

## CHAPTER 4

### Housing

#### 4.1 Introduction

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

Objective No.	Housing Strategy
	It is an objective of the Council to:
<b>HS 4-1</b>	Facilitate the provision of housing for the existing and future population of the County
<b>HS 4-2</b>	Actively participate in the housing sector through the provision of infrastructure and serviced land for social, voluntary and private housing.

4.1.2 In order to promote this aim the Council has identified a settlement hierarchy that recognises the different roles of settlements. Towns, villages and rural areas will need to absorb differing levels of development in accordance with the settlement strategy and anticipated growth in population and the provisions of the local area plan. New housing development, both private and public will be provided in existing towns and villages as local needs and demands are identified, where public services can be fully utilised.

4.1.3 In the provision of all housing, the Council will actively pursue efforts to meet demand where it arises throughout the county. In this way the Council will be proactive in sustaining rural populations and in assisting development which will retain and strengthen the fabric of these communities.

Objective No.	Housing Strategy
	It is an objective of the Council to:
<b>HS 4-3</b>	Facilitate the housing needs of people in their local communities through actively providing / assisting the provision of housing in settlements and single rural houses as identified in the Settlement Strategy.

## 4.2. Planning and Development Act 2000 – Part V - Housing Supply

4.2.1 Planning Authorities face increasing challenges in their task to provide for the varied housing needs of the population. Every Planning Authority is required to develop a Housing Strategy to plan for the existing and future housing requirements in their functional area.

Specifically, Section 94(1) of the Planning and Development Act (2000) requires that:

“Each planning authority shall include in any development plan ...a strategy for the purpose of ensuring that the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the development plan provides for the housing of the existing and future population of the area in the manner set out in the strategy.”

**Part V** of the **Planning and Development Act, 2000** states that a housing strategy shall take into account:

- The existing need and the likely future need for housing.
- The need to ensure that housing is available for persons who have different levels of income.
- The need to ensure that a mixture of house types and sizes is developed to reasonably match the requirements of different categories of households, as may be determined by the Council, and including the special requirements of elderly persons and persons with disabilities.
- The need to counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social backgrounds.

## 4.3 Review of Previous Plan Period

4.3.1 Since the adoption of the 2003 County Development Plan there has been a strong period of economic growth reflected in the level of housing completions throughout the County. While the years 2005 and 2006 remain the most buoyant for housing completions, there has been a significant drop in the total number of house completions (public and private) in 2007 to 2,678. This drop in completions can be attributed to a varied number of reasons. Table 4.1 shows the number of houses completed since 2002.

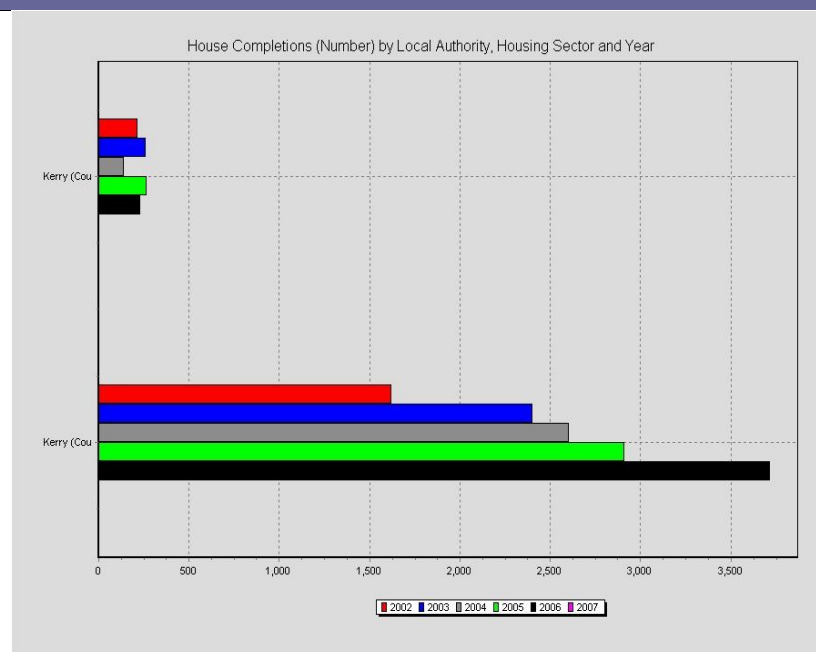
Table 4.1							
Houses Completed 2002 – 2006 in County Kerry – By Sector							
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total
Private	1,623	2,403	2,603	2,914	3,721	2,432	(ex.'07)13,264
Public	215	264	139	269	232	246	(ex.'07) 1,119
Total	1,838	2,667	2,742	3,183	3,595	2,678	16,703

Source – Annual Housing Statistics Bulletin 2007, DoEHLG

\*Note: the breakdown of the 2007 figures remain unavailable at the time of writing

The following graph displays a significant increase in the number of private houses built between 2002 and 2006.

