’ in Bric. M.J. (Ed.) *Kerry – History and Society*. Dublin: Geography Publications.

The town's contemporary form and function reflect several layers of ecclesiastical, commercial, political and social history, and Milltown's historical geography features are most concentrated in the town core and in the lands immediately to its west. These confer on Milltown the ingredients required to apply for heritage town status.

A survey and assessment of Kilcoleman Abbey, undertaken by Dr John Knightly (2011), itemises the wealth of the demesne's assets, which include: an 18th century church and graveyard; a 19th century folly set within an early medieval ringfort; the remnants of a walled garden; the site of Kilcoleman Abbey; various earthworks; and a small lodge. Knightly observes, "These various elements underline the great importance of the demesne both locally and nationally, but these surviving structures are extremely fragile and their vulnerability is a cause of concern" (2011: 1). The aforementioned layers of history and heritage resources are evident in Milltown today, as the following images illustrate, but more concerted efforts are required to conserve them and harness their potential. With due statutory sector support, Milltown is capable of doing so, as is the case in Muckcross, Kenmare, Listowel and other towns.



Source: Knightly, J. (2011) *Kilcoleman Demesne – Survey and Assessment*.

In his assessment of Kilcoleman Demesne, Knightly concludes, "Kilcoleman Demesne is a relic parkland landscape of significant local and regional importance containing structures that represent millennia of Irish cultural and social history" (2011: 55).

As the following map shows, Milltown and its environs have a high concentration of national monuments.

Plate 7: National Monuments in Milltown and Environs⁶



Source: <https://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/>

1. KE047-047001- Class: Religious house - Augustinian canons
2. KE047-047006- Class: Graveyard
3. KE047-048- Class: Church
4. KE047-048001- Class: Graveyard
5. KE047-091- Class: Castle - tower house
6. KE047-055- Class: Enclosure
7. KE047-053001- Class: Souterrain
8. KE047-054- Class: Ringfort – Rath
9. KE047-051- Class: Ringfort – Rath
10. KE047-052- Class: Megalithic tomb - portal tomb
11. KE047-107- Class: Standing stone
12. KE047-062- Class: Enclosure
13. KE047-057- Class: Enclosure
14. KE047-056- Class: Enclosure
15. KE047-058- Class: Standing Stone

- A. Kilcolman Abbey - Reg. No. 21304710
- B. Court House - - Reg. No. 21304709
- C. Kilcolman Church - Reg. No. 21304706
- D. Presentation Convent - Reg. No. 21304708
- E. Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart

⁶ Copyright Government of Ireland. The content of this application is owned and operated by National Monuments Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. This copyright material is licensed for re-use under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence. The permission to reproduce Government copyright material does not extend to any material on this site which may be the property of a third party. Authorization to reproduce such material (e.g., OSi mapping) must be obtained from the copyright holders concerned. Basemaps used in this site are copyright Ordnance Survey Ireland (Licence No EN 0059216) and DigitalGlobe, Inc. All Rights Reserved. | Copyright Government of Ireland. The content of this application is owned and operated by National Monuments Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. This copyright material is licensed for re-use under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence. The permission to reproduce Government copyright material does not extend to any material on this site, which may be the property of a third party. Authorization to reproduce such material (e.g., OSi mapping) must be obtained from the copyright holders concerned. Basemaps used in this site are copyright Ordnance Survey Ireland (Licence No EN 0059214) and DigitalGlobe, Inc. All Rights Reserved. | © Ordnance Survey Ireland.

The following photographs capture some elements of Milltown's historical geography.

<p data-bbox="347 275 619 304">Plate 8: Killagha Abbey</p> 	<p data-bbox="970 275 1206 304">Plate 9: Grain Store</p> 
<p data-bbox="323 696 643 725">Plate 10: Demesne Avenue</p> 	<p data-bbox="791 696 1385 725">Plate 11: Church Street (viewed from The Square)</p> 
<p data-bbox="320 1146 646 1176">Place 12The 'White Church'</p> 	<p data-bbox="951 1146 1225 1176">Plate 13: The Bridewell</p> 

Note: All photographs were taken between July and September 2020.

4. Vision Planning

The draft LAP published by Kerry County Council, in August 2020, sets out a vision and a number of objectives for the local electoral area. Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance welcomes these, as articulated on page seven (of the LAP). We acknowledge and endorse, in particular, the County Council's and Government's support for:

- Public participation;
- Community needs;
- Local economy;
- Vibrant and dynamic town centre;
- Integration of the environment;
- Biodiversity;
- Provide green infrastructure;
- Sufficient provision for schooling;
- Smarter travel;
- Less sprawl – better urban structure;
- High quality design; and
- Balanced expectations.

In addition to these, we advise including:

- Collaboration with other communities and other municipal districts; and
- Ensuring the LAP is subject to regular review and an independent evaluation.

We envisage that community-led local development (CLLD), as recommended by the European Commission, will be a hallmark of Milltown's trajectory over the LAP's timeframe.

The Chamber Alliance supports the vision for the local electoral area (articulated on page eleven), and we recommend the harnessing of all territorial assets, and not just those that are 'unique'. The MD has many distinctive assets, some of which are latent, which, while not 'unique', can make tangible contributions to sustainable development. We advocate specific references to human and cultural capital.

We note the policy context in which the LAP is being formulated, and the cascade from the National Planning Framework (NPF), the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and County Development Plan. Given the LAP's reference to, and the relevance of, sustainable development, we advocate specific reference to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), and the incorporation of the UNSDG framework more explicitly into the plan. We also advocate reference to the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) and the work of the European Spatial Planning and Observation Network (ESPON) and in particular their advocacy of urban – rural partnerships, healthy communities and place making.

The Chamber Alliance notes the geographical context in which our LAP is situated. We note the inclusion (Fig. 2.2) of the regional planning guidelines and the specific references to the Wild Atlantic Way and Atlantic Economic Corridor. We point out that were Milltown to be bypassed, as suggested by the red line on the zoning map (page 98); we would no longer be on the Wild Atlantic Way.

We also note, in respect of geography, the delineation of the An Daingean Electoral Area. While we acknowledge that this geography aligns with the western part of the Castleisland and Corca Dhuibhne

Municipal District, we see greater logic in the ‘functional area’ approach to sub-county planning, as previously applied by Kerry County Council. As the community at the edge of the new geographical delineation, which was devised without due citizen consultation, we stress the importance of illustrating how Milltown relates to, and is connected with, Killorglin, Listry and other communities in Mid-Kerry. Indeed, in many respects, Milltown was historically seen as the gateway to South Kerry – a bridge between the Iveragh and Corca Dhuibhne Peninsulas.

Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance acknowledges that Kerry County Council, among other bodies, has been under pressure to make investments and provide services in tandem with, and in response to, the rate of population growth, in Milltown, over the past two decades. For many people in this community, the level of growth was unanticipated, and local organisations found themselves playing catch-up in order to meet demands for services and to seek to welcome and integrate newcomers. We anticipate greater forward planning, over the coming years, so that there is greater alignment between population growth and service provision. In advance, there is a need for retrofitting in order to make good the deficits that have emerged over recent years, not least in education, but also in the provision of community amenities, green infrastructure and job creation. The Place Standard survey results (presented in our Phase 1 Report) provide specific pointers in these regards.

We note (on page 93) that the draft LAP states, “Milltown has a modern sewerage network and treatment plant designed to accommodate a population equivalent of 3,535. The PE⁷ far exceeds the existing loading of 1,600 indicating a large spare capacity”. If such population growth is to happen in our community, we expect Kerry County Council and Irish Water, among the other relevant bodies, to engage with us and with other local organisations to agree the timeframe and manner of such growth. Were Milltown’s population to grow in line with its wastewater treatment capacity, the town would need to be moved up one notch in County Kerry’s settlement hierarchy tier (see draft LAP, Table 1.1).

The Chamber Alliance notes (also on page 93), Kerry County Council’s commitment to preparing a masterplan for Milltown. We warmly welcome this commitment, and we look forward to co-decision making in formulating and delivering the masterplan.

Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance recommends aligning the LAP with core elements and best practices in the current Programme for Government. These include, among others:

- The commitment to a ‘town centres’ first’ policy – promoting the rejuvenation of our town centre, the re-utilisation of existing buildings and the promotion of residential occupancy. We stress that any town centre development ought to respect the fabric and integrity of the built heritage and provide for vibrant and inter-generational public realm spaces;
- The undertaking of a Town Health Check;
- The expansion of the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, which, we envisage will provide for strategic investments, including in human, cultural and knowledge capital;
- Greater investment in cycling and pedestrian infrastructure;
- Increasing the number of children walking and cycling to school;
- Improving public transport connectivity; and
- Mainstreaming the European Green Deal.

⁷ PE: Population Equivalent

These specific provisions in the Programme for Government are relevant to Milltown, and are directly applicable here.

We also note the following provisions in the Programme for Government, and recommend their incorporation into the LAP:

- Introduce policies on supports for urban biodiversity and tree planting;
- Encourage and support local authorities to reduce the use of pesticides in public areas;
- Continue implementation of the third National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021, and build on the commitments made at the first National Biodiversity Conference;
- Support local nature groups and local authorities to work in partnership on local biodiversity projects; and
- Build on community-led schemes, such as the Built Heritage Investment Scheme and the Structures at Risk Fund, which provide grant aid to protect and maintain important historic buildings in our local communities.

Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance notes previous governments' policies in respect of enhancing Ireland's road network and improving inter-regional connectivity. Such policies promoted car travel over public transport, and they are associated with Ireland's importation of fossil fuels and increased greenhouse gas emissions. The proposed Milltown bypass is indicative of such a policy push. Since the publication of the Functional Local Area Plan (FLAP) 2013 – 2019, in which an indicative bypass route was signalled, policy priorities have changed, and there is now much more awareness of climate change and the benefits of active travel and green infrastructure. Moreover, in our opinion, the indicative bypass route reduces Milltown's ability to give effect to the town centre first policy to which the Government is committed. The proposed route comes within 320metres of The Square – Milltown's historic core. Unless development could take place on either side of any bypass, such a route would circumscribe the town – on its western flank, and lead to further sprawl to the south and east. Any further sprawl would not be desirable.

As noted earlier, Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance advocates an asset-based approach to town planning. One of our strategic assets, albeit a latent one is our heritage – including Kilcoleman Demesne and the associated woodlands and ecclesiastical buildings. This historic landscape is of local and regional significance, and the construction of a bypass through it would do irreparable damage.

Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance favours safer streets and we welcome any constructive steps towards alleviating traffic congestion. Thus, we are open to dialogue with Transport Infrastructure Ireland and Kerry County Council in ensuring the best engineering solutions are found in order to ensure:

- smooth and safe traffic flows; and
- an improved quality of life for the people of Milltown that includes:
 - ✓ harnessing our heritage resources;
 - ✓ providing greater access to green spaces; and
 - ✓ ensuring the sequential development of our town.

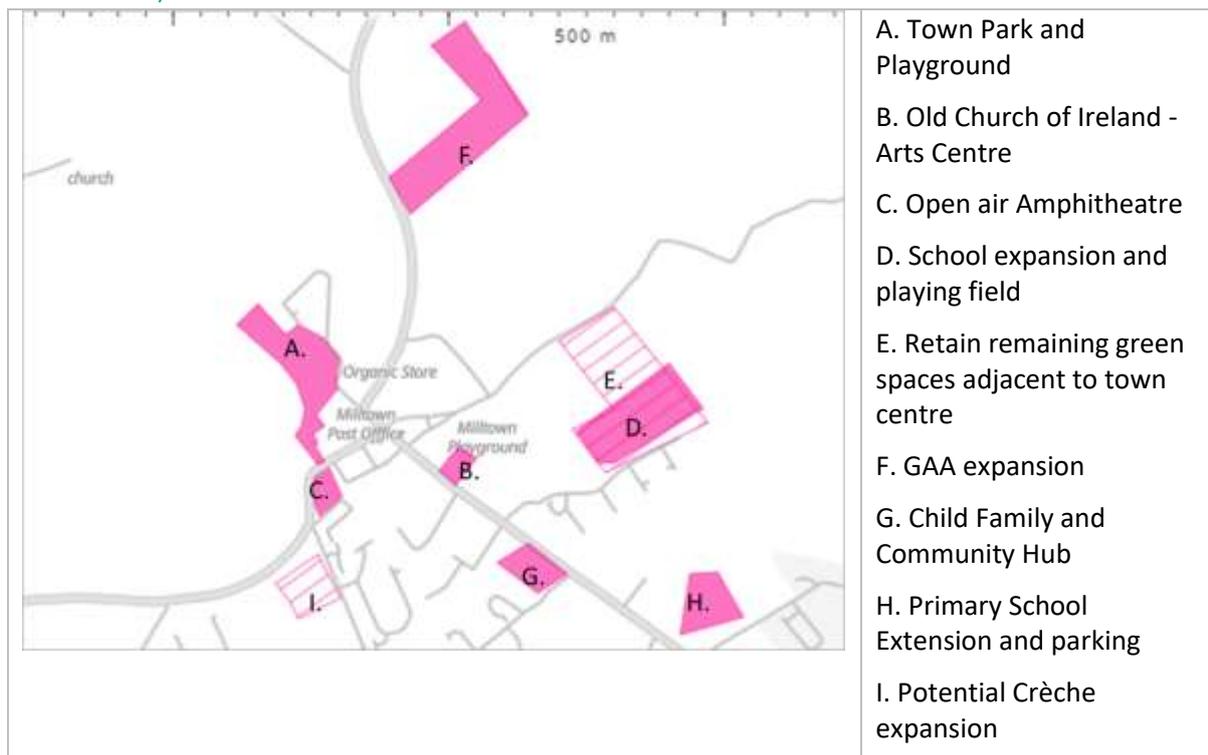
5. Geodesign Proposals

The following pages present the maps that were created through our Geodesign workshops (August 2020). These illustrate the projects, investments, approaches, interventions and policies that would give effect to local citizens' visions for Milltown. They represent citizens' priorities for the community. Their assigned geography is based on citizens' perceptions of the optimum location for each proposal, all other factors being equal. Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance stresses the imperative of due and respectful consultations with all landowners and those whose properties may be affected, in any way, by any of the proposals presented here. The Chamber Alliance opted for a spatial representation of the proposals, rather than other possible formats, in order to encourage citizen engagement and dialogue and to respond to the spatial planning approach pursued by KCC. For presentation purposes, the Geodesign proposals are organised into eight thematic areas, as follows:

1. Community facilities;
2. Culture and Heritage;
3. Active Travel;
4. Traffic Infrastructure;
5. Economy;
6. Public Transport;
7. Green Infrastructure;
8. Parking; and
9. Housing

The Chamber Alliance notes that several are inter-related, and we advocate an integrated approach to their rollout – based on community-led local development (CLLD) and inter-agency partnership. A whole-of-community and inter-generational approach is required that harnesses local goodwill and knowledge in tandem with the expertise and technical support of the private sector and public bodies.

Community Facilities



- A. This proposal complements the development of a more extensive town park / green. A landscape area with a playground - adjacent to the village - will form an integral part of the new town park.
- B. Upgrade and conserve the Church of Ireland as an arts centre.
- C. Construct an open-air amphitheatre at the southern end of Bridge Street - similar to the amphitheatre in Ballykeeffe, County Kilkenny.
- D. Enable the school to expand, in order to ensure that all local pupils can be assured of a place. Provide adequate playing space, especially for football, on the school grounds. Meet current needs and the anticipated project volume of students.
- E. Liveability and attractive neighbourhoods require the retention and protection of green spaces in residential and commercial areas. These need to be properly landscaped, so that there are amenities for residents and a habitat for wildlife.
- F. The GAA club needs to acquire additional lands, adjacent to its current facility, to cater for club needs e.g., more training space.
- G. Re-purpose the former girls' national school as a base / hub for a range of child and family support services - promoting lifelong health and wellbeing.
- H. Enable the primary school to expand, so that all local children / families can be assured of places. Ensure adequate parking for school staff and visitors - in the interest of safety.
- I. Ensure an adequate supply of childcare places in Milltown, by working, in the first instance, to support existing providers. If needs be, the community / entrepreneur should consider developing a new facility.

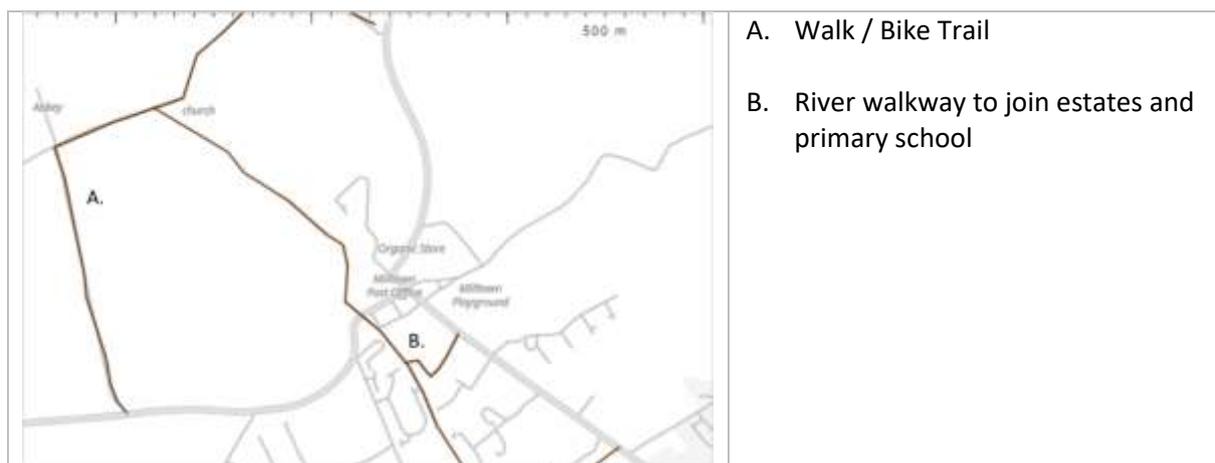
Culture and Heritage



- A. Heritage Museum/
Walking Trail
Information
- B. Heritage
Quarter including
grain store, town
square
- C. Protect site for
future park
- D. Restore
historic 'Ladies
Walk'

- A. Re-develop the former Bridewell as a heritage and information centre.
- B. Formulate and deliver a conservation plan for Milltown's historic core, to ensure the built fabric is retained and buildings can be re-purposed and put to good use, thus redressing dereliction and preventing any further erosion of the built environment.
- C. Milltown's Demesne is an important asset and a vital component of our place-making strategy. The Demesne offers the optimum site for a town park that will serve the town and surrounding areas. Therefore, the relevant lands need to be zoned appropriately and a management plan needs to be formulated.
- D. Plant additional trees, prune some existing vegetation and lay an appropriate surface along this historic walkway (in the Demesne). Ensure adequate parking at both ends of the walk.

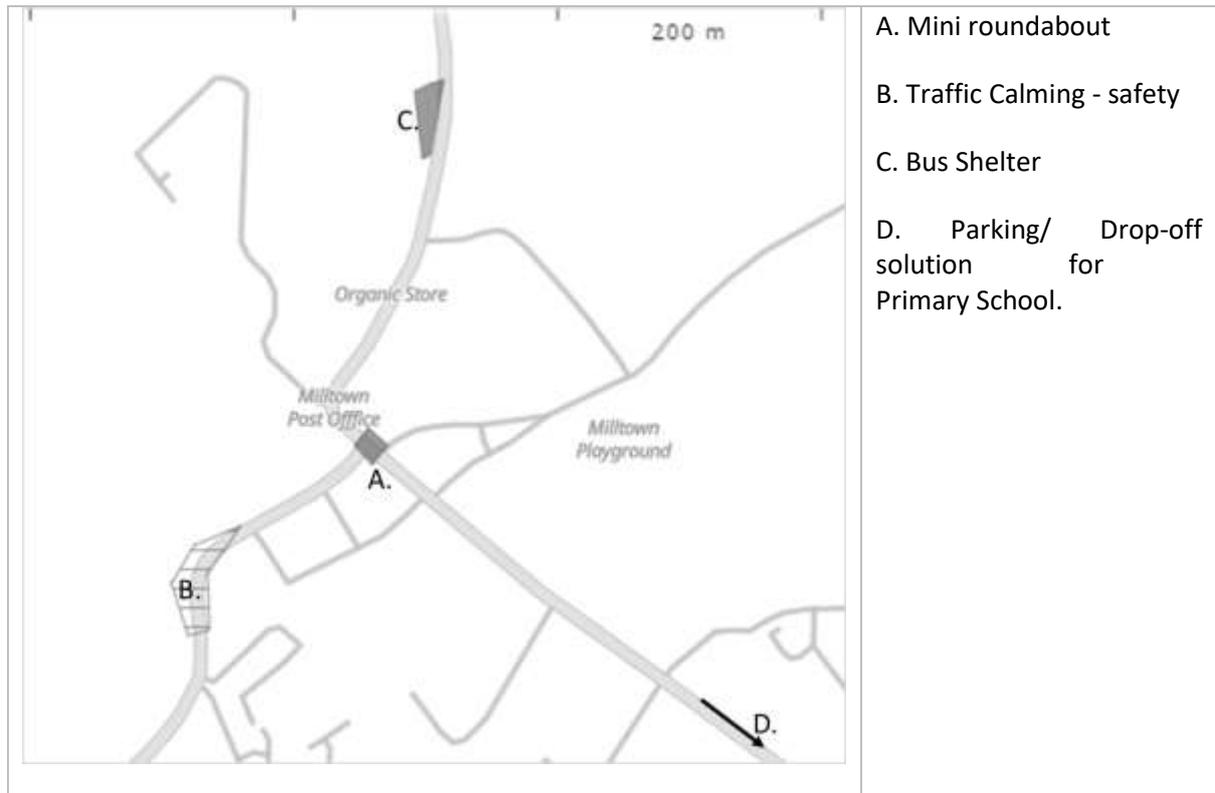
Active Travel



- A. Walk / Bike Trail
- B. River walkway to join estates and
primary school

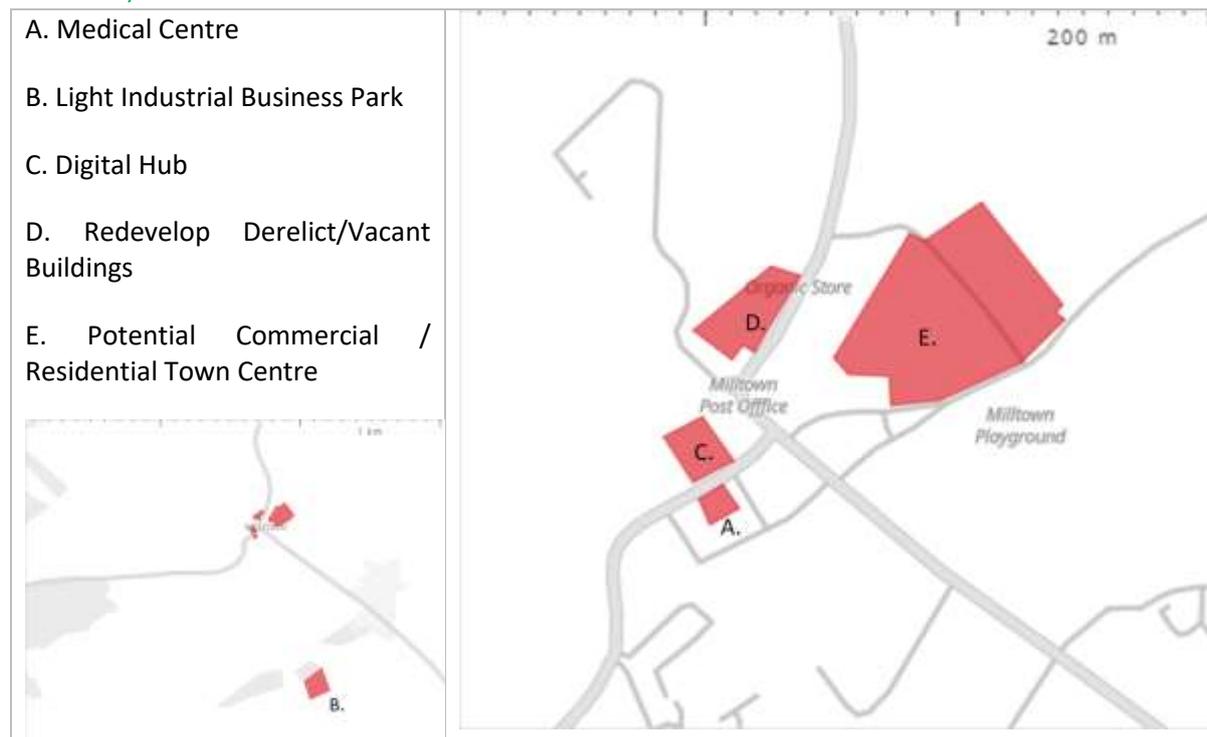
- A. Develop 1.8km of a walking / bike trail from the Killorglin Road to the Castlemaine Road via the (new) Town Park (Demesne).
- B. Encourage active travel, particularly for school students, by providing a dedicated walkway along the riverbank, and with spurs to the housing estates and main streets.

Traffic Infrastructure



- A. Improve traffic flow, especially at peak times, by constructing a mini-roundabout at Larkin's Corner.
- B. Undertake road-safety measures e.g., lay rumble strips and construct a median / more defined verges, on the southern approach to Milltown - between the new roundabout and Bridge Street.
- C. Construct a bus shelter at northbound and southbound bus stops.
- D. Improve safety and traffic flow, at the primary school, by constructing a traffic flow lane and dedicated drop-off area.

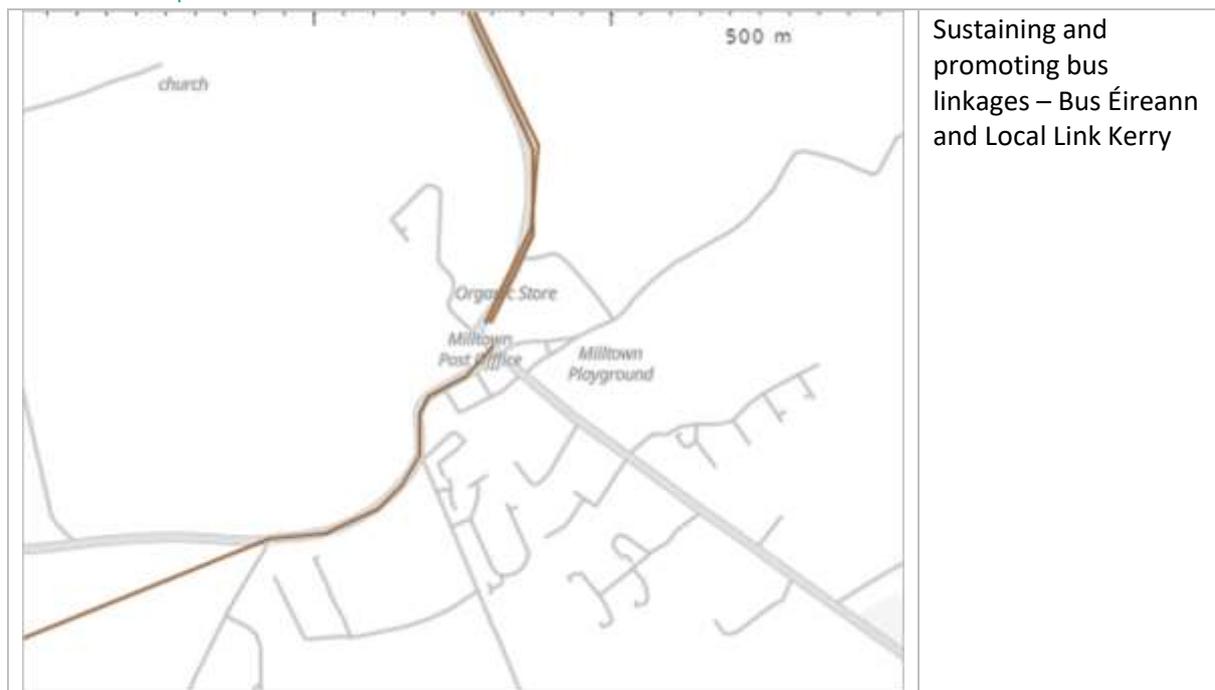
Economy



- A. Establish a multi-purpose medical centre in the town, adjacent to existing medical / health services.
- B. Provide units for light industry on the outskirts of Milltown - to enable local firms to expand and to provide entrepreneurs with incubation and enterprise-development space.
- C. Develop a co-working space - to facilitate remote working and to reduce commuting.
- D. Capitalise on Milltown's distinctive identity and built environment and preserve and re-purpose vacant buildings and brownfield sites. This contributes to sequential development.
- E. Provide for additional commercial, retail, residential and mixed-use development in the physical centre of the town - within walking distance of, and complementary to existing businesses.

The Chamber Alliance welcomes the draft LAP provisions in respect of developing technological capacity within the area, including the development of a digital hub and the establishment of start-up enterprise spaces. We look forward to renewed clarification of the intent to ensure Milltown's local economy develops, and that we are not a satellite or dormitory town.

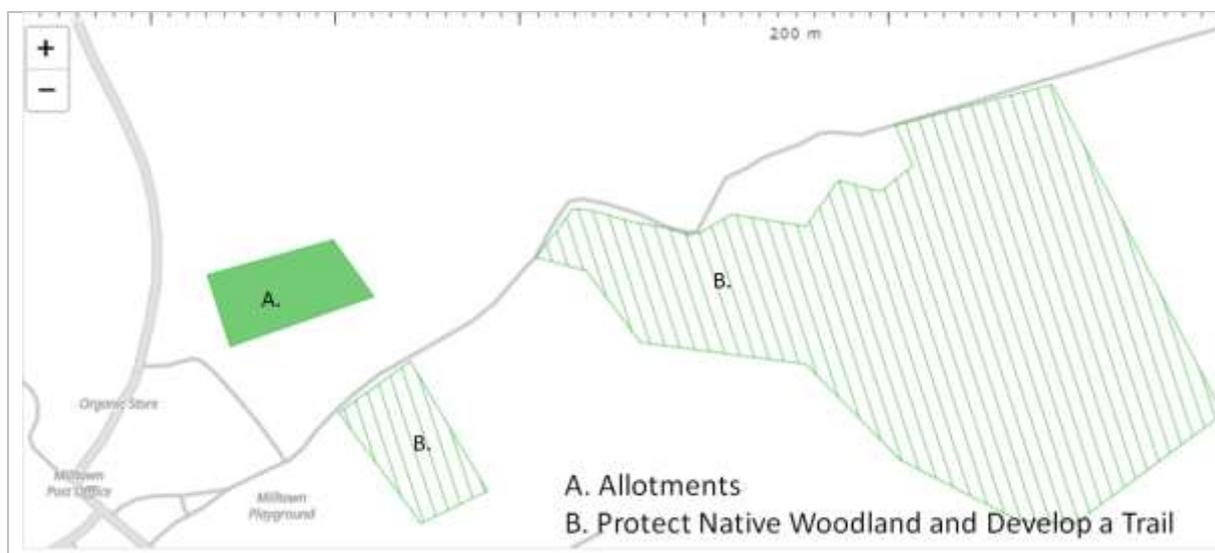
Public Transport



Sustaining and promoting bus linkages – Bus Éireann and Local Link Kerry

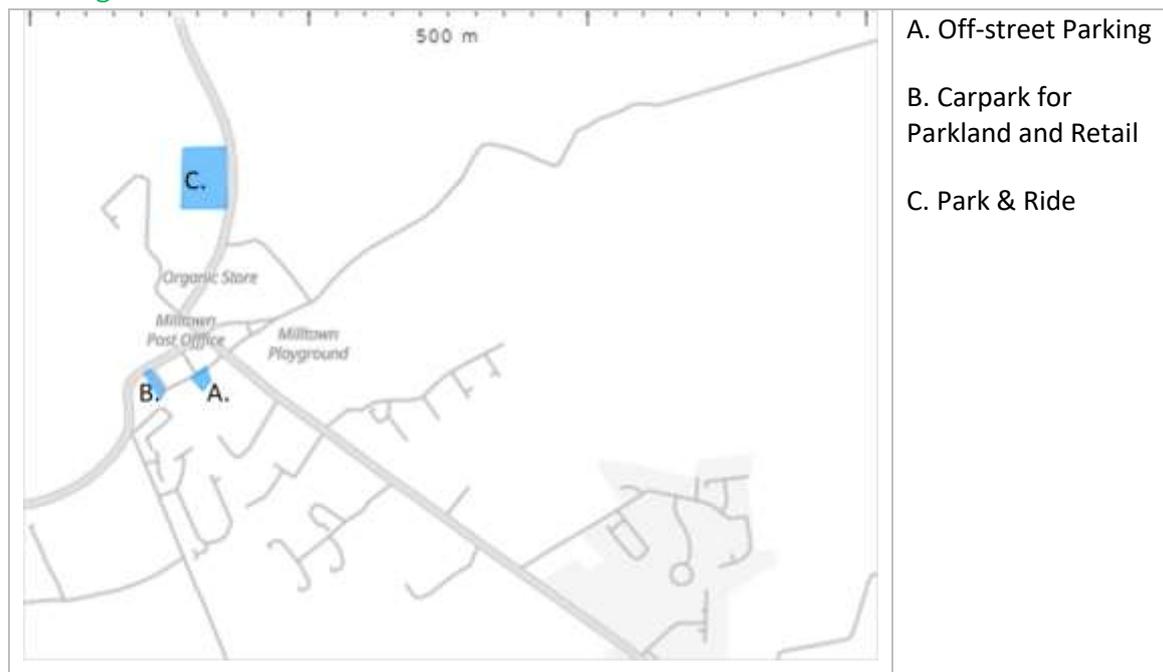
The workshops and conversations with Bus Éireann noted the need for bus shelters.

Green Infrastructure



- A. Work with local farmer / landowner to buy / lease / rent a site that would be suitable for allotments / a community garden. Enable people to GIY and arrange gardening / horticulture events (e.g., classes). Involve local schools and community groups (e.g., Men's Shed).
- B. Protect the native trees / woods in and around Milltown, and develop walking trails - for the benefit of locals and visitors alike.

Parking



- A. Provide off-street parking, using part of the site of the old boys' national school. Ensure spaces on Bridge Street and the other commercial areas are freed-up for customers, and not occupied by 'space blockers'.
- B. Construct a car park on Bridge Street, between existing retail premises and the proposed amphitheatre.
- C. Develop a park-and-ride facility, to encourage greater use of public transport and an increased uptake of car-pooling. The facility should be located within walking distance of the bus stop(s), but should not adversely affect other parking requirements.

Housing

The various consultations noted the importance of good quality housing – to cater for people in all stages of life – including family housing, apartments for couples and single people, retirement homes and social housing. The workshops also considered the zonings proposed by Kerry County Council, and emphasised re-focusing on the town centre, in line with government policy and local potential. There is a strong desire locally to end the perception of Milltown as a transitory community, and to foster greater integration of newcomers, so that people see themselves as belonging to Milltown, rather than passing through. Thus, there is a need to invest in community development and in local structures, as well as in bricks and mortar. In terms of housing design, the Chamber Alliance advocates the application of place-making principles, high quality design and sufficient provision of green spaces – for gardens and community recreation. New developments should avoid monolithic design, and be more in keeping with the local built environment. In terms of social housing, we recommend allocations within new and existing developments, rather than segregation. We also envisage a purpose-built scheme for older people incorporating e-health and smart technologies.

The following page presents the composite Geodesign map. This is the legend for that map:

No.	Project
1A	COMF 8 Town Park and Playground
1B	COMF 10 Old Church of Ireland - Arts Centre
1C	COMF 11 Open air amphitheatre
1D	COMF 24 School expansion and playing field
1E	COMF 28 Retain remaining green spaces adjacent to town centre
1F	COMF 31 GAA expansion
1G	COMF 39 Child Family and Community Hub
1H	COMF 41 Primary School Extension and parking
1I	COMF 42 Potential Crèche expansion
2A	CULH 4 Heritage Museum/ Walking Trail Information
2B	CULH 9 Heritage Quarter including grain store, Town Square
2C	CULH 15 Protect site for a future park
2D	CULH 16 Restore historic 'Ladies Walk'
3A	ATRANS 5 Walking / Bike trail
3B	ATRANS 11 River walkway to join estates and primary school
4A	TRANS 1 Mini roundabout
4B	TRANS 2 Traffic calming - safety
4C	TRANS 3 Bus Shelter
4D	TRANS 4 Parking/ Drop-off solution for Primary school.
5A	COM 1 Medical Centre
5B	COM 6 Light Industrial Business Park
5C	COM 20 Digital Hub
5D	COM 22 Redevelop Derelict/Vacant Buildings
5E	COM 23 Potential Commercial / Residential Town Centre
6A	PTRA 1 Keep Bus connection from Milltown to Castlemaine
6B	PTRA 2 Keep Bus route from Milltown to Killorglin
6C	PTRA 4 Keep Bus connection Milltown to Tralee
7A	GI 4 Allotments
7B	GI 6 Protect Native Woodland and Develop a trail
8A	P 1 Off-street parking
8B	P 2 Carpark for Parkland and Retail
8C	P 3 Park & Ride