**Table 4.2 - Houses Completed 2002-2006 in County Kerry - By Sector**



*\*Note: the top graph displays social housing provision and the lower graph displays private housing provision.*

4.3.2 Serviced land resources have been placed under considerable pressure since 1996. With the favourable economic conditions and low interest rates, there has been a significant increase in house prices with second hand house prices absorbing most of the increase.

€	Up to 150000	150001 to 200000	200001 to 250000	250001 to 300000	300001 to 350000	350001 To 400000	400001 to 500000	Over 500000
2004%	22.5	32.8	21.0	11.5	5.1	2.9	2.3	1.9
2005%	13.4	25.9	23.9	15.6	9.1	4.9	4.1	3.0
2006%	8.6	20.4	23.5	17.1	12.4	7.1	6.0	4.9
2007%	8.2	16.5	20.1	17.8	14.4	7.8	7.5	7.7

Table 4.3 % Distribution of house prices in Kerry 2004 to 2007

The data refers to all housing units, houses, apartments and new and second hand dwellings. As expected there is a substantial decline in the proportion of houses in the lowest price category over recent years. In 2004 22.5% of all houses were priced at up to €150000. By 2007 this had declined to 8.2%. The decline in prices in 2007 slowed down the decline in the proportion of low priced houses but it did not reverse it. The second lowest price category has also declined in recent years. In 2004 32.8% of all houses were in the €150001 to €200000 category. By 2007 this share had declined to 16.5%.

The affordability issue can immediately be seen in that almost 92% of houses are priced at above €50000 in 2007. It is predicted in 2009 that this priced house category will be about the same price which would require an income of €2226 per month to service a 97% mortgage. The three lowest income deciles\* in Kerry in 2009 will have average disposable monthly incomes of €748, €144 and €678 respectively, well below the level to fund a €50000 house.

\*(A decile is any of the 9 values that divide the sorted data into 10 equal parts, so that each part represents 1/10th of the sample or population.)

**4.3.3** The number of social housing units being built has remained relatively stable at approximately 200 houses per annum. The Council is nearing the end of its four year 2004-2008 Housing Construction Programme of 650 houses. The current total amount of local authority housing stock is 2,096 housing units, with the majority of this stock listed as houses in estates and one-off dwellings.

## 4.4 Future Demand

**4.4.1** The housing market is currently in a situation of flux and at present there is no consensus on the likely short term trends in house prices. In addition there is disagreement on the immediate macroeconomic performance of the economy in 2008 and to a lesser extent in 2009. There is greater agreement on likely economic performance beyond 2009. The short-term uncertainty influences expectations about incomes growth and interest rates.

**4.4.2** The requirement for additional housing is based on the expected population growth which is a function of birth, death and migration patterns. The projected population is converted into households through an assumption about the likely average size of households. This should identify the expected housing need and therefore the required supply. However, historically there has been a substantial difference between the required number of houses to meet demand based on the new household formation methodology and actual numbers built. The difference is substantially determined by second and holiday homes. It may also be influenced by the fact that the increment of population is characterised by smaller household size than the average. Whatever the reasons the actual houses built in a particular period substantially exceed the numbers warranted on the basis of population/household projections. This factor must be incorporated in the housing supply consideration.

	Change in persons total	% increase	Annual average change in persons
1996-02	6396	5.1	1066
2002-09	13097	9.9	1871
2009-2015	14742	10.1	2457

Table 4.4 Relative rates of population increase 1996 to 2015

**4.4.3** Population growth since 2002 has greatly exceeded the 1996-02 performance. In the first period population grew by 1066 persons per year. Between 2002 and 2009 population is expected to have increased by 1871 persons per year. This rate of increase will grow further in the period of the housing strategy. The expected annual growth between 2009 and 2015 is 2457 persons per year. Based on the population projections which are consistent with the current regional projections the expected population increase over the period of the housing strategy will exceed previous experience.