COMMF: Community Facilities

CULH: Culture and Heritage

ATRANS: Active Travel

TRANS: Transport and Traffic

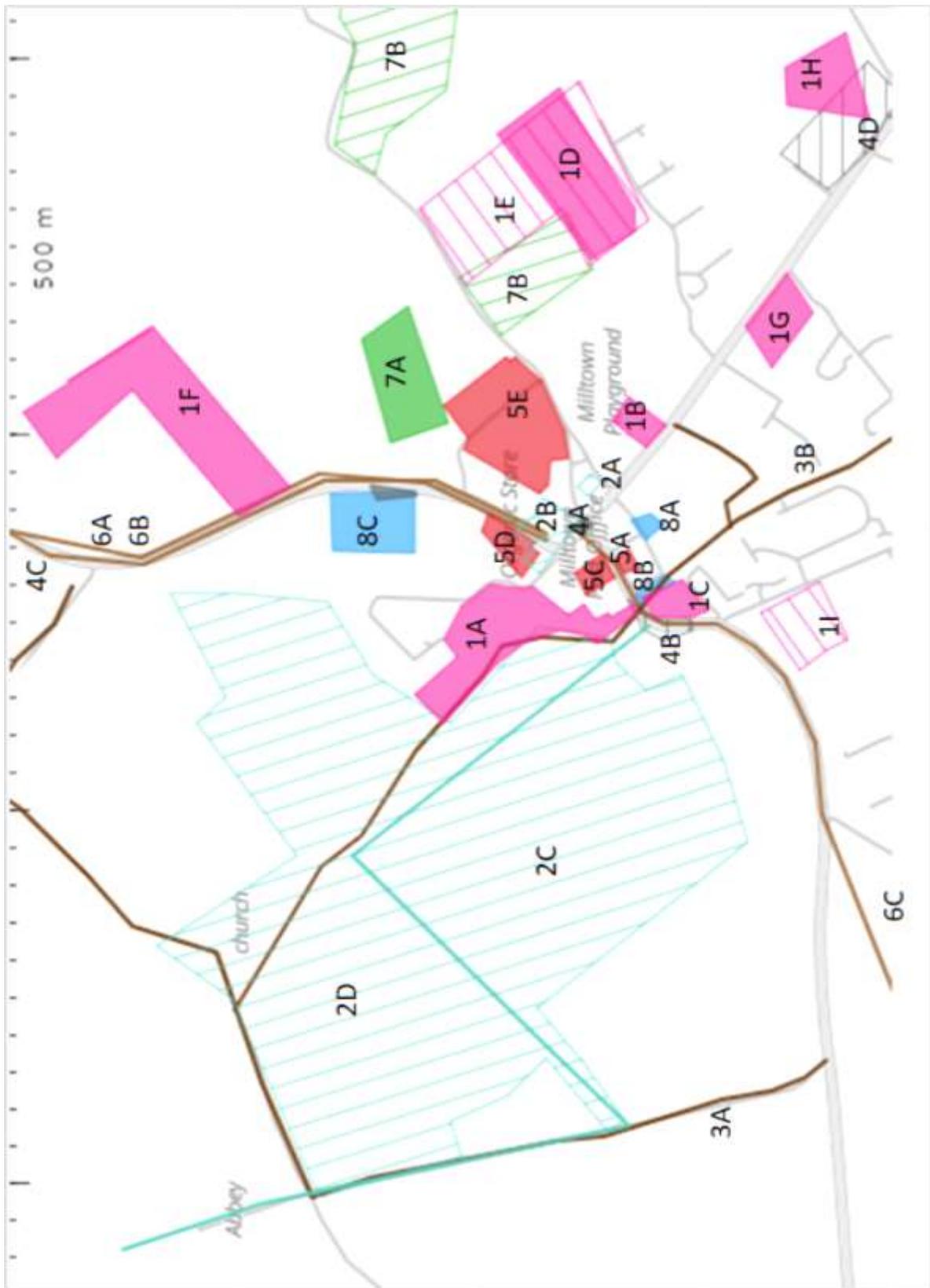
COM: Commerce / Economy

PTRA: Public Transport

GI: Green Infrastructure

P: Parking

Plate 14: Milltown Geodesign Composite Map

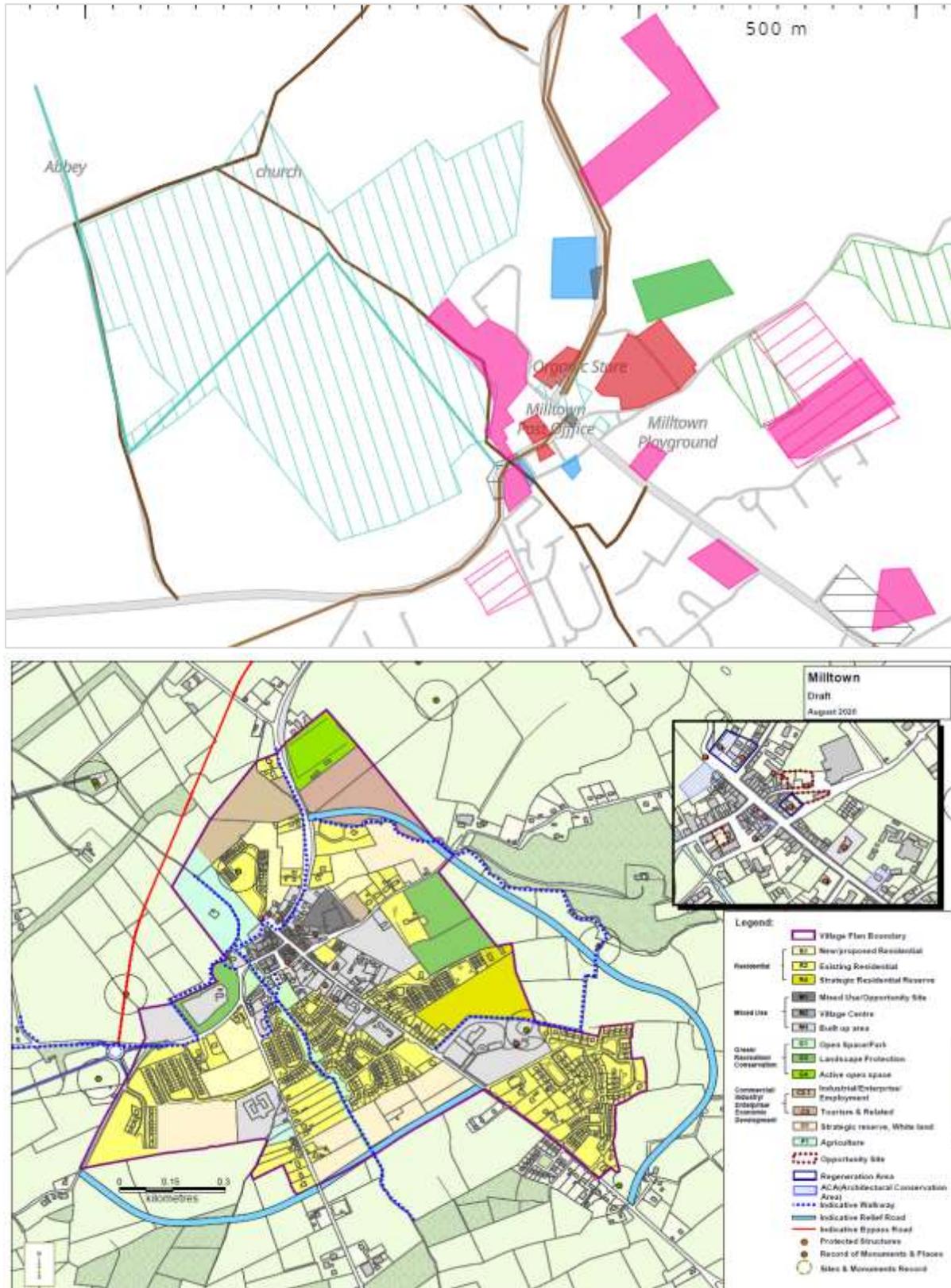


The following table presents the results of the ‘voting’ on the various proposals. These are listed here in sequence – based on the frequency with which they received public approval:

Table 1: Results of community voting on the Geodesign proposals

Proposal	No. Approvals
Parking/ drop-off solution for Primary School.	249
Walking / Bike trail	247
Medical Centre	238
Redevelop Derelict/Vacant Buildings	238
River Walkway to join estates and primary school	234
Town Park and Playground	232
Potential Commercial / Residential Town Centre	231
Light Industrial Business Park	230
Open-air Amphitheatre	229
School expansion and Playing Field	229
Old Church of Ireland - Arts Centre	228
Digital Hub	227
GAA expansion	226
Primary School Extension and Parking	223
Child Family and Community Hub	222
Keep Bus connection Milltown to Tralee	221
Keep Bus route from Milltown to Killorglin	221
Bus Shelter	220
Mini roundabout	220
Retain remaining green spaces adjacent to town centre	220
Keep Bus connection from Milltown to Castlemaine	218
Restore historic 'Ladies Walk'	218
Heritage Museum/ Walking Trail Information	217
Traffic calming - safety	216
Off-street parking	215
Potential Crèche expansion	215
Protect Native Woodland and Develop a trail	215
Protect site for a Future Park	215
Carpark for Parkland and Retail	212
Allotments	211
Heritage Quarter including grain store and town square	211
Park & Ride	204

Plate 15: Milltown Geodesign Map and KCC LAP Proposed Zoning



As the following table illustrates, Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance would like to see some re-classification of the zonings proposed by Kerry County Council.

Table 2: Promoting alignment between Milltown's Geodesign proposals and Kerry County Councils' proposed zonings

Project	KCC Proposed Zoning (August 2020)	Change Required
1A COMF 8 Town Park and Playground	G1 Open Space / Park	Yes - to amenity
1B COMF 10 Old Church of Ireland - Arts Centre	M4 Built Up Area & Protected Structure	No
1C COMF 11 Open air amphitheatre	G1 Open Space / Park	No
1D COMF 24 School expansion and playing field	M4 Built Up Area, and G3 Landscape Protection	Partly - on northern part
1E COMF 28 Retain remaining green space adjacent to town centre	G3 Landscape Protection and R2 Existing Residential	Partly - on southern part
1F COMF 31 GAA expansion	C5 Tourism and Related	Clarify
1G COMF 39 Child Family and Community Hub	M4 Built Up Area	No
1H COMF 41 Primary School Extension and Parking	M2 Village Centre	No
2A COMF 42 Potential Crèche expansion	R1 New / Proposed Residential	Yes
2B CULH 4 Heritage Museum/ Walking Trail Information	M4 Built Up Area	No
2C CULH 9 Heritage Quarter including grain store, Town Square	R2 Existing Residential & Village Centre	Clarify
2D CULH 15 Protect site for future park	Part G1 (open green space), but mainly outside town boundary	Yes
3A A TRANS 5 Walking / Bike trail	Outside town boundary	Yes
3B A TRANS 11 River walkway to join estates and primary school	Partly in 'indicative walkway'	Yes - expand
4A TRANS 1 Mini roundabout	Partly in 'indicative walkway'	Yes - expand
4B TRANS 2 Traffic calming - safety	In M1 areas (Mixed use and opportunity sites)	No
4C TRANS 3 bus shelter	Between green / recreation areas (G1 and G2)	No
4D TRANS 4 Parking/ Drop-off solution for Primary school.	C5 Tourism and Related	No
5A COM1 Medical Centre	M4 Built Up Area	No
5B COM6 Light Industrial Business Park	M4 Built Up Area	No
5C COM20 Digital Hub	M2 Village Centre	No
5D COM22 Redevelop Derelict/Vacant Buildings	M2 Village Centre	No
5E COM23 Potential Commercial / Residential Town Centre	M4 Built Up Area	No
6A PTR 1 Keep Bus connection from Milltown to Castle maine	M1 Mixed Use / Opportunity Site	No
6B PTR 2 Keep Bus route from Milltown to Killorglin	N/A	N/A
6C PTR 4 Keep Bus connection Milltown to Tralee	N/A	N/A
7A GI 4 Allotments	N/A	N/A
7B GI 6 Protect Native Woodland and Develop a trail	R1 New / Proposed Residential	Yes
8A P 1 Off-street parking	Mainly outside town boundary	Revise part labelled as existing residential
8B P 2 Carpark for Parkland and Retail	M4 Built Up Area	Partly
8C P 3 Park & Ride	M2 Village Centre	Partly
	R1 New / Proposed Residential	Yes

As the following table shows, several of the Milltown Geodesign proposals contribute to the attainment of LAP objectives as set out by Kerry County Council.

Table 3: Milltown Geodesign proposals' contributions to KCC Objectives, as stated in the draft LAP

No.	Project	MN-GO-05	MN-GO-10	MN-T-05	MN-TC-2	MN-TC-5
1A	COMF 8 Town Park and Playground					
1B	COMF 10 Old Church of Ireland - Arts Centre	MN-GO-05	MN-T-05	MN-TC-2		
1C	COMF 11 Open air amphitheatre	MN-GO-09	MN-T-05	MN-TC-2		
1D	COMF 24 School expansion and playing field					
1E	COMF 28 Retain remaining green spaces adjacent to town centre	MN-GO-05	MN-TC-2	MN-TC-5		
1F	COMF 31 GAA expansion	MN-T-05				
1G	COMF 39 Child Family and Community Hub	MN-GO-09	MN-TC-2	MN-TC-7		
1H	COMF 41 Primary School Extension and parking	MN-T-03				
1I	COMF 42 Potential Crèche expansion					
2A	CULH 4 Heritage Museum/ Walking Trail Information	MN-GO-05	MN-T-05	MN-TC-2		
2B	CULH 9 Heritage Quarter including grain store, Town Square	MN-GO-05	MN-GO-09	MN-TC-1	MN-TC-2	MN-TC-3
2C	CULH 15 Protect site for future park	MN-GO-05	MN-GO-09	MN-GO-10	MN-T-04	MN-TC-5
2D	CULH 16 Restore historic 'Ladies Walk'	MN-GO-05	MN-GO-09	MN-GO-10	MN-T-04	MN-TC-5
3A	ATrans 5 Walking / Bike trail	MN-GO-03	MN-GO-09	MN-T-01	MN-T-04	
3B	ATrans 11 River walkway to join estates and primary school	MN-GO-03	MN-GO-09	MN-T-01	MN-T-04	
4A	TRANS 1 Mini roundabout	MN-GO-07	MN-T-03	MN-TC-1		
4B	TRANS 2 Traffic calming - safety	MN-GO-03	MN-T-03	MN-TC-1		
4C	TRANS 3 bus shelter	MN-GO-07				
4D	TRANS 4 Parking/ Drop-off solution for Primary school.	MN-GO-07	MN-T-03	MN-TC-1		
5A	COM 1 Medical Centre					
5B	COM 6 Light Industrial Business Park	MN-GO-01				
5C	COM 20 Digital Hub	MN-GO-01	MN-GO-06	MN-TC-2	MN-TC-6	
5D	COM 22 Redevelop Derelict/Vacant Buildings	MN-GO-04	MN-GO-06	MN-TC-2		
5E	COM 23 Potential Commercial / Residential Town Centre	MN-GO-01	MN-GO-06	MN-TC-2		
6A	PTRA 1 Keep Bus connection from Milltown to Castlemaine	MN-GO-07				
6B	PTRA 2 Keep Bus route from Milltown to Killorglin	MN-GO-07				
6C	PTRA 4 Keep Bus connection Milltown to Tralee	MN-GO-07				
7A	GI 4 Allotments	MN-GO-10	MN-T-05			
7B	GI 6 Protect Native Woodland and Develop a trail	MN-GO-05	MN-GO-10	MN-T-05	MN-TC-5	
8A	P 1 Off-street parking	MN-GO-01	MN-GO-06	MN-T-03	MN-TC-2	
8B	P 2 Carpark for Parkland and Retail	MN-GO-01	MN-GO-06	MN-T-03	MN-TC-2	
8C	P 3 Park & Ride	MN-GO-07	MN-T-03			

As Table 3 shows, the draft LAP does not cater specifically (on pages 91 to 98) for project proposals 1D, 1I and 5A. However, as the LAP objectives articulate progressive objectives in respect of education and wellbeing, Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance looks forward to their explicit incorporation into the section relating specifically to Milltown. We also look forward to due support from the Health Service Executive (HSE) and Department of Education and Skills (DES) in giving effect to these proposals and ensuring enhanced service provision for children / youth and our older citizens.

Youth

Many of the projects and proposals presented here are motivated by the need to retrofit local infrastructure and to address the service provision gaps that have emerged in Milltown. They also take account of the town's demographics, and in particular its significant youth population and anticipated increase. In addition, we note the need for a specific youth space, and we have spoken to Kerry Diocesan Youth Service (KDYS) and the Nagle-Rice Secondary School about a dedicated youth project. We recommend making such an investment, and we support the recruitment of a local youth worker, even on a part-time basis. We strongly advocate harnessing youth creativity and imagination, and building their capacity, particularly in designing and delivering public realm projects. Our young people are well informed about environmental issues, including how best to ameliorate and mitigate climate disruption. Their vision for sustainable communities needs to shine through in formulating the Milltown masterplan.

6. Conclusion – mapping the way ahead

Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance acknowledges the support of Kerry County Council in enabling us to undertake local consultations, carry out research and engage professional support to ensure an evidence-based and inclusive approach to the formulation of this submission. This submission focuses specifically on the draft Local Area Plan for the An Daingean Electoral Area (2020-2026), and it represents part of our vision for Milltown's sustainable development over the coming decade. Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance looks forward to ongoing collaboration with Kerry County Council and other bodies in giving effect to the vision, objectives and proposals presented here. We contend that partnership and citizen engagement underpin best practices in spatial planning.

In consulting with local citizens, organisations and service providers, Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance sought to give effect to the principles of place-making and healthy communities. Thus, the actions proposed in this document represent strategic contributions to enabling local economic development, social cohesion and ecological responsibility. The consultations and research enabled us to identify and valorise local assets, particularly our landscape and heritage resources. Engagements over the past few months have allowed for a greater and clearer articulation of community needs and priorities, particularly investing in our schools, promoting active travel, providing more recreational amenities / spaces, energising a more attractive public realm and promoting family well-being.

Over the past two decades, Milltown was the fastest growing town in County Kerry. We welcome all those who have come to live in Milltown, and we hope they will commit to, and work with, our community. During this period of growth, mistakes were made, and infrastructure and service provision have not kept pace with population growth. Indeed, there can be a false perception in some quarters that because Milltown has experienced housing developments it has modern or sufficient infrastructure to cater for its population. This perception needs to be challenged. We encourage all agencies to learn from these mistakes and to ensure that planning and development are more people-centred and place-appropriate.

The forthcoming LAP, County Development Plan and Milltown masterplan afford opportunities to recalibrate planning and development, and to ensure that Milltown becomes an exemplar of best practice in spatial planning, design and liveable communities. The Chamber Alliance commits to supporting and engaging in these and other channels through which to promote Milltown's vitality. We recommend the continuation of consultative planning and the appointment of a town architect. We look forward to the rejuvenation of our town core, sequential development, the arrest of sprawl, a better quality built environment, universal valorisation of our heritage landscapes and historical geography, enhanced provision of community facilities and a more vibrant local economy. Our town and its environs have a strong suite of assets, and we need to play to our strengths.

The vision articulated here and the various Geodesign proposals seek to add value to the draft LAP and the objectives presented by Kerry County Council. In several respects, there is common purpose and close alignment between the LAP provisions and community priorities, while, as noted in Chapter 5, there ought to be some re-working of provisions to better reflect local needs, potential and strategic priorities.

Community Planning in Milltown 2020 – 2026

Phase 1: Citizen Consultations

Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance

Prepared by: Breandán Ó Caoimh
July 2020

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List of acronyms

CDP	County Development Plan
FLAP	Functional Local Area Plan
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
GDA	Greater Dublin Area
KCC	Kerry County Council
LAP	Local Area Plan
MCCA	Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance
NDP	National Development Plan
NPF	National Planning Framework
NRA	National Roads Authority
NSS	National Spatial Strategy
RSES	Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy
UNSDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
WFD	Water Framework Directive

Foreword

Twenty years ago, few of us could have anticipated the level of growth that has taken place in Milltown. Our community is now home to many people who, prior to coming here, had few if any connections with Milltown. We welcome those who have come to live in Milltown, and we hope they will be active, happy and committed citizens in our community. While there have been many positive changes in Milltown over the past two decades, there have been some unintended and unplanned consequences of population growth. Our local infrastructure is under pressure, service provision has not kept pace with demographics and many of those who have come to our community are obliged to commute long distances, rather than work locally. We have learned a great deal about planning and development over the past twenty years, and the forthcoming local area plan (LAP) and county development plan provide opportunities for our community, Kerry County Council and other bodies to apply those lessons and to ensure that planning and development are people centred and place appropriate.

Citizen / community participation is an essential component in spatial planning. Thus, Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance, with the support of Kerry County Council, has initiated a community consultation process – designed to inform our submission to Kerry County Council, as part of the process to formulate the LAP (2020-2026) for the An Daingean Local Electoral Area (to which Milltown now belongs). This report presents the outcomes of those consultations, and it outlines a vision and set of priorities for Milltown’s future development.

Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance wishes to acknowledge the support of Kerry County Council in enabling us to compile this report. We want to thank the many local people and organisations who committed their time to this process, and who came forward with excellent ideas and proposals. This document and the associated processes represent the first step in a two-stage process to formulate a submission that is evidence based, visionary, strategic and promotive of a vibrant community and local economy.

Stewart Stephens

Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance

1. Introduction and overview

This document presents the outputs of a community consultation process initiated and led by Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance (MCCA). The consultation process, which was supported by Kerry County Council (KCC), provided local citizens and organisations with a structured set of opportunities to have a say in shaping Milltown's future development. Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance engaged Dr Breandán Ó Caoimh and Paul O'Raw to co-facilitate the consultation process. They had previously worked with the community (in 2018), and their work had provided useful baselines and pointers at that time.

While the consultations can be seen as a standalone process – to inform community planning in a general sense - they were timed to enable Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance to feed into the formulation of a Local Area Plan (LAP) – as part of Kerry County Council's Municipal District Plan for Castleisland and Corca Dhuibhne. Kerry County Council sought public submissions to inform the LAP, and in June 2020, the Council circulated an issues paper in respect of its forthcoming county development plan. This outlines the County Council's main goals for the planning period, relevant policy issues and the anticipated timeline for the formulation of the plan.

This community consultation process builds on the planning work done with Kerry County Council in 2018, and it aligns with, and gives effect to, the brief and work programme of Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance. The consultations involved a systematic approach, as follows:

- Meetings between the Chamber Alliance and the facilitators;
- Citizen Survey – using the Place Standard toolkit; and
- A series of thematic workshops.

The initial meetings, which took place in early March 2020, allowed stakeholders (MCCA, KCC and the facilitators) to take stock of local assets, issues, development potential and possible projects that could enhance Milltown's built environment and improve people's quality of life. The citizen survey provided local people with an opportunity to assess their locality's vitality on a range of indicators. The survey instrument was based on the Place Standard, which is widely used to support local area planning in Scotland. Due to public health guidelines, the thematic workshops took place on an on-line platform. These were held in June, and their thematic foci encompassed all dimensions of the Place Standard and the issues that had been identified in Kerry County Council's planning issues paper. The thematic headings were: mobility and accessibility; economic development; community wellbeing; and the environment. All workshops considered governance and community participation as an overarching and cross-cutting theme.

The activities and outputs documented here represent the first phase in a two-step process to formulate a more specific set of proposals, including infrastructural projects, to improve liveability, promote conservation and stimulate economic development in Milltown and its environs.

2. The principles of good planning and place-making

Over the past twenty years, and in particular since the enactment of the Planning and Development Act (2000), planning has become a more inclusive and participatory process. Local authorities have engaged communities more in the planning process, as they recognise the value of local knowledge, insights and support in ensuring that plans are well-received and more likely to succeed. Community and voluntary organisations bring particular perspectives and expertise to the planning process, and they complement the technical expertise and professional qualifications of planners, engineers and others in the local government and planning systems. As well as being more participatory, planning has acquired a broader remit. Previously, planning was almost entirely preoccupied with zoning and land use. Today, planning can be used as a tool to enable economic development; it creates the conditions in which activities can happen and businesses can flourish. Planning is about creating communities, and good planning can significantly enhance citizens' quality of life. Good planning also seeks to harness local assets and to enable places to realise their potential. Thus, we speak about 'vision planning' – devising plans on the basis of an agreed and shared vision – so that planning is enabling and ensures sustainable community and territorial development.

In the transition from traditional top-down and trend-planning to more inclusive and collaborative approaches, core principles have emerged that guide and shape successful plans. These introduce the notion of place-making, and emphasise that place and community matter. In a review of the evolution of planning approaches, in Ireland, Dr Conor Norton (President of the Irish Planning Institute) noted that, "place-making is a multi-faceted and multi-party approach to improving and creating quality places. It focuses on the interaction between people and the urban environment and achieving a high quality of life, sense of place and belonging". Dr Norton went on to remark that a quality place has "a strong character and sense of place – cultural, built and natural heritage is understood, valued and enhanced. A rich diversity of functions and activities – underpinning viability and vitality"¹. Established good practices in planning demonstrate the importance of plan-led development, rather than developer-led planning. The latter was prevalent in Ireland, particularly during the period 1995 to 2008, and was among the main contributors to the financial crisis, environmental degradation and declines in citizens' quality of life (especially among residents of suburban housing estates).

The community-based planning process that took place in Milltown between April and June 2020 sought to reflect the principles of place-making, which have been defined as follows:

The Principles of Place-making

1. The community is the expert.
2. You are creating a place, not a design.
3. You can't do it alone.
4. They'll always say, "It can't be done."
5. You can see a lot just by observing.
6. Develop a vision.
7. Form supports function.
8. Triangulate (locating elements next to each other in a way that fosters activity).
9. Start with the petunias.
10. Money is not the issue.
11. You are never finished.

¹ Irish Planning Institute Webinar (April 2020) [Urban Regeneration and Placemaking](#).

These principles need to be constants in planning and in catering for, and enabling, Milltown's ongoing and sustained development. The initial planning processes in 2018 and 2020 represent the laying of solid foundations, in respect of place-making, and it is important to embed and mainstream them in all future planning-related engagements.

The challenges and opportunities associated with supporting the rejuvenation of rural towns were highlighted in a recent RTÉ [Eco Eye programme](#). Many rural towns, Milltown included, are suffering the ill-effects of suburbanisation. This is evident in a proliferation of new housing estates on the approach roads to the town, whilst the town is losing population and becoming increasingly derelict. Fortunately, the situation in Milltown is not as grave as in other locations, as the town remains reasonably compact and most of the housing estates are within a 10 to 15 minute walk of the town centre. In order to address sprawl, many plans, including the Kerry County Development Plan, emphasise compact and sequential growth. This implies stimulating growth / development / activity in the town core, and gradually progressing from there outwards – in a sequential manner – like concentric circles. At the same time as consolidating town cores, good planning implies that communities have abundant civic, amenity, recreational and green spaces. This can present challenges, particularly when local communities advocate for increased green spaces, while local authorities are under pressure to meet housing provision targets. Therefore, plans should prioritise the re-use of brownfield sites and derelict buildings, rather than developing new sites.

While plans are shaped and devised locally and at county level, they have to have due regard for global imperatives, particularly the amelioration and mitigation of climate disruption. Planning needs to ensure the avoidance of building on floodplains (actual and possible) and in areas of environmental sensitivity. It also needs to minimise reliance on private transportation, and to encourage the development of walkable neighbourhoods and the use of public transport. Reducing Ireland's dependence on fossil fuels makes good economic and political sense, as oil prices are susceptible to external shocks, and the commodity itself is generally imported from autocratic Middle Eastern countries, many of which have considerable wealth gaps – a rich elite and a large underclass. National, regional and sub-regional plans increasingly have regard to the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(UNSDGs\)](#). These offer a framework for integrated economic development, social progress and environmental protection; they give effect to the maxim 'think global, act local'.

Collaborative spatial planning implies that planning authorities work with communities and that community organisations – working in partnership with local development companies - seek to empower and give voice to all local stakeholders. It also implies collaboration with neighbouring communities and between town and countryside. In practice, Milltown's development trajectory needs to complement those of Listry, Castlemaine, Killorglin and other communities, and that communities support one another. Towns such as Milltown were established and developed as market places, and their future development will continue to rely on inputs from the surrounding community, while rural areas will benefit from Milltown's enhanced standing as a commercial and service centre.

3. The Planning Context

The forthcoming Local Area Plan (LAP) will have provisions relating to Milltown and the surrounding communities, including Castlemaine and Listry. These will deal with spatial planning matters including land use, zoning, transportation, the protection of particular structures and environments. The LAP will outline how each settlement / community will contribute to the overall development of the Castleisland and Corca Dhuibhne Municipal District (MD). All MDs in Kerry will have their own LAPs, and these will operate within the framework of the county development plan, which will be on a statutory footing, and will therefore be binding in respect of development policies and practices across County Kerry.

County development plans and LAPs are situated within a hierarchy of plans, all of which relate to the National Planning Framework (2018-2040). Recent reforms of the Irish planning system have sought to avoid the mistakes that were made during the so-called ‘tiger’ years. In order to curb over-zoning of land for development and other malpractices, the government established an [Office of the Planning Regulator](#) to oversee the planning process in Ireland. The system has become more participatory, as noted already, and is characterised by a greater level of transparency. Citizens can access information about local authority plans, including zoning maps, on a dedicated website www.myplan.ie.

Ireland’s [National Planning Framework](#) (NPF) is part of [Project Ireland 2040](#) – a vision for the spatial development of the country over the next twenty years. Over the next two decades, the population of the State is expected to grow by one million, and government has recognised the need for a balanced and sustainable distribution of this population and the associated services and infrastructure. The NPF states that at least half the additional population growth will be allocated to the main cities outside of the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), and it sets targets for regional populations. The National Planning Framework is a successor to the National Spatial Strategy (NSS), which had commenced in 2002. One of the fundamental differences between these two overarching strategies is that, unlike the NSS, the NPF is on a statutory footing. Moreover, it is linked to government spending including the National Development Plan (NDP). Therefore, local authorities and others engaged in planning, including community organisations, must align objectives with those of the NDP in order to be able to access State supports.

In terms of County Kerry, the NPF notes that the county is part of the [Atlantic Economic Corridor](#) (AEC) – from West Cork to Derry, and it emphasises inter-county connectivity. The NPF also refers to the growth of the Limerick-Shannon and Cork Metropolitan Areas, which it envisages as driving growth in the Mid-West and South-West Regions. Thus, connectivity to these metropolitan zones is in Kerry’s strategic interest, and is associated with the commencement of the Adare and Macroom bypasses. The NPF commits to the strengthening of towns across North Cork and County Kerry.

Since 2014, Ireland has three regional assembly areas. Kerry pertains to the Southern Regional Assembly area, and the Regional Assembly is charged with operationalising the NPF at regional level and to guiding local authorities in the preparation of county (and city) development plans. To this end, the Southern Regional Assembly has recently published a [Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy](#) (RSES). In concert with the NPF, the RSES notes the significance of the metropolitan zones and inter-county / regional connectivity. Noting the outgoing Kerry County Development Plan and the submission it received from Kerry County Council, the Regional Assembly refers to the ‘knowledge triangle’ of Tralee-Killarney-Killorglin, which, it notes, “is an established network with the aim to drive economic growth and capitalise on connectivity to the Cork and Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Areas

and the AEC. Shared assets include existing third-level education, a technology park, ports, an airport and world-leading indigenous companies in sectors, such as fin-tech and agri-tech. Investment in the Hub is key to development of a knowledge cluster and service design and innovation hub at Killorglin, focusing on research and development innovation and product prototyping”. Chapter Four of the RSES refers to the knowledge triangle as an example of regional innovation.

In June 2020, Kerry County Council released an [issues paper](#) – outlining the issues that it anticipates addressing in its forthcoming (2022-2028) County Development Plan (CDP). The Council will be preparing this plan over the next eighteen months, and has invited submissions from the public. The forthcoming plan may incorporate and continue elements of the previous CDP (2015-2021), and will take stock of lessons arising from its delivery over the past five years. The 2015-2021 plan was significant for Milltown, as it paralleled a period of significant growth and consolidation. The plan referred to Milltown as a ‘district town’, having dual functions – as a service centre and market town. It states that it was important to ensure that Milltown had adequate retail space – in line with retail guidelines and with the town’s scale, character and function. It also referred to, and included, the N70 bypass, relief roads and investments in the transfer station.

In parallel to the CDP, Kerry County Council implemented a [Functional Local Area Plan](#) (FLAP) for the Tralee-Killarney Hub, and the surrounding areas. Milltown was included in this FLAP, which covered the period 2013-2019. The FLAP noted that Milltown had / has a “reasonable degree of self-sufficiency” and that its functions are “complementary to Tralee and Killarney”. It envisaged “a critical mass of population for Milltown, so that it plays a major role in the region with its own identity, employment opportunities and tourist facilities”. Specifically, the FLAP projected an additional housing need (in Milltown) of 168 units – requiring an additional 20.4 hectares of land (to be zoned for housing). The zoning map, as presented in the FLAP, is presented in Annex 1 of this report. The FLAP stated, “the overall vision for Milltown is to ensure that it develops sustainably as a market town which is an attractive location for residents and tourists alike and that future development preserves the town’s character and reinforces it where necessary” (page 89).

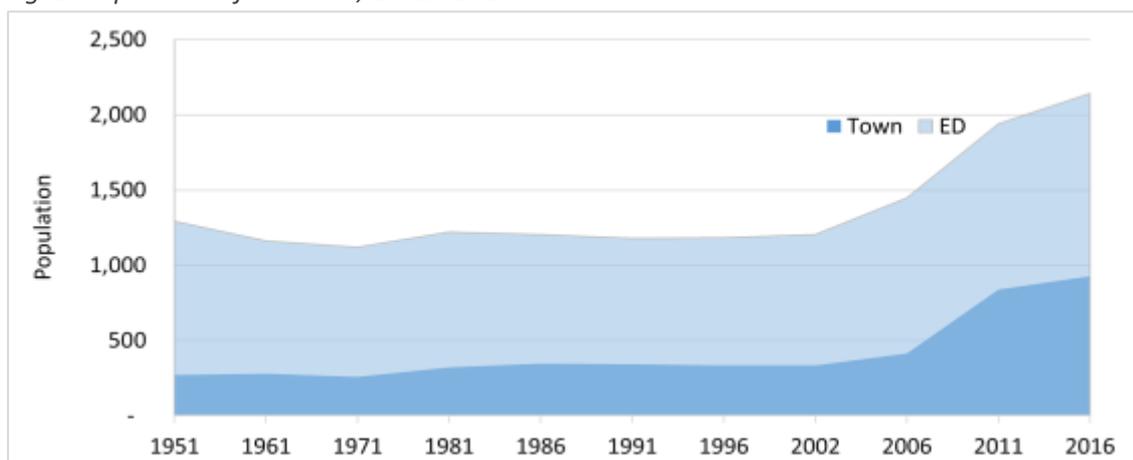
Kerry County Council (KCC) is currently working on two spatial plans that are directly relevant to Milltown. At sub-county level, the Council has a series of Local Area Plans (LAPs) - generally aligned with municipal districts, or functional parts thereof, and Milltown is included as part of the LAP for the [Castleisland and Corca Dhuibhne Municipal District](#). This LAP is currently being finalised, and its timeframe is a significant mobilising and motivating factor behind the current consultations in Milltown. The LAP will sit within the framework of the County Development Plan 2022-2028, and in the aforementioned issues paper, relating to this, KCC has identified and set out a number of issues and considerations. In addition to articulating county-level commitments in respect of regional development, attracting investment and ameliorating climate change, it advances issues and features that resonate with current community-level deliberations in Milltown including:

- Increasing the population of our towns and villages;
- Emphasising compact growth – building up town cores, rather than permitting residential and other developments on town peripheries, and focusing on infill and brown field sites within the existing footprint of settlements.
- Promoting town centre vibrancy and vitality;
- Creating high quality (urban and rural) environments; and
- Accommodating the needs of our ageing and diverse households.

4. Demographic and socio-economic characteristics

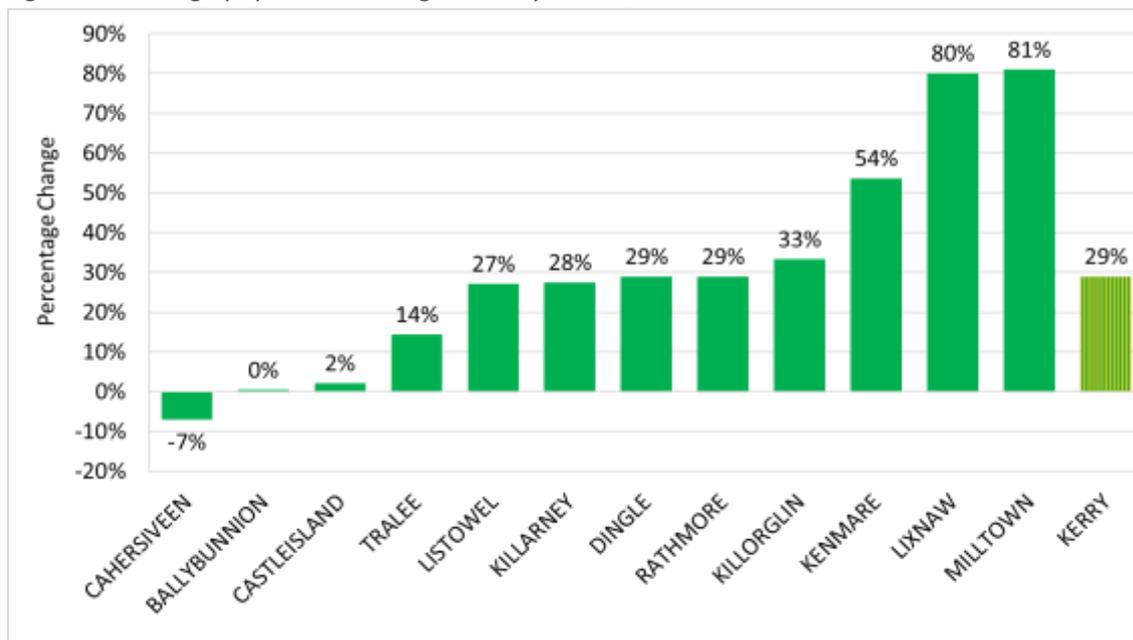
Along with Lixnaw, Milltown is, over the past two decades, the fastest-growing settlement in County Kerry. As the following graph shows, the town and its environs have experienced substantial population growth since 2002. The figures from the most recent Census of Population (2016) reveal that the Electoral Division (ED) of Milltown had a population of 2,142, while the town itself had 928 residents². Since the previous census (2011), the population of the ED increased by 203 persons (10.5%), while the town's population grew by 90 (10.7%). Over the same period, the population of Kerry increased by 1.5%, while Ireland's total population grew by 3.8%.

Fig. 1: Population of Milltown, 1951 - 2016



The following graph sets Milltown's growth in context – the fastest among Kerry's towns since 1996 and almost three-times faster than the county level.

Fig. 2: Percentage population change in Kerry towns, 1996 - 2016

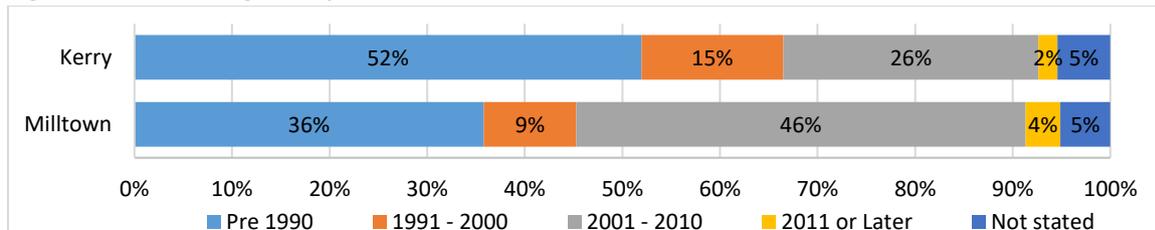


² The town boundary is indicated by the purple line in the zoning map (see annex one). Some of the newer housing estates on the Killarney Road are outside the current town boundary. In order to enable longitudinal analysis, all values are at Electoral Division (ED) level.