4.4.4 To convert the population increase to changes in household numbers and hence the demand for new accommodation, assumptions are made about the average size of household. The basic assumption is that the average size of household will decline over the period of the housing strategy from 2.91 in 2006 and 2.83 in 2009 to 2.69 in 2015.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Population	139835	141738	143666	145621	147603	149611	151647	154498	157403	160363
Average household size	2.91	2.88	2.85	2.83	2.80	2.77	2.75	2.73	2.71	2.69
Number of households	48110	49180	50338	51529	52753	54011	55144	56593	58082	59614
Increase in number of households		1070	1158	1191	1224	1258	1133	1449	1489	1532

Table 4.5 new household formations in Kerry up to 2015

## 4.5 Social and Affordable Housing

4.5.1 Section 94 of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* requires that planning authorities to ensure that sufficient housing is available for persons with different levels of income. In particular planning authorities are required to reserve a ‘percentage’ of land zoned for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, specifically for social and affordable housing.

4.5.2 In order to achieve these objectives, the total demand for housing over the next six years must be predicted. In addition, the specific need in the County for social and affordable housing must be determined. This will determine the ‘percentage’ of land zoned for residential use that will be allocated for social and affordable housing.

4.5.3 The **total demand for housing** (private, social and affordable) was calculated, based on:

- The projected number of households requiring accommodation per annum up to the year 2015.
- Projected distribution of household income.
- The distribution of house prices over the period to 2015.
- The existing situation with regard to supply of social and affordable housing.
- An analysis of where existing supply is not meeting demand.

## 4.6 Housing Affordability Analysis

4.6.1 The identification of affordability is a critical part of the housing strategy. Clearly, as the exercise involves forecasting affordability levels and shares there is a substantial degree of uncertainty associated with the exercise. While this is always the case with forecasts it is particularly so for the current housing strategy because of uncertain short-term economic factors. The affordability estimates include assumptions on likely house prices. House prices declined in 2007 by over 7%. Forecasts for 2008 range from continuing decline, albeit at a slower pace, to resumption of price increases. It is also uncertain whether 2009 will see a resumption of “normal” house price trends.

4.6.2 There is substantial uncertainty about interest rates in the short-term. Depending on economic circumstances they could rise or fall over the next two years and it is unclear at what level they will settle over the period of the plan. Income levels are a major determinant of affordability and these are influenced by economic growth and levels of unemployment. Over a short period of time growth forecasts for 2008 have decreased from over 3% to around 1.5% and forecasts for growth rates in 2009 have also been reduced. The ESRI has published its medium term economic review for the period up to 2015 (published in 2005) but the current short term performance is substantially below that envisaged in 2005. However, it is expected that the economy will resume its medium to long term expected growth performance from 2010 and the medium term assessment is used as the basis for 2010-2015 performance.

4.6.3 Unemployment is a substantial determinant of affordability. If unemployment continues to rise as expected this will give rise to greater affordability issues. It will increase the proportion of households in the lower income categories who form the core of the affordability problems.

decile	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
1	726	766	808	852	899	948	1000
2	1111	1172	1236	1304	1376	1452	1532
3	1631	1721	1816	1916	2021	2132	2249
4	2219	2341	2470	2606	2749	2900	3060
5	2854	3011	3177	3352	3536	3730	3935
6	3541	3736	3941	4158	4387	4628	4883
7	4319	4557	4808	5072	5351	5645	5955
8	5304	5596	5904	6229	6572	6933	7314
9	6454	6809	7183	7578	7995	8435	8899
10	10139	10697	11285	11906	12561	13252	13981

(A decile is any of the 9 values that divide the sorted data into 10 equal parts, so that each part represents 1/10th of the sample or population.)

**Table 4.6 Average predicted monthly household disposable income in Kerry 2009-2015 €**

decile	% of households	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
1	7.6	48	52	55	58	61	64	67
2	8.8	74	78	84	88	93	98	103
3	9.9	109	115	123	129	136	143	149
4	9.9	149	158	167	175	186	196	206
5	10.3	193	203	214	226	238	252	265
6	10.7	239	253	266	280	296	312	330
7	11.1	292	307	325	342	361	381	402
8	10.7	358	378	399	421	443	468	494
9	10.7	436	460	486	513	540	570	601
10	10.3	685	723	763	804	848	895	944

**Table 4.7 Maximum house price afforded by each income decile Kerry 2009-2015 (€ 000)**

The above factors determine the maximum price that individual households in Kerry can pay for houses. These figures combined with the assessment of future house prices give an indication of the affordability of housing for different income groups. Based on this analysis, the table below identifies the proportions of households with affordability difficulties for each year from 2009 to 2015.