Over the coming decade, Milltown’s population is projected to increase further. The town’s waste water treatment facility has capacity for a population of 3,500. Therefore, in the context of the [Water Framework Directive](#) (WFD) and other legislation, there is an onus on Kerry County Council to promote population growth in areas, such as Milltown, that have the requisite carrying capacity.

Among the other drivers of population growth in Milltown has been the availability of land and the level of housing construction. Over half the housing stock was built since 2001.

Fig. 2: Housebuilding: Timeframe in which houses were built



It is notable that despite the relatively new housing stock, households in Milltown have a high level of dependence on imported fossil fuels; over two-thirds (68%) of homes are heated using oil. A further thirteen percent use coal or turf as their primary fuel.

Milltown’s growth has distinctive local features, while also reflecting those of the surrounding areas in Mid-Kerry, as the following maps shows. The core of the county has experienced population growth, while decline persists in much of the periphery. The core, and in particular the areas closest to Killarney, have the highest levels of household income (among the resident population).

Fig. 3: Percentage population change in County Kerry, at ED level, 1996 – 2016

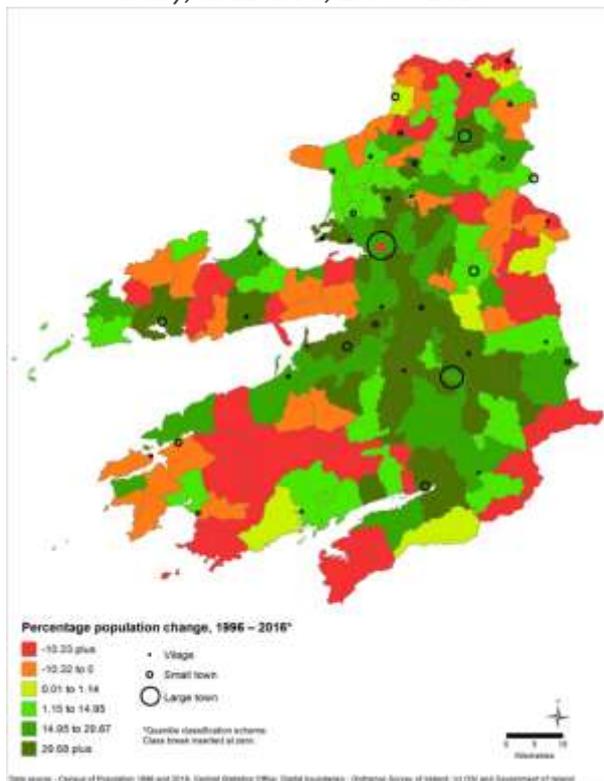
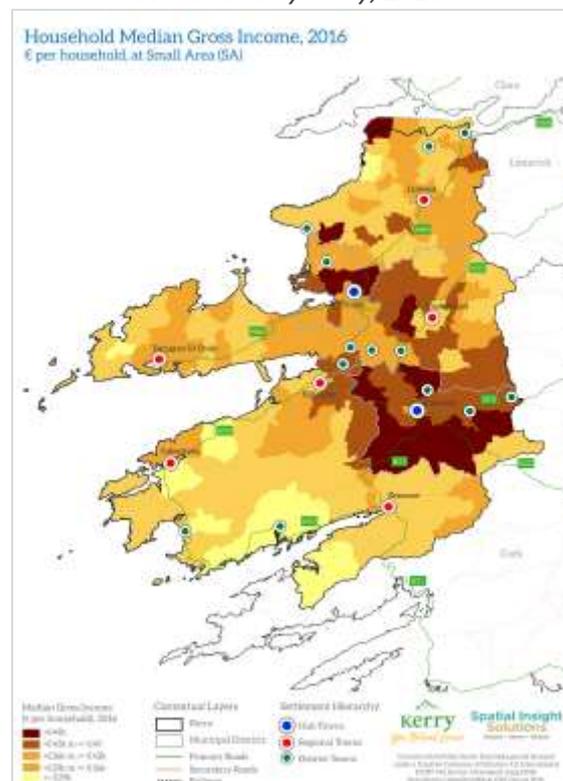


Fig. 4: Median gross household income, at SA-level in County Kerry, 2016

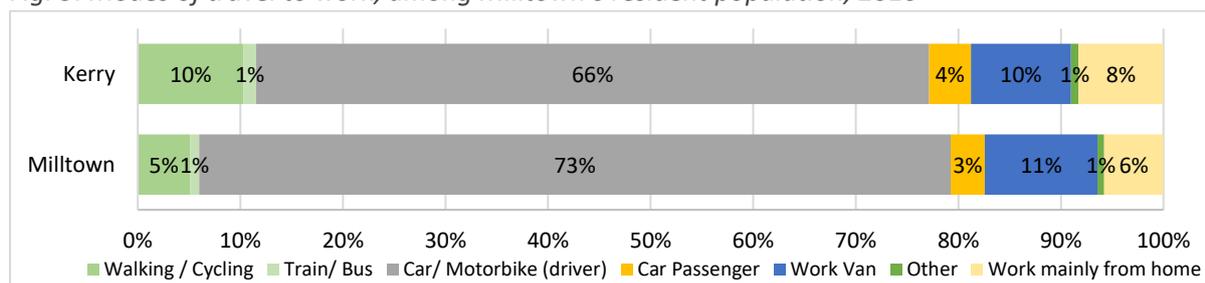


Associated with its exponential levels of population growth, Milltown has, relative to County Kerry (as a whole):

- A relatively young age profile;
- A more diverse population – a higher proportion of persons born outside the State;
- A high level of participation in the workforce and a low level of unemployment;
- High levels of out-bound commuting; and
- High levels of dependence on the private car.

Almost three-quarters (73%) of Milltown’s resident working population travel to work by private car. Only one percent uses public transport, while five percent walk or cycle to work.

Fig. 5: Modes of travel to work, among Milltown’s resident population, 2016



The following table shows commuters’ destinations.

Table 1: Travel to Work, School and College – destinations of Milltown (ED) residents³

Within Kerry		Outside Kerry	
Destination	Persons	Destination	Persons
Milltown	372	Cork City	24
Killarney	211	Cork County	15
Killorglin	179	Limerick City and County	12
Tralee	138	Dublin City	9
Kiltallagh / Castlemaine	34	South Dublin	4
Beaufort / Kilbognet	12	Dún-Laoghaire Rathdown	2
Farranfore	9	<i>Elsewhere in Ireland</i>	9
Castleisland	9	Overseas	2
<i>Elsewhere in Kerry</i>	82		
Total	1,046		77

The Census of Population data (POWSCAR database) also reveal that 1,152 people travel into Milltown. Assuming 880 of these (1,046 persons) are students (based on school numbers), Milltown has approximately 400 in-bound commuters – c.36% of the number of outbound commuters. The census data reveal that 55 people travel from Killarney to Milltown, while 54 travel from Killorglin.

In essence, Milltown is a rapidly growing town, with a vibrant population profile, that serves as a commuter base. Over the coming years, the development of a more sustainable community will necessitate investment in transport, local infrastructure and amenities and economic development – so that the town becomes more than a dormitory town, in which residents have an improved quality of life and better environment.

³ The school-going population equals approximately 800.

5. Place Standard Findings

In order to add to the evidence base underpinning its analysis and its engagements with Kerry County Council, Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance, applied the [Place Standard](#) to enable local citizens to assess Milltown's current standing on a range of indicators. The Place Standard is widely used as a planning tool, particularly in Scotland, where the government actively encourages its use. It allows communities to award a score – ranging from zero to seven (0 to 7) – depending on their perspectives, on fourteen dimensions of place, as follows:

- Natural Space;
- Feeling Safe;
- Care and Maintenance;
- Play and Recreation;
- Identity and Belonging;
- Community Engagement / Participation;
- Moving Around;
- Streets and Spaces;
- Social Contact / Amenities;
- Traffic and Parking;
- Housing;
- Facilities and Amenities;
- Work and Local Economy; and
- Public Transport.

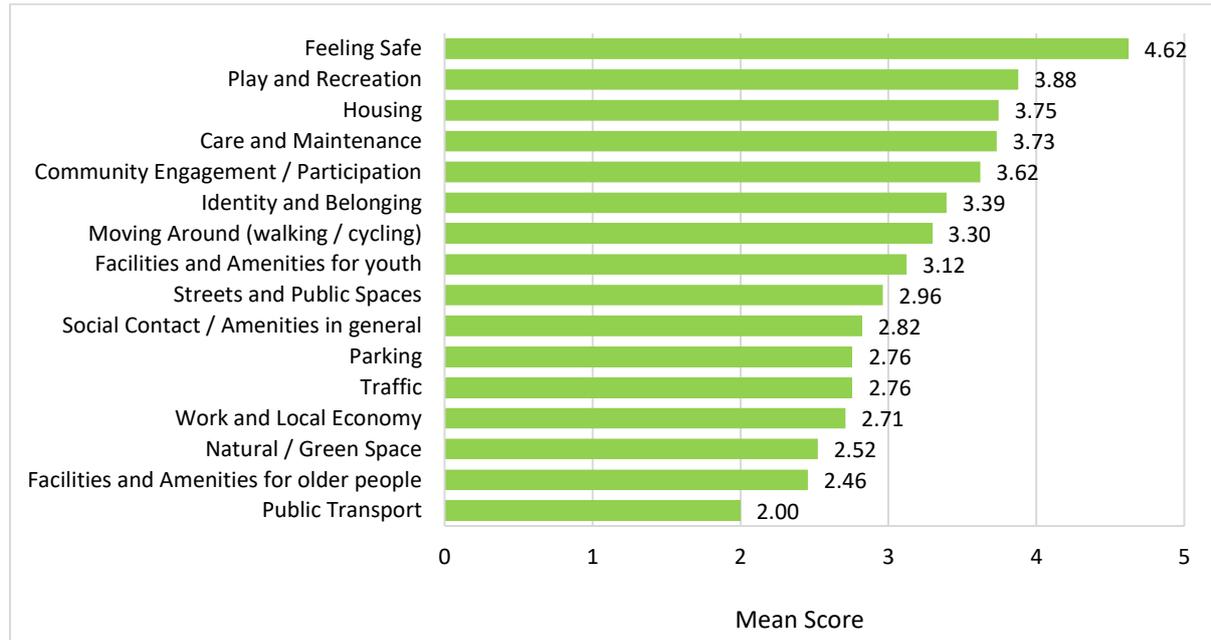
On reviewing the Place Standard, the members of Milltown Community and Chamber Alliance revised the standard tool. They decided to further develop the indicator 'facilities and amenities', and to add complementary indicators as follows: 'facilities and amenities for youth' and 'facilities and amenities for older people'. They also separated out 'traffic' and 'parking', as both are distinctive in the local context.

In addition to inviting respondents to score (0 to 7) Milltown on each of these sixteen dimensions of place, the questionnaire asked local citizens to assess how / if they perceived Milltown to have changed over the past five years. It also asked them to identify the community's main assets, challenges and development priorities.

The Place Standard questionnaire was available in on-line and hard-copy formats, and members of the MCCA actively promoted its uptake locally. The consultants promoted the Place Standard among members of the Milltown-Castlemaine GAA Club and with Mid-Kerry Macra na Feirme. The Maine Valley Family Resource Centre arranged for the questionnaire's translation into Polish, and this was taken-up by Polish-speakers locally. In total, 230 completed questionnaires were returned, and the consultants processed these, and collated the data.

The following graph presents the mean (average) scores awarded to each dimension of place:

Fig. 6: Mean Scores on the Place Standard, as awarded to Milltown, 2020



As the graph shows, the mean values range from 2.0 to 4.62. The dimension of place that receives the highest score is ‘feeling safe’. Other variables that receive relatively high scores are: ‘play and recreation’, ‘housing’ and ‘care and maintenance’. These scores indicate that those are the dimensions of place that are among Milltown’s greatest strengths, and which should therefore be consolidated.

The place standard findings indicate that the dimensions (of place) that are least favourably perceived are ‘public transport’, ‘facilities / amenities for older people’ and ‘natural / green spaces’. The scores awarded to them indicate that they require considerable investment / renewal.

Looking objectively at the data / responses, it is noteworthy that just six (of sixteen) dimensions of place record scores that are above 3.5 (the mid-way point on a continuum from 0 to 7 – the range of scores open to respondents). Thus, this set of responses points to the need for considerable and concerted efforts to enhance several aspects of the locality / town.

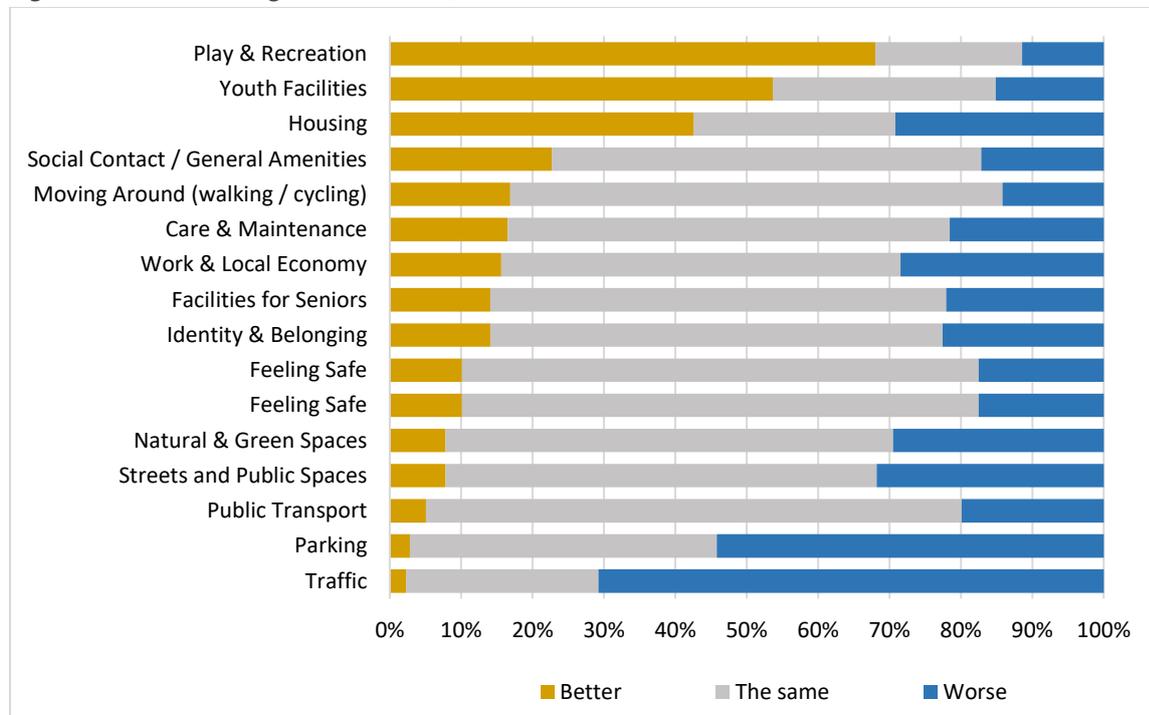
The following graph presents respondents’ perceptions of changes in Milltown over the past five years. It reveals that over half of local citizens perceive that there has been positive change in respect of ‘play and recreation’ and ‘youth facilities’. Their qualitative responses and the subsequent workshop discussions indicate that the development of the Nagle-Rice Centre is the most significant driver of positive change in respect of these dimensions of place.

The survey responses reveal mixed perceptions regarding housing. In their answers to the open-ended questions, respondents noted that housing is more affordable than in Killarney, but several expressed concerns over what they perceive to be poor building quality, siting and landscaping. Several respondents stated that there have been too many housing developments in Milltown, and that the resultant population growth is putting undue pressure on local services and infrastructure.

As the graph shows, the dominant (modal / most frequent) response is ‘the same’ (no change). This is the case in respect of thirteen (of the sixteen) variables. Considering the level of population growth

that Milltown has experienced, and is likely to continue to experience, these responses indicate that the town will experience infrastructure and service deficits unless investments keep pace with demographic change.

Fig. 7: Perceived changes in Milltown, 2015-2020



The survey questionnaire included a number of open-ended questions. These asked respondents to list Milltown’s main strengths and challenges. It also asked them to identify development priorities and to suggest ways in which stakeholders could tangibly move forward. The following wordclouds summarise their responses in respect of assets and challenges.

According to respondents, Milltown’s main assets are its schools (primary and post-primary), its central location in Mid-Kerry (relatively close to Tralee, Killarney, Killorglin and to recreational areas). The Nagle-Rice Centre features strongly, and respondents referred directly to it and / or to the associated facilities such as the playground and astro-turf pitch. Milltown’s commercial offering also features prominently in the responses, with several references to shops (in general) and to specific retailers. The Church and parish personnel feature strongly, as does the mart. People and community were frequently mentioned.

The responses reveal that Milltown has a significant asset base, and that the community can further harness and capitalise on several local features – particularly its geographical, social and commercial strengths.

Fig. 8: Milltown's main assets



The main challenges identified in the survey relate to schools, traffic and housing. These are all interlinked. While its schools are among its main assets, Milltown's schools are challenged to provide places for all those who wish to attend. Though their buildings are new, it is evident that they are too small to cater for the current population, let alone the projected increase. As a consequence, many local children are unable to get a place in their nearest school, and several are travelling to other towns, notably to Killorglin. This is a significant concern to families in Milltown and the surrounding rural areas.

As the following wordcloud shows, traffic is a significant challenge. The main issue is that there is considerable traffic congestion, at peak times – when schools open and close and when commuters are travelling to and from Fexco (in Killorglin). Thus, the findings and subsequent workshop discussions point to the need for congestion alleviation measures within the town. Some contributors suggested staggering school opening times.

Facilities and amenities – or more precisely the lack thereof – feature strongly among the challenges. There is a strong sense among local citizens that the provision of amenities, particularly recreational amenities, has not kept pace with population growth. The town lacks sufficient green spaces and play areas, and families are having to travel to access open playing spaces. At the same time, Milltown has several natural and heritage amenities (e.g., Kilderry Wood) within walking distance of the town, and stakeholders recommend the provision of paths – for walkers and cyclists – to better enable residents to access natural spaces. Indeed, the promotion of walkability featured strongly among the recommendations that emerged in the consultations.

The survey responses also point to deficits in respect of local employment provision and integration – enabling newcomers to feel part of the community and to be more actively involved in local decision-making.

Survey respondents put forward several suggestions regarding the ways in which the community ought to tangibly move forward. These were further elaborated in the thematic workshops, and can be synthesised as follows:

Facilities/ Amenities

Stakeholders welcome the acknowledgements, in the current CDP and FLAP, that Milltown has important commercial and service functions, and they are keen to ensure these are developed and that Milltown does not become a dormitory town. Therefore, it is essential to invest in facilities and amenities that contribute to the town's vibrancy / vitality. In the course of the consultations, stakeholders identified the priority cohorts as youth and senior citizens.

Young people in Milltown are the primary users of the Nagle-Rice Centre, which is at capacity. There is a need to expand recreational and social amenities for youth and to enable them to be more involved in the local community. While Killarney's 'bright lights' will always appeal to young people, they ought to have the option to socialise locally.

There is a need, to provide social / retirement housing for older people – in a collegial, community-based setting – close to facilities and which enables independent living. The former primary school (on the Killarney Road) was frequently mentioned as a potential location for this development.

More community engagement / events

The current consultation process has been helpful in enabling people to have a greater say over the community's future direction, and there is broad welcome for the inputs provided, and investments made by Kerry County Council and South Kerry Development Partnership. Stakeholders appreciate KCC's commitment to on-going dialogue with the community.

Survey respondents note that many of the newcomers to Milltown, especially those who have come from outside Ireland, need to be invited and encouraged to play a more active part in community life.

Schools

While Milltown has good schools, both were constructed and staffed without having due regard to the population growth that has occurred over the past decade. Both schools, and in particular the post-primary school, have insufficient student places, and the lack of play and recreational space is problematic, especially for the primary school. Stakeholders would like to see investments in both schools, so that local children can be guaranteed a place in their own community. There is also a need to ensure that lands around both schools are not zoned for housing, so that they can be allowed to expand to cater for educational needs. Stakeholders recommend the installation of walkways and cycleways to enable children / teenagers to walk or cycle safely to and from school.

Proper Planning

The capacity of the water supply and wastewater treatment infrastructure is a key consideration in determining where population growth ought to take place. Stakeholders in Milltown appreciate this, but they firmly believe that it should not be the exclusive factor. Other variables also determine an area's carrying capacity; these include quality-of-life factors. At present, Milltown suffers from an imbalance, as the level of housing growth over the past decade has far outpaced the level of investment in other dimensions of place. The most significant investments have been made by the community itself – in the form of the Nagle-Rice Centre and playground. This current deficit in respect of civic amenities and public spaces needs to be redressed so that civic infrastructure is commensurate with the population. As the population grows, over the coming years, parallel investments in community facilities will need to be made, in addition to the retrofitting that is currently required.

While traffic congestion (pre-Covid) has been a problem in Milltown, this is generally the case at peak times and is associated with schools and Fexco. Therefore, many stakeholders are questioning why the National Roads Authority (NRA) envisages bypassing Milltown, and there are concerns locally that a bypass may have a negative impact on the town's commercial life. Stakeholders (survey respondents and workshop participants) called on the NRA and KCC to communicate the rationale for the bypass to the people of Milltown.

Traffic management, parking and town streetscape

The town core contains several fine buildings, many of which date from the 1700s. Milltown's planned streetscape gives it a distinctive urban footprint and form. These buildings need to be respected, celebrated and promoted – as important heritage resources and as drivers of place-making. Some engineering interventions could help to ensure a better flow of traffic, particularly at Larkin's Corner.

Retailers and customers identified a number of issues in respect of parking. It is essential that those who work in the town avoid parking in the vicinity of shops, as such behaviour deprives would-be customers of a parking space – sending them away from Milltown and on to other towns. The mart yard and other off-street locations offer possibilities in this regard. The redevelopment of the former girls' national school has the potential to open up additional space for parking and for civic amenities. This site is within a short walk of the main commercial core.

Housing

Reference has already been made to the volume of housing in Milltown. Stakeholders note that almost all of the housing is of a similar stock – three- and four-bedroom semi-detached houses. These cater well for families, but one and two-bedroom properties would be more appealing to single people and to those who may want to downsize. Thus, there is a need for a greater mix of housing types. Stakeholders note that all of the housing developments of the past decade are on the town's periphery, and many are outside the town boundary. They point out that this is leading to urban sprawl, which is exacerbating the decline of the town centre. Consequently, the town centre, particularly along the Castlemaine Road, has become afflicted by dereliction. Thus, future development needs to be more compact in nature, and direct interventions and structured supports are needed to enable property owners to rehabilitate and restore derelict properties – in keeping with Milltown's heritage.

Investment

Stakeholders want to give serious consideration to Milltown applying for heritage status. They note that the town and its environs have a stock of heritage resources – built and natural – that are, at least, on a par with those of well-established heritage towns. Conservation and good design will be key to Milltown's development over the coming years.

Milltown's recent development trajectory is putting a strain on environmental resources. The scale of housing development has caused Milltown to be perceived as becoming a dormitory town. The lack of public transport, particularly to / from Killarney, is compounding car dependency. Stakeholders note the need for investment in public transport, including bus shelters, and the facilitation of car-pooling. Above all, they note the importance of developing the local economy, in order to arrest the dependence on commuting. Thus, local firms and commercial outlets need to be facilitated to expand – locally. A more vibrant local economy will deliver social and environmental benefits.

6. Workshop Deliberations and Development Priorities

Place Standard questionnaires were distributed during March and April 2020, with the intention of providing data and pointers to enable structured conversations and discussions – in workshop format - that were initially scheduled to take place in early April. Due to the public health guidelines associated with the corona virus, the workshops had to be deferred and moved to an on-line format. Thus, a series of four workshops took place, using Zoom, in June and July. These dealt with four themes, as follows. Each thematic workshop dealt specifically with the corresponding dimensions of place – as specified in the Place Standard and the corresponding variables that have been identified in the KCC CDP issues paper (to inform the forthcoming county development plan).

Table 3: Thematic workshops in Milltown, June and July 2020

Theme	Place Standard Dimensions	KCC Issues Paper – themes
A. Mobility and Accessibility	moving around; public transport; traffic and parking;	transportation & connectivity;
B. Economy	work and local economy;	tourism; economic development and activity;
C. Community wellbeing	social contact; identity and belonging; play and recreation; facilities and amenities; housing	sustainable places to live; community facilities & quality of life; housing and community;
D. Environment	care and maintenance; natural space; feeling safe; streets and spaces;	built heritage & landscape; natural assets & environment; climate change, flooding & coastal zone management; infrastructure & energy;
E. Community participation and decision-making	influence and sense of control.	rural development; culture and the Gaeltacht.

Themes A to D (above) each had a discrete workshop, while Theme E was treated as a cross-cutting theme – relevant to all workshops.

Each workshop had a similar format. The consultants set the forthcoming LAP in context, in respect of planning policy, demographics and place standard findings. They then facilitated a discussion in response to the following four questions, which mirror those covered in the questionnaire:

- i What are Milltown’s main assets?
- ii What are the challenges?
- iii What are the priorities?
- iv How do we tangibly move forward?

The following pages present the responses, to these questions, in respect of each theme.

6.1 Mobility and Accessibility

Assets

- Being within one hour of all of Kerry – good connectivity;
- Access to employment – Killorglin (15 minutes);
- Gateway to South Kerry;
- Wild Atlantic Way – potential for heritage tourism;
- Being on the main Killarney - Dingle route;

Challenges

- No bus / hop-on-off bus / transit;
- Broadband deficits;
- Not having a central place to park – especially for the premises in the town centre;
- People who work in town occupying the parking spaces during the day – displacing customers;
- Loss of parking spaces – school grounds (not being used outside of school times);

Priorities

- Access to the schools – parking, dropping and collecting, especially at the primary school;
- More transit as well as more homeworking – reduce commuting (especially car-dependent commuting);
- Broadband connection points (National Broadband Plan - NBP);
- Consider the evidence for the bypass – particularly in the context of smart travel and climate change;
- Communication about the bypass – explain the case;
- Set-back areas for new housing developments (e.g., on the Killarney Road);
- Network of cycling and walking routes to connect estates with the school;

Moving Forward (*including questions posed*)

- Could the schools stagger opening times to alleviate congestion?
- Look at the opportunities for an ICT hub;
- Investigate the scale, quality and speed of current broadband / fibre cover / connectivity;
- Further analyse the POWSCAR data for Milltown – feed into the research about the bypass;
- Capitalise on the town's good location;
- Consider using the school car park outside of school hours / days;
- Avail of the space around the mart for parking?
- Use the site of the former Boys' NS for parking and a civic space – as well as housing;
- Identify a parking space for workers / employees (Nagle Rice / Mart?);
- A dedicated park-and-ride facility;
- Roundabout at the Larkin's Corner;
- Change drop-off point (to near the mart) and provide a walkway to the school; and
- Conduct a traffic survey.

6.2 Economy

Assets

- Engineering firm and other good local employers;
- Location within Kerry Economic Triangle, but this could also be a threat, depending on how this is perceived and pursued; Milltown should not be a dormitory town;
- Unrecognised assets; heritage buildings, vacant properties;
- The old primary schools - with great potential for new resources, good buildings, great streetscape / access;
- The former Church of Ireland building;
- Good core services - water and waste water;
- Undeveloped walking and cycling routes – connecting amenities with residential areas;
- Untapped tourism potential, a very attractive local landscape, with several natural amenities;

Challenges

- Retaining and growing industry;
- Securing enterprise spaces;
- The closure of Larkin's Bakery;
- Dereliction is a deterrent, and the town core has become badly afflicted;
- Lack of vibrancy in the town core – need to bring people in and encourage movement;
- Perception as a dormitory town, this influences investment;
- Lack of housing suitable for older and single people;
- Sprawl – while the core has been neglected;
- No cycleway or path along new road (to Killorglin);
- The next two months will be critical in respect of emerging from Covid-19;

Priorities

- Address dereliction and re-develop village / town centre;
- Provide locations for industries and enable local firms to expand – locally;
- Re-purposing of existing premises/ heritage buildings;
- Ensure Milltown is an attractive location for visitors – capitalise on our location on the Wild Atlantic Way;
- Adequate development / expansion space for childcare services, schools and primary care;

Moving Forward

- Engage with KCC to ensure that the forthcoming set of plans fully cater for Milltown's economic development, so that local businesses can grow effectively;
- Look for Heritage Status for Milltown. Learn from others, such as Listowel and Kenmare;
- Develop a creative hub, as there are many 'creatives' in the locality, and such a space would entice people into Milltown (similar to the Burren Art College);
- Develop a technology/ creative/ innovate hub – cater for, and anticipate, future economic development needs and trends;
- Harness existing premises – re-purpose them;
- Engage with landowners, at pre-planning and throughout the planning and development stages, particularly with regard to relief roads and other notable infrastructural projects;
- Facilitate remote/ home working;
- Undertake research in respect of local service provision – identify level of provision, gaps and opportunities; and
- Public policy needs to support village renewal and the reduction of dereliction.

6.3 Community wellbeing

Assets

- A young population – with great ideas
- The community has proven its ability to develop and manage amenities and facilities;
- The surrounding environment – conducive to a healthy community;
- The Nagle-Rice Centre;

Challenges

- Commuter burnout – car dependent commuters, especially those who see themselves as transient, are not involved in the community;
- Reliance on volunteers – community has had to fill the gaps caused by poor planning decisions and to provide the amenities that should have been developed in parallel with housing developments;
- Lack of school places;
- Lack of expansion space for community services;
- Over-zoning of lands for housing – lack of balance to date;

Priorities

- Sustainable planning – a mix of land uses and the avoidance of sprawl;
- Reaching out to newcomers;
- Inter-culturalism – integration of those who have come from other countries;
- Hearing young peoples' voices;
- A youth facility (like in Killorglin);
- Social housing (for senior citizens);
- A community arts / creative space;
- Safe walking and cycling routes;
- Enhancing access to the natural environment;
- Ensuring sufficient spaces are zoned for amenity, recreational and community purposes;

Moving Forward

- Engage young people in the development / planning process;
- Be open and progressive – work with the neighbouring communities, and support them;
- Be inclusive – continue to invite everybody to contribute to community development; and
- Dialogue with the State agencies and service providers – work in partnership.

6.4 Environment

Assets

- The town's rich built and natural heritage (these assets need quantifying);
- Potential to become part of the Historic Towns and Heritage Towns networks;
- Very considerable biodiversity in the Mid-Kerry area (woods, rivers, riparian zones, wetlands, mud flats);

Challenges

- The scale of commuting and the level of car dependence – not environmentally sustainable;
- The absence of a focal point (layout of the town square), no natural point for visitors to stop, to look around;
- Visitors do not know about Milltown, it's 'a bit too close to Killarney', and does not feature in tourism promotion (although independent travellers have discovered Milltown's strengths as a base);
- Ensuring the provision of services is commensurate with the current and planned population growth of the town / locality;
- Not missing funding opportunities;

Priorities

- A focal point for the town - look at the overall town layout and the incorporation of social spaces;
- A recreation / amenity park;
- Facilities (including tourism amenities) that benefit the community;
- Renewable energy / energy-proofing: start with community buildings;
- Environmental projects (potential: circular loop walk, a community garden, the white church);
- A heritage trail for the wider area - in collaboration with neighbouring communities and Mid-Kerry Tourism;
- Awareness-raising – making people more aware of our locality's natural resources and heritage amenities and potential;

Moving Forward

- Work towards heritage status. A heritage/ tourism group will need to drive it;
- Need to carefully consider what to do with old buildings – are they an asset or a hindrance?
- Look at the lands available around the town for various purposes, not just accommodation / housing - Insist on balanced and sustainable growth;
- A walks' scheme – loop walks, as in Annascaul;
- Identify/ quantify the built and natural assets; and
- Collaborations with other communities – especially Castlemaine, Listry and Killorglin.

7. Ways ahead and next steps

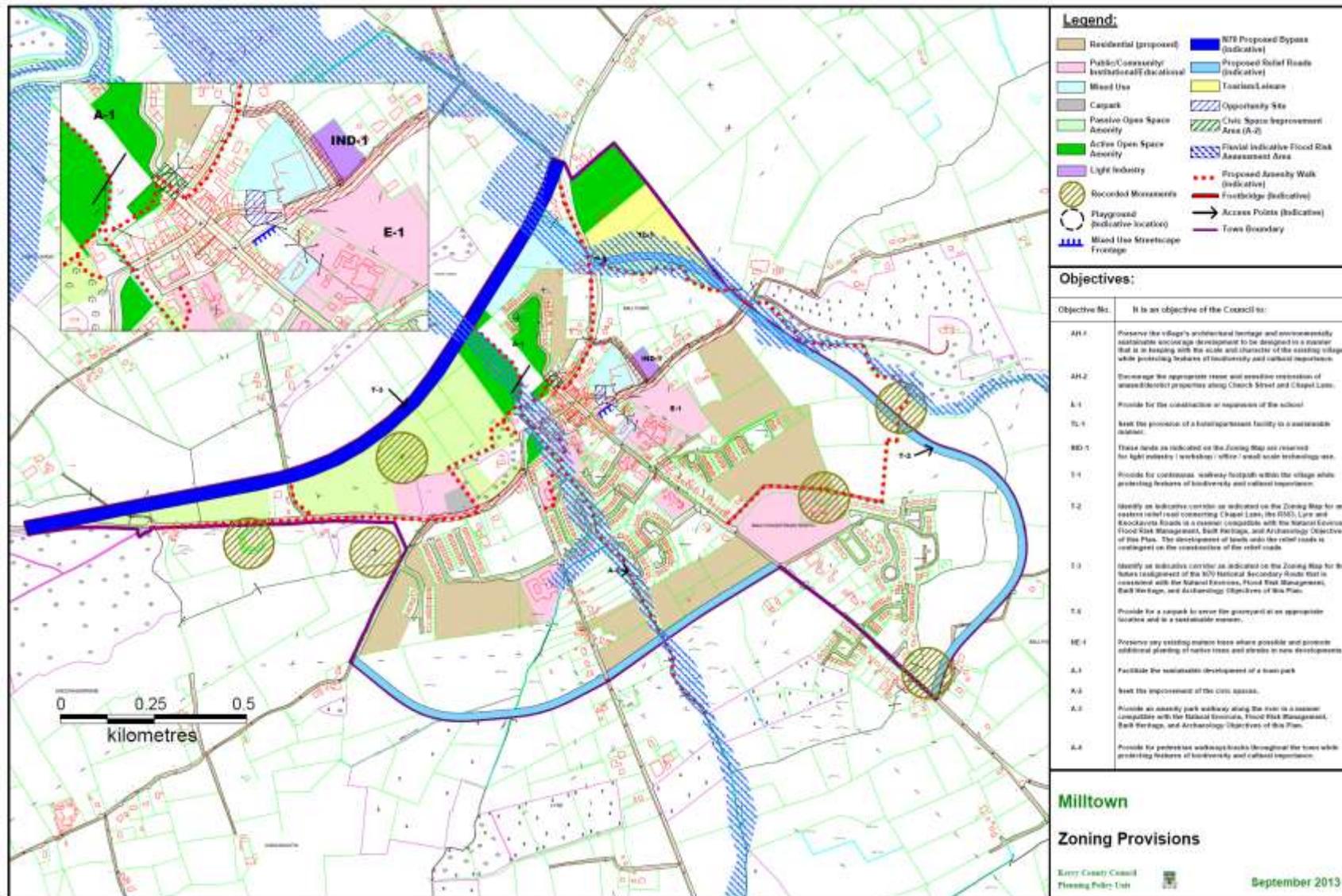
This report documents a consultation process, and it captures the views, perspectives and visions of many people and organisations in Milltown. The evidence presented here highlights that Milltown is a growing and burgeoning place. It is distinctive, in a Kerry context, in respect of its level of growth over the past two decades. The local community and other stakeholders have learned a great deal from Milltown's recent experiences, and it is essential that they be enabled to put those learnings into practice over the coming years. The forthcoming Local Area Plan and County Development Plan represent important opportunities and mechanisms through which to underpin and mainstream good planning and development practices. Ongoing dialogue among local stakeholders, inter-community collaboration and engagement with Kerry County Council, among other bodies, will stand Milltown in good stead, and will ensure that planning benefits from good governance, reflective praxis and periodic reviews.

This document reflects community voices. Local communities are important stakeholders in planning, and it is essential that they be afforded ongoing opportunities to contribute to the systematic formulation, design, delivery and review of planning and development. Kerry County Council has statutory obligations and technical expertise that also shape planning and affect development trajectories. In addition, the County Council's membership is democratically elected by the citizens, and councillors' assent is required to bring a development plan to fruition. Thus, good planning incorporates elements of the bottom-up and top-down (communities and agencies). Good planning is also about collaboration and the integration of economic, socio-cultural and environmental objectives. Organisations such as South Kerry Development Partnership play an important role in bringing diverse agencies and sectors together, and are important enablers of collective decision-making. As advocates of community development, they are vehicles of participative democracy, and, along with various service providers (statutory and non-statutory), they are important enablers of place-making.

The community perspectives that are captured in this document do not always conform rigidly to thematic headings or the dimensions of place, as identified in the Place Standard. Instead, as evidenced by the presentation of material in Section 6, many overlap with, and complement, one another, and they transcend various dimensions of place. In moving forward, it is essential to maintain and work on the inter-linkages and to promote collaboration – among local stakeholders and with organisations and agencies that can support the delivery of the many objectives articulated here.

Stage one of this planning process has focused on the community. This has enabled Milltown to take stock of local assets, identify potential, devise visions, list projects and convey values about the future development of the community. Stage two ought to afford these local stakeholders and agency representatives structured opportunities to be more specific about their vision and priorities. In many respects, the process to date has answered the 'what' questions, and some of the 'how' questions. There is a need, in Stage two, to answer the 'where' and 'who / with whom' questions.

Annex 1: Zoning Provisions for Milltown, 2013 - 2019



(62)

Lisa O'Carroll

From: Jauch, Matthias [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday 1 October 2020 19:42
To: planpolicy
Subject: Draft Dingle Electoral Area, Local Area Plan 2020 – 2026

[Caution: External Sender] Use care when opening attachments or clicking links unless you can verify the sender.

Senior Planner,
Planning Department,
Kerry County Council,
County Buildings,
Rathass,
Tralee,
Co Kerry.

1 October 2020

RE : DRAFT AN DAINGEAN ELECTORAL AREA, LOCAL AREA PLAN 2020 – 2026

Dear Madam/ dear Sir,

We are owners of property on the Great Blasket Island.

We wish to submit our objection to the proposals contained in the above draft Plan, and in particular to the proposals contained therein seeking to prohibit restoration and/or conservation of standing houses where the roof is not still intact, and also the proposed blanket prohibition on construction of new dwellings.

The draft Plan refers to the fact that the Island's landing slip is now, and has been for many years inadequate and unsafe and this has restricted accessibility. The draft Plan also states it is conceded that a new pier is necessary and refers to the fact that Permission has been granted for upgrading and construction of new piers both on the mainland and the Island – but this is subject to Government funding. For these reasons, it has been practically impossible to land materials on the island to enable restore or repair roofs on old dwellings on the Island – unless you could afford a helicopter.

The above factors, along with the long history of litigation and subsequent island management processes, have operated to prevent the ordinary person from being able to take steps to renovate or restore, and in particular to repair roofs on existing residential properties owned on the Island.

To therefore draw a distinction now in the Local Area Plan, and favour the development of standing houses only “where the roof is still intact” would clearly be unfair and discriminatory.

I strongly object to any such criterion being used as a basis for favouring development of property on the Island by certain landowners and as a ground for prohibiting development by other landowners of their property and houses. Why should we be penalised as a result of the Government's failure to construct a suitable Pier or landing slip. It is unfair and discriminatory.

Limited development and restoration of property on the Island would not in any way be damaging to the landscape or the Islands natural and cultural heritage.

We must also point out that as Landowners, we participated in and cooperated in the process leading to agreement of the **Great Blasket Island Management Plan**, which took multiple years to come to completion and agreement with all parties involved. The landowners were advised, as part of that process and Plan, that **each owner would be allowed to restore and/or build one dwelling on the Island in future**. The Great Blasket Island Management Plan envisaged the refurbishment for residential use of houses in private ownership outside the core village and the Local Area Plan should now reflect and honour that commitment.

Please acknowledge receipt.

Yours sincerely,

Matthias Jauch & Muiris Cleary





Maharees Conservation Association

Protecting | Enhancing | Preserving

Submission in response to the Draft Dingle Area Local Area Plan 2020-26

by Maharees Conservation Association CLG 02.10.20

Maharees Conservation Association CLG was founded in 2016. It aims to protect the coastline and the habitat of Maharees and its environs for the benefit of the local community and visitors. It is an award-winning community group and registered charity with the following objectives:

1. To raise awareness of the challenges presented by coastal erosion to the Maharees among key stakeholder groups.
2. To raise awareness of the unique habitats and rich biodiversity of Maharees among key stakeholder groups.
3. To promote sustainable tourism in Maharees – particularly tourism that promotes an appreciation of the natural environment.

CONTEXT

The Maharees is a tombolo. Its dune system, tidal mudflats, Atlantic salt meadows and estuaries are designated as part of the Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane Special Area of Conservation (site code 002070) and the Tralee Bay Complex Special Protection Area under the EU Birds Directive 2009. The area boasts a Blue Flag beach at Béal Geal. It also has one of the longest uninterrupted stretches of sandy beach in Ireland on Brandon Bay – it is the longest beach on the Wild Atlantic Way. It is consistently rated as one of the top beaches in Ireland in national media.^{1 2} It is a thriving water sports destination and it is an engine of tourism for the north side of the Dingle Peninsula, providing employment, recreation and revenue - acting as a tourist draw for Castlegregory and its environs. A recent report by researchers at NUI Galway, estimated that the value of the ecosystem goods and services provided by the Maharees beaches and dune system is in excess of €9 million per year during the months of June, July and August alone.³

Kerry County Council traffic counters recorded 23,000 cars per week on the Maharees road during the summer season 2019. This tourism is largely domestic, repeat tourism. There is no official marketing strategy for the area at the moment. Accommodation providers are over-subscribed during the peak season of July and August but the season is very short. Maharees Conservation Association has recently submitted a proposal to Kerry County Council for the development of a Blue Way in the area

¹ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/irelands-40-best-beaches-kkfcpcwrj>

² <https://www.image.ie/life/9-of-the-best-beaches-in-ireland-209602>

³ <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2020/0320/1124306-sand-dunes-maharees-kerry-economics-wild-atlantic-way/>

as a means of marketing a recognised standard of experience, to lengthen the tourist season and to act as a catalyst for the development of tourism services and infrastructure in the area.

Dune systems shift naturally. However recent patterns, particularly during and after extreme weather conditions, have gone far beyond the traditional ebb and flow of the dunes and are threatening the delicate ecosystem and causing major concern to the inhabitants of the Maharees. There is only one access road in and out of the community, and in the three months leading up to February 2016, Kerry County Council had to clear sand from the same stretch of road approximately seventeen times. The repeated blockage of the road posed health and safety hazards as it impeded access for emergency vehicles and medical assistance. There are also associated economic risks as residents and visitors are hindered from attending work or bringing business to the area.

The Maharees Conservation Association CLG (MCA) was formed to address the adverse impact of coastal erosion and human impacts. Key activities undertaken include: raising awareness of the habitats and associated wildlife, putting in place practical measures (such as fencing, marram planting and prevention of wild camping on the sand dunes) and working with key partners and stakeholders such as Kerry County Council, NPWS, Clean Coasts an Taisce, NUI Galway and Institute of Technology Tralee to ensure the future of the coastline for all to enjoy. MCA activities and challenges have been documented in a case study by NUI Galway researchers.⁴ Since the interventions undertaken by MCA *and partners* over the past four years, dramatic regeneration of sand dunes has occurred at key sites such as Magherabeg Cut (see Figure 1). The Kerry County Council and the OPW have commissioned a Coastal Erosion Risk Mitigation Study to determine a course of action to deal with coastal erosion. The community would like to acknowledge the role of Kerry County Council in taking this proactive step and in its considerable assistance in dune protection activities and parking provision to date.

ISSUES

Several fundamental issues prevail which are seriously impacting upon our community such as: A lack of parking facilities to access Brandon Bay (the longest beach on the Wild Atlantic Way), no toilet facilities on Brandon Bay, a lack of motorhome and camping facilities in the Castlegregory/ Maharees area, anti-social behaviour such as illegal camping and dune parties. These issues will become more impactful over the next decades as other factors such as an increased population and climate change take effect and must be planned for now. The single-biggest factor affecting our tombolo, coastal erosion, must also be addressed.

1. COASTAL EROSION

Perhaps more impactful than any of the factors will be the coastal erosion and flooding affecting the area due to Climate Change. The community anxiously awaits the publication of the report of the Coastal Erosion and Flood Risk Mitigation study commissioned by Kerry County Council and the OPW. This will set out recommendations and actions to mitigate against the impact of coastal erosion and will specify how the community can adapt to climate change. Swift action is required to address erosion in Maharees as the main road between Castlegregory and the Maharees is currently at risk from flooding at the area before the Trench Bridge; and it is at risk from collapse between the Trench Bridge and the Blue Flag beach at Béal Geal.

4

https://aran.library.nuigalway.ie/bitstream/handle/10379/7428/MCA_Case_Study_%28Farrell%29_April_2018.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y



Figure 1 The dunes at Magherabeg Cut, Maharees; showing the impact of dune regeneration activities over four years



Figure 2 Coastal Erosion near the Trench, Magherabeg 02.02.20 - the dune protecting the road from flooding is receding very quickly in this area

2. LACK OF PARKING FACILITIES TO ACCESS BRANDON BAY – THE LONGEST BEACH ON THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY

There are no official parking facilities to access the 11km beach on Brandon Bay (the longest beach on the Wild Atlantic Way). This results in ‘wild parking’ - where individuals park cars on private property, on roadsides and on special area of conservation-designated land. The congestion resulting from this type of parking makes driving in Maharees extremely stressful and at times, extremely dangerous. Visitors tend to congregate around the Blue Flag beach area in Maharees and many do not know about the existence of the other beach access points along Brandon Bay (Fermoyle, Kilcummin, Goulane and Stradbally). Large vehicles from the agricultural and fishing industries find it exceptionally difficult to traverse the roads during the summer season and it is very doubtful if emergency vehicles would reach those in need in time if required in these conditions.



Figure 3 The 3km stretch of road from the Trench to the Grotto where most of the wild parking occurs.

A survey undertaken from drone footage of the area on the afternoon of Sunday 09.08.20 shows that of the cars parked between the areas of the Trench Bridge and the Grotto (approx. 3km):

- * 173 were parked on Kerry County Council parking areas (full to capacity)
- * 166 cars were parked on roadsides or on privately-owned land. 87 cars were parked on an area designated as a Special Area of Conservation. This was a typical day, not a particularly busy day.



Figure 4 Examples of Wild Parking to access Brandon Bay in Maharees on 9th August

3. NO TOILET FACILITIES ON BRANDON BAY (THE LONGEST BEACH ON THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY)

There are currently no toilet facilities accessible to the public anywhere along the 11km stretch of beach on Brandon Bay (the longest beach on the Wild Atlantic Way). The dunes in this area are designated as a Special Area of Conservation. The impact of this lack of toilet provision is that beach users climb the foredunes to relieve themselves on the dunes. This is damaging to the habitat and also weakens and causes breaches on the dunes which are our natural coastal defence.



Figure 5 Sand trap fencing was required to block a breach in the dune resulting from foot traffic on the foredune due to lack of toilets (Maharees Conservation Association, 2020)

4. A LACK OF MOTORHOME AND CAMPING FACILITIES IN THE CASTLEGREGORY/ MAHAREES AREA

There are no details of how many Motorhomes, or Campervans are registered in Ireland. The RSA/Dept of Transport in Ireland does not differentiate between a motorhome and car in records. In the UK, the DVLA in Swansea have a specific coding for Motorhomes/Campervans, M1. Of which in Northern Ireland alone, there are 6,785 M1 Class vehicles registered as of 31/03/20. The Total Motorhome Ireland Facebook group has over 7,500 members as of 19/08/20 (one of the largest motorhome groups in the country). Not all motorhome owners are members of motorhome groups.

According to Total Motorhomes Ireland, motorhome owners only require the 'full service' of wastewater disposal etc. about twice per week. For the remainder of the week, they require a 'park-up only' service and are willing to pay for a secure parking place.

The French Term, "Aires de Service" has been adopted by the UK and Irish market as a term for a stopover, although the Irish have shortened it to Aire. In France, practically every town and village

have Aires – it is estimated that there are 5018 Aires in total in France.⁵ According to Total Motorhomes Ireland (TMI), most French towns have Aires to Service machines, which cost in the region of €4k-€6k. Users pay for the service by tokens. An alternative to these machines would be a site with a fresh water tap; somewhere to empty the grey water (shower & dish water), and somewhere to empty the toilet cassette. An acceptable overnight park-up-only rate is €10; €15 if EHU/other services are provided. TMI has made clear the fact that motorhomes do not require a full-service facility every night, thus an exclusive offering of the more expensive full-service camp sites in Kerry is not delivering on what the market requires.

Total Motorhomes Ireland held a motorhome gathering/ event in Sneem, Co Kerry in Autumn 2019. They surveyed their members and found that the average "motorhome spend" for the weekend was between €150 and €250 per motorhome from 76 motorhomes, over 3 days. Which is estimated at between €11,500 and €19,000 for the weekend in one village. In addition, each motorhome contributed to a collection for a local community project and a total of €900 was donated as a show of respect to the community of Sneem for welcoming motorhomes. (Total Motorhomes Ireland, 2020)

The Maharees/ Castlegregory area attracts thousands of motorhome owners and campers each year. There are only four campsites that currently provide for this segment. These are 'full-service' sites but they can accommodate only a fraction of this segment. The reality for the community of Maharees/Castlegregory is that thousands of motorhome owners and campers have been camping unofficially on private land, on land designated as a Special Area of Conservation, on public car parks and on roadsides. This causes traffic congestion and parking on dunes destroys the vegetation which degrades the habitat.

5. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR SUCH AS ILLEGAL CAMPING AND DUNE PARTIES

A minority of campers has left litter and caused considerable damage to the dune system (by lighting fires and trampling). This has caused tension in the community. This is a recurring issue in most Irish coastal areas, particularly at popular Kerry Blue Flag beaches and has been well documented in both local and national media^{6 7 8 9} In response, the Maharees Conservation Association members have decided to actively control camping in the area over the last three summers.

5

<https://www.campercontact.com/en/france?countrycode=FR&filters=100%7C101&sortby=NameAscending&map&maparea=-14.026047187500001,38.014789961843775,18.9329371875,54.021659167217706>

⁶ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/campings-a-real-carry-on-as-staycationers-hit-the-road-tdxdk3mrw>

⁷ <https://www.rte.ie/news/munster/2020/0617/1148112-camping-beaches-kerry/>

⁸ <https://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/beach-parties-putting-sensitive-coastal-landscape-at-risk-1009739.html>

⁹ <https://www.radiokerry.ie/claims-fire-banna-sand-dunes-put-lives-wildlife-property-risk/>



Figure 6 Litter and Fire Damage on Special Areas of Conservation from unofficial campers and dune parties in Maharees (on left, 2018) and at Banna (on right, 2020)

A total of 252 hours of volunteers' time was dedicated to moving campers from areas designated as a Special Area of Conservation in Summer 2020 alone. One of the biggest problems is that there are no official sites with availability to move campers to. Many campers do not even know what a Special Area of Conservation is, much less realise they are camping on one.

6. AN INCREASED POPULATION AND A CHANGED CLIMATE

The importance of capacity building cannot be underestimated in the context of dune protection and climate adaptation. Coastal areas, dunes and beaches provide significant recreational and wellbeing benefits.¹⁰ A recent global study by Price Waterhouse Coopers showed that "As a result of COVID-19 well over half of (4,500) respondents reported to be more focused than before on taking care of their mental health and well-being (69%) and their physical health (69%)."¹¹ As more and more benefit will be derived from the ecosystem goods and services provided by beach dune systems into the future, they are highly susceptible to the effects of climate change and anthropogenic activities, and they need protection.¹²

According to 'moderate' Central Statistics Office population projections, the Irish population will grow by 1,290,900 people to 6 million people between 2017 and 2051.¹³ Climate change will result in warmer summers, with more days experiencing air temperatures over 20 degrees Celsius by 2050.¹⁴ International targets to cut carbon emissions will also result in more expensive flights as the aviation industry will be forced to use more expensive renewable energy or individual nations will impose flight taxes.¹⁵

Media outlets have reported that Western coastal counties, including Kerry, are among the preferred destinations of Irish staycationers.¹⁶ The Castlegregory Maharees area is a beautiful area with a huge diversity of coastlines, scenery, activities and experiences. The fact that it is so populated during the summer months without a concerted marketing effort is testament to the excellent tourism offering

¹⁰ <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2020/0320/1124306-sand-dunes-maharees-kerry-economics-wild-atlantic-way/>

¹¹ <https://www.pwc.ie/media-centre/press-release/2020/global-consumer-survey-reveals-new-behaviours.html>

¹² <https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/spotlight/arid-40021553.html>

¹³ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-plfp/populationandlabourforceprojections2017-2051/populationprojectionsresults/>

¹⁴ <https://www.climatechangepost.com/ireland/climate-change/>

¹⁵ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/andystone/2019/12/10/can-the-airline-industry-survive-climate-change/#272f20e4708e>

¹⁶ <https://www.rte.ie/news/business/2020/0717/1154033-can-you-afford-to-holiday-in-ireland/>

it provides. The Castlegregory Maharees area is growing in popularity through positive word of mouth and imagery on social media by visitors and social media influencers alike. In a future of an increased number of domestic tourists and better summer weather, we must do better to prepare to adapt to climate change and to provide properly for visitors and for the communities and dune habitats that are currently struggling to deal with the numbers visiting our coasts.



Figure 7 Popular Social Media Influencer Eimear Varian Barry (96,900 followers on Instagram) posts pictures from her holiday in Castlegregory, 2017

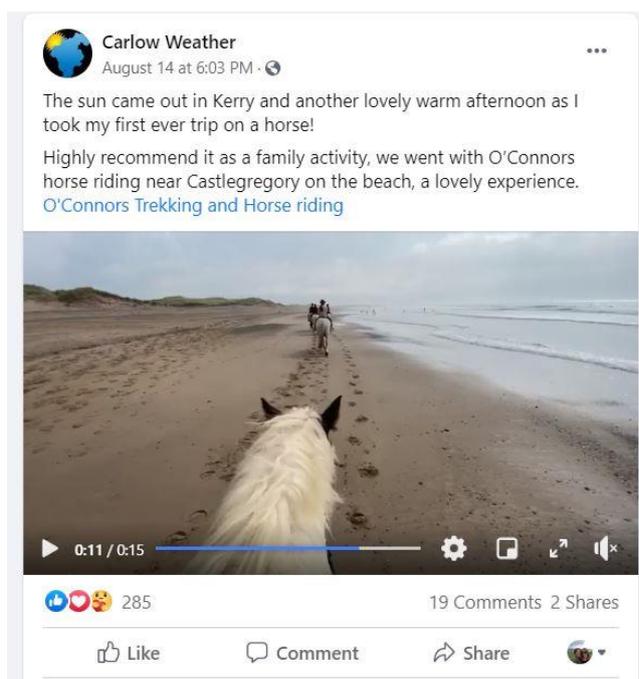


Figure 8 Owner of popular Facebook page Carlow Weather (36,961 followers on Facebook) shares pictures of his holiday in Maharees, 2020

THE DRAFT DINGLE PENINSULA LOCAL AREA PLAN 2020-26

This section sets out the position of Maharees Conservation Association CLG on the draft Dingle Local Area Plan. The members of Maharees Conservation Association CLG acknowledge and are extremely grateful for the ongoing support of the Kerry County Council staff and our elected members.

The directors of Maharees Conservation Association CLG (MCA) met on 25.09.20 to consider the draft local area plan. MCA welcomes the plan's focus on key areas of concern as outlined by the MCA committee through submissions, liaison with elected members and staff of Kerry County Council and Municipal District meetings over the past four years. In particular, MCA welcomes the emphasis put on developing critical infrastructure to build capacity and to facilitate the sustainable development of the tourism industry in the area.

The directors of MCA welcome the following objectives in relation to the Castlegregory area (Section 3.9, pg. 111-114) :

General Objectives	
OO 01	Facilitate the sustainable provision of public facilities including community hall, public toilets, heritage/tourism centre.
OO 02	Promote the sustainable development of ecotourism and other niche markets. Encourage the sustainable extension and diversification of tourist facilities at appropriate locations
OO 04	Facilitate and support the upgrade of the existing wastewater treatment infrastructure in a timely manner to ensure the sustainable development of the area.
Tourism	
TM 01	Encourage the sustainable provision of an all year-round tourism and recreational facility at an appropriate location
TM 02	Encourage the provision of camping/ glamping facilities at an appropriate location in the village and surrounding areas
TM 03	Support the sustainable expansion of the festivals, regattas and visitor events.
TM 04	Encourage the provision of overnight motorhome facilities at an appropriate location within the village.
TM 05	Support the creation of a Blueway connecting the village with surrounding areas/settlements in a sustainable manner. *** It is suggested that this text change to reflect the revised definition of a Blueway as per Failte Ireland (2019): <i>Support the creation of a Blueway in Castlegregory and the Maharees to support sustainable tourism development.</i>
Vehicular and Pedestrian Traffic	
T 01	Seek the sustainable provision/ improvement of continuous footpaths / walkways at appropriate locations.
T 02	Encourage the provision of additional parking at appropriate locations in the village and surrounding areas
T 03	Facilitate the provision of a carpark in the Maharees subject to compliance with the EIA and Habitats Directives. *** It is suggested that this text change to reflect the urgent need for parking with access to Brandon Bay: <i>Facilitate the provision of a carpark with access to Brandon Bay in the Maharees subject to compliance with the EIA and Habitats Directives</i>

Amenity & Environment	
A 04	Facilitate the development of public toilets and other public facilities at appropriate locations in the village and surrounding area. *** It is suggested that this text change to reflect the urgent need for toilet facilities (even on a seasonal basis) on Brandon Bay: <i>Facilitate the acquisition of land and the development of public toilets and other public facilities at appropriate locations in the village, surrounding area and at key beach access points along Brandon Bay.</i>
A 05	Support the Magharees Conservation Association and other stakeholders that seek to sustainably manage the Magharees area in compliance with the Habitats Directive.

Table 1 Dingle Area LAP Objectives

Outside of the small suggested amendments outlined in Table 1, the MCA directors feel that the issue of **coastal erosion along Brandon and Tralee Bay** should feature in the LAP as this is will be a critical issue in the life-time of the new plan. The Maharees and Castlegregory communities eagerly await the publication of the Coastal Erosion and Flood Risk Mitigation Study which has been commissioned by Kerry County Council and the OPW. There are several parts of the main road between Castlegregory and Maharees at risk due to erosion and flooding. A commitment to finding solutions and supporting our community on this issue is urgently required and should be reflected in the LAP.

In addition, the following suggestions were made as part of the MCA submission to the County Development Plan and it is felt by the MCA directors that they are equally relevant in respect of the LAP 2020-26. In particular MCA requests:

- *Toilets and parking with access to Brandon Bay at five access points (Fermoyle, Kilcummin, Goulane, Stradbally and Magherabeg) is urgently required).
- *Large official signage at the entrance points to the Special Area of Conservation to raise awareness of the designation.
- *A seasonal site officer should be employed to protect the SAC (particularly at Magherabeg) during the summer season.

POINTS ADDRESSED IN A SUBMISSION MADE RE. THE REVIEW OF THE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVITY

⇒What incentives/infrastructure are needed to promote economic activity?

Significant investment is required in tourism infrastructure in Kerry's coastal areas to build capacity during the peak season and to provide an excellent tourism experience which will be marketable in the shoulder season. Kerry's beaches are hugely valuable assets and they need investment. In a survey of visitors undertaken by IT Tralee students in 2017, it was found that the main reason why people visit Maharees is to enjoy the beach. Over 95% of respondents stated the provision of additional parking was either very important or important.

The development of a water sports experience hub, provision of additional motorhome parking and camping facilities, provision of parking along Brandon Bay and the development of a Blueway¹⁷ in

¹⁷ as identified as a catalyst project in the Failte Ireland Dingle Peninsula Visitor Experience Development Plan

Castlegregory Maharees (with associated walking trails, eco walks, talks and boat trips and water sports) would promote associated economic activity for the area and would lengthen the tourist season.

State agencies such as NPWS, Failte Ireland and the local authority should work together with local coastal communities to determine the best development plan and the best management solutions at key Natura 2000 sites with a tourism interest such as a Blue Flag beach. This will stimulate economic activity for the benefit of the community and at the same time, will manage the relevant sites in a way that will respect and protect the habitats.

Extension of fibre broadband to all areas of the county will promote remote working and will attract the many remote workers who would like to relocate businesses to and work from Kerry's coastal areas and will thus promote economic activity

⇒ **How can we support the transition from traditional employment sectors and diversification into new employment areas?**

The development of a Blueway in the Castlegregory Maharees area will encourage the transition from traditional employment sectors such as fishing and agriculture into new employment areas such as guiding, boat tours, eco-tourism and wellbeing.

2. TOURISM

⇒ **How do we encourage tourism in less visited areas?**

Significant investment is required in tourism infrastructure at Kerry's less well-known coastal areas. Brandon Bay is an 11km stretch of uninterrupted beach, it is the longest beach on the Wild Atlantic Way. There are six beach access points along the bay, none of these access points has adequate parking provision. The Blue Flag beach at Béal Geal is much smaller in size and it is usually full to capacity. If tourism infrastructure was provided at other less well-known coastal areas, it is highly likely that they could be awarded Blue Flag status which would increase the number of visits to these less visited areas.

Many visitors are not aware of other beach access points when they arrive to the area and travel to the most well-known ones (usually the Blue Flag beaches). If minimal infrastructure was put in place (**parking and toilets**) on less well-known coastal areas it would serve to distribute tourism from existing pinch points such as Inch and Magherabeg.

In addition, if parking infrastructure were available, **sensor technology could be used to allow beach users to check digitally, in advance of travelling to a beach, whether there are parking spaces available** or whether the area is congested and this could allow them to visit a less busy, less visited area.

The development of a Blueway in the Castlegregory Maharees area will lengthen the tourism season and will market the already excellent tourism offering which will serve to distribute tourism from existing 'pinch points' such as Inch and Dingle to less visited areas.

⇒ **How can we achieve a balance between environmental protection and tourism?**

The Maharees Peninsula, like Banna beach, has a Blue Flag beach adjacent to a Special Area of Conservation. The sand dunes that support a variety of rare and protected species do not have adequate protection from human intervention at the moment. Most visitors do not know what a Special Area of Conservation is and they do not know they are holidaying near one. Most visitors do not understand the dangers or damaging effects of climbing foredunes or lighting fires on dunes.

State agencies such as NPWS, Failte Ireland and the local authority should work together with local coastal communities to determine the best development plan and the best management solutions at key Natura 2000 sites with a tourism interest such as a Blue Flag beach. This will stimulate economic activity for the benefit of the community and at the same time, will manage the relevant sites in a way that will respect and protect the habitats.

The following measures would help to protect our coastal Special Areas of Conservation, particularly those with a Blue Flag beach:

Official ‘arrival’ signage should be erected at entrance points to the SAC to inform visitors that the area is protected under the EU Habitats Directive for the wildlife it supports. This signage should also advise visitors to use main beach access points and respect the habitat. Additional visible and noticeable signage should be placed at beach access points, displaying an environmental code of conduct; to remind visitors that lighting fires, camping etc. is prohibited on a Special Area of Conservation.

Small signs should be placed at intervals along the foredunes to advise visitors to avoid climbing foredunes – for their own protection and to protect this natural coastal defence. Many of Kerry’s foredunes are unstable due to storm damage. There has already been a fatality in Kerry resulting from the climbing of unstable foredunes.

Foredunes at beach access points should be fenced to protect them from human impacts (climbing etc).

Basic beach infrastructure such as parking, toilets and rubbish bins will protect the dune system from damage done from visitors parking on a Special Area of Conservation or from climbing foredunes in order to use the dune as a toilet.

Provision of a more diverse range of motorhome and camping facilities to accommodate the huge number of visitors in this segment who would like to visit the area on a short-term basis and contribute to the local economy. The domestic motorhome segment could be viewed as a ‘year-round’ market which could contribute to the lengthening of the tourism season.

Site officers (perhaps funded by both NPWS and Kerry County Council) should be employed (from 2pm to 11pm or at a minimum from 7pm-11pm) during the busy summer season to work with the Gardai to control wild parking, illegal camping, anti-social behaviour such as dune fires and litter from dune parties. In our experience, signage on its own will not protect the Special Areas of Conservation as a very damaging minority will ignore signs.

⇒ **What can Kerry do to attract more domestic and overseas tourists and lengthen their stay, particularly outside the main tourist season?**

The development of a Blueway in the Castlegregory Maharees area will lengthen the tourism season by marketing the already excellent tourism offering. The development of a Blueway will allow the area to be more easily marketed to walking groups, water sports clubs and societies and will promote

engagement with the Blueway trails and activities to domestic tourists and residents of neighbouring towns. The promotion of a range of activities and trails (which are largely already in existence) will allow visitors to plan longer stays.

3. NATURAL ASSETS AND ENVIRONMENT

⇒ **What measures should be implemented for protecting amenity?**

⇒ **How can the Plan achieve a balance between the growth of the county and the protection of the environment?**

⇒ **How can the Plan enhance biodiversity in the county?**

The Maharees Peninsula, like Banna beach, has a Blue Flag beach adjacent to a Special Area of Conservation. The sand dunes that support a variety of rare and protected species currently do not have adequate protection from human intervention. Most visitors do not know what a Special Area of Conservation is and they do not know they are holidaying near one. Most visitors do not understand the dangers or damaging effects of climbing foredunes or lighting fires on dunes.

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4. CLIMATE CHANGE, FLOODING AND COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

⇒ **How can we increase awareness and help reduce the impacts of climate change in Kerry?**

⇒ **How can we transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society?**

There is very low-level awareness of the future impacts of climate change on Kerry among the Kerry population. **A public awareness campaign** is required to demonstrate the case for lowering emissions and to act as an impetus for a more urgent transition to renewable energy sources and smarter modes of travel.

In addition, **long-term, low-cost loans** are required to enable householders to switch to low-carbon forms of energy and transport.

⇒ **How can we manage areas at risk of flooding and coastal erosion?**

As there is a requirement for a coastal erosion and flooding risk mitigation study to be conducted before any coastal protection can be considered; **the areas at risk of flooding and coastal erosion in Kerry should be identified and the studies should be commissioned. The recommendations of such studies should then be acted upon.**

Currently the coastal study for the Castlegregory/Maharees area is being concluded. As the main road in and out of Maharees is currently at risk between Castlegregory and the Blue Flag beach at Béal Geal, we feel strongly that Kerry County Council needs to act swiftly on the recommendations of this study in order to protect the road. The dunes which protect the road from flooding between Castlegregory and the Trench are receding rapidly and this road will be subjected to flooding on a regular basis if action is not taken. In addition, Kerry County Council will need to **plan and budget for scenarios where vulnerable infrastructure is at risk from coastal erosion and flooding – to mitigate the risks or to compensate where buildings are not viable/sustainable in the long term.**

5. TRANSPORTATION AND CONECTIVITY

⇒ **How can rural transport and accessibility be improved?**

Protect key access routes from coastal erosion to allow communities to survive. Currently the main road from Castlegregory to the Blue Flag beach at Béal Geal is at risk of being lost to the sea in one part and flooded in another. This is the main artery connecting the main Maharees settlements, the Blue Flag beach and tourism centre to the rest of the Dingle Peninsula. Currently the coastal study for the Castlegregory/Maharees area is being concluded. As the main road in and out of Maharees is currently at risk between Castlegregory and the Blue Flag beach at Béal Geal, we feel strongly that Kerry County Council needs to act swiftly on the recommendations of this study in order to protect the road

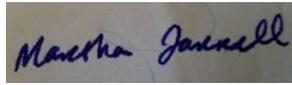
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND QUALITY OF LIFE

⇒ **What type of community and recreation facilities are lacking in your area?**

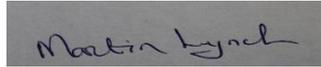
The development of a modern sports/ community hall for the Castlegregory/ Maharees community that will meet the needs of a rapidly growing community over the coming decades.

Submitted by:

Martha Farrell

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martha Farrell".

and Martin Lynch

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martin Lynch".

on behalf of Maharees Conservation Association CLG

Contact details for Maharees Conservation Association CLG: mahareesconservation@gmail.com

(64)

Lisa O'Carroll

From: Conor Brosnan <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday 1 October 2020 23:22
To: planpolicy

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4 An Choill
Dingle

Re. Draft An Daingean Electoral Area Plan 2020-2026

1/10/20

To whom it concerns,

I am making this submission as a private individual.

The acceleration of global temperature has made reducing environmental carbon imperative and urgent.

It has been established that restoring trees can reduce carbon by 30%.

I propose that Kerry County Council facilitate the dense planting of native trees by volunteers on council land as one way of tackling the climate emergency. There are thousands of such mini-forests all over Europe.

Such forests grow 10 times faster, become 30 times denser and achieve 100 times more biodiversity than conventionally planted forests using single or few species of trees.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Conor Brosnan

65

Lisa O'Carroll

From: Padraig McKenna <mckennacontractors@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday 1 October 2020 23:23
To: planpolicy
Subject: Submission regarding Draft An Daingean EA LAP 2020-2026
Attachments: Ordnance Survey Ballybeg 2020.pdf

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A Chara,

We Pádraig and Siobhán McKenna land owners at Ballybeg, Dingle, wish to make a submission regarding the Draft An Daingean EA LAP 2020-2026.
Map included showing location.

Our land as per the new proposal has been zoned as A Flood Storage Area located within the Town Boundary. The land is currently in use as part of our building firm and we bought it with the intention to develop it for our own family in the future, not as a speculative project. Our family has always taken interest in the land. As a family we planted and tended the outline of the area with 240 indigenous trees in the year 1991 to allow them time to mature as part of our intended development. They are now nicely matured and we would scruple to see them over run by the Councils intended Flood Storage.

We also note that the Kerry County Council owns land attached to ours which they have zoned New/Proposed Housing. As our land is within the Town Boundaries and on the public sewer and service lines, we feel that our lands should also be zoned New/Proposed Housing. If not, bias would be questionable.

With regards to Flooding in the town of Dingle. We would note that previous changes made by the Council adjusting water flow from the Connor Pass to Garfinny area, appears to have resolved any flooding the town historically suffered from. To which I would question the need for the Flood Storage area proposed.

Sinne Le Meas,

Pádraig & Siobhán McKenna

--
McKenna Contractors Limited
Cooleen
Dingle
Co. Kerry
VAT No. 6361330P

Land Registry Compliant Map

CENTRE COORDINATES:
ITM 445464 601353

PUBLISHED: 30/09/2020
ORDER NO.: 50145119_1

MAP SERIES: 1:2.500
MAP SHEETS: 5862-A

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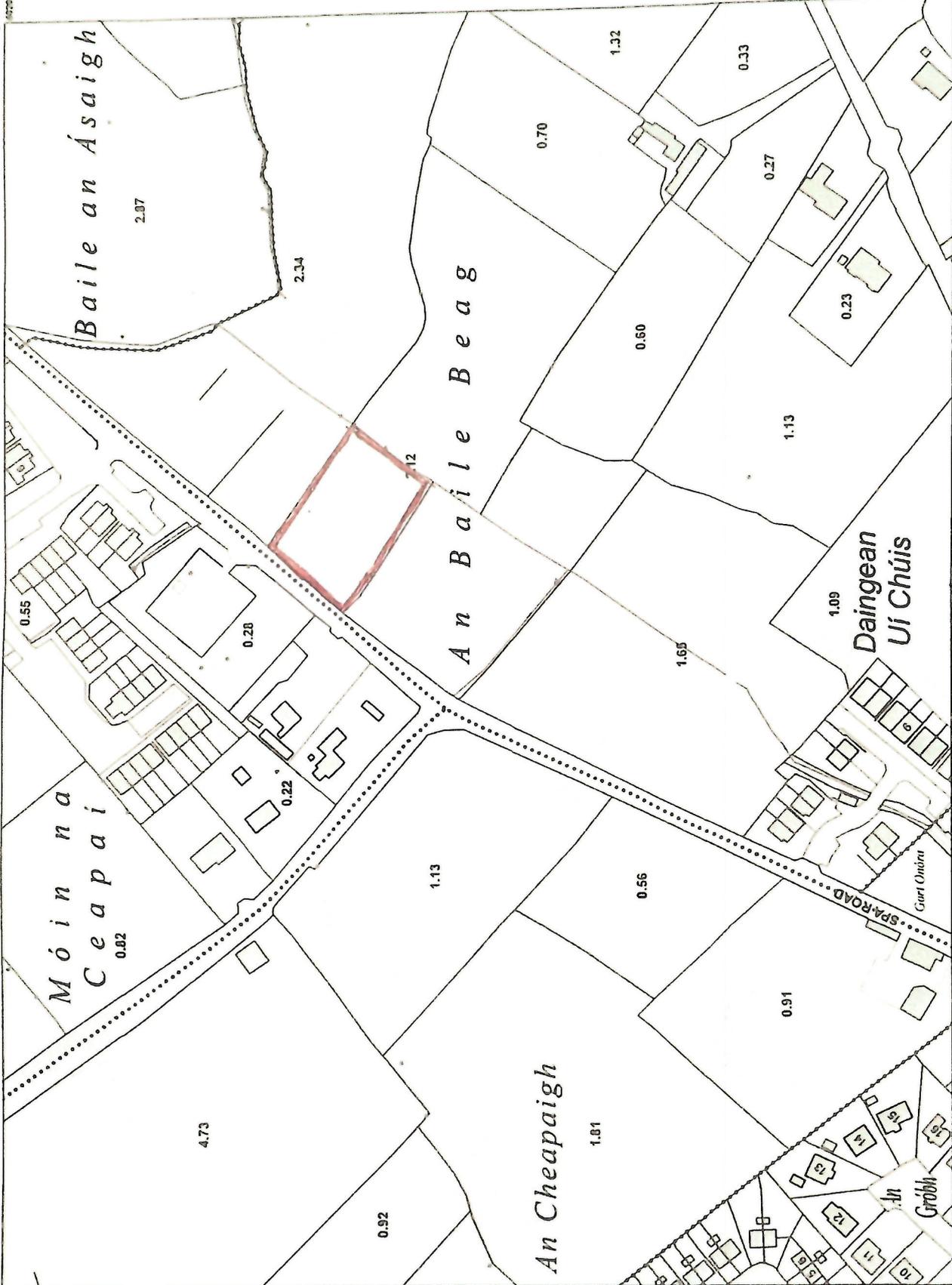
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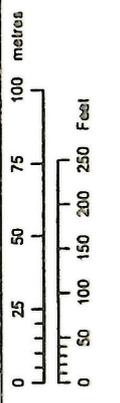
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Further information is available at:
<http://www.osi.ie> search 'Capture Resolution'

OUTPUT SCALE: 1:2.500



69

Lisa O'Carroll

From: ic engineers <info@icengineers.ie>
Sent: Friday 2 October 2020 10:36
To: planpolicy
Subject: Fw: An Daingean Electoral Area Local Area Plan 2020-2026
Attachments: O'Shea P. Milltown, Site Location Map 001.pdf

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FAO Forward Planning Department

An Daingean Electoral Area Local Area Plan 2020-2026 - Milltown area

I am acting on behalf of my client Mr. Patrick O'Shea, who wishes for his property at Ballyoughtragh North, Milltown be considered for possible future development and zoned as residential. Site Location Map 001 attached.

Please let me know if more information is required to substantiate these requests.

Regards,
Damian Murphy BE MIEI

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Milltown
Co. Kerry

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Mobile: +353 872506545
email info@icengineers.ie