Accordingly, in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000, 20% of the land zoned for residential and a mix of residential and other uses should be reserved for social and affordable housing.

Year	% of new households with affordability problems
2009	28.2
2010	27.5
2011	27.0
2012	26.7
2013	25.8
2014	26.8
2105	25.1

**Table 4.8 % of Households with Affordability Problems**

Objective No.	Need For Social and Affordable Housing
	It is an objective of the Council to
<b>HS 4-4</b>	Meet the demand for social and affordable housing in accordance with the general policy contained in objective HS 4-2.
<b>HS 4-5</b>	Reserve 20% of land zoned in the County Development Plan and Local Area Plans for residential development, or for a mix of residential and other uses, for the provision of social and affordable housing. This figure may be modified in line with any revisions to the Housing Strategy carried out during the period of the plan.

## 4.7 Undue Social Segregation

4.7.1 The Council recognises that National Policy and the specific purpose of the Part V provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 go beyond the mere acquisition of land for Social and Affordable Housing. Central to these provisions is the need to counteract undue segregation between persons of different social backgrounds.

Objective No.	Social Integration
	It is an objective of the Council that
<b>HS 4-6</b>	In meeting the demand for social and affordable housing to promote social integration between persons of different social backgrounds.

## 4.8 Meeting the Demand for Social & Affordable Housing

4.8.1 It is the Council's policy to enable every household to have available to them an affordable dwelling of good quality, suitable to their needs, in a good environment and, as far as possible, the tenure of their choice. This objective will be achieved in partnership with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, National and Local Voluntary Housing Groups and other State Agencies.

Objective No.	Existing Landbank
	It is an objective of the Council to
<b>HS 4-7</b>	In meeting the requirements of objective HS 4-2 during the period of this plan to identify and acquire lands at all levels of the settlement hierarchy for the provision of housing.

### *Voluntary and Co-operative Housing Bodies*

4.8.2 Voluntary Bodies and Housing Associations have a major role to play in developing Social and Affordable Housing in the county. This accommodation is additional to that provided by the Local Authority housing construction programme and therefore helps to reduce the numbers on the Council housing waiting list. Voluntary Bodies provide accommodation to meet the needs of the elderly, persons with disabilities and other persons who require supportive housing responses. The impact of the voluntary sector has become increasingly important in recent years. It is estimated that this sector will contribute 40 housing units each year.

### *Private Rental Accommodation Assistance*

4.8.3 It is important to take account of the growing significance of the private rental sector. The Government's publication *Action on Housing* indicates that more supply-based approaches to rental assistance will be pursued. It is envisaged that new arrangements will be developed, in partnership with the private sector, to procure private rental accommodation that will be available on a long-term basis to help address the needs of eligible households not accommodated through other social and affordable housing options.

### *Affordable Housing Schemes*

4.8.4 The Council has a role in the direct provision of affordable housing in the county. Affordable housing schemes have been undertaken in Ballybunion and Kenmare, with allocations also in place for Listowel and Ardfert since the previous plan period.



Objective No.	Need For Social and Affordable Housing
	It is an objective of the Council to
<b>HS 4-8</b>	Provide for a mix of housing types and sizes to meet the demand throughout the period of the Plan.
<b>HS 4-9</b>	Utilise the full range of Housing Schemes to assist households in acquiring or improving a dwelling suitable to their needs.
<b>HS 4-10</b>	Increase the involvement of the voluntary and co-operative housing sector to assist in the provision of such housing, and in particular to help address the housing and lifestyle requirements of those with special needs.

## 4.9 Housing Requirements of Persons with Special Needs

4.9.1 This section provides information on the specific housing requirements and housing issues that need to be addressed in the provision of social and affordable housing for people with special needs. This is done by highlighting the manner in which the Council is currently assisting people with special requirements to reside in private housing.

### *Persons with Disabilities*

4.9.2 The specific housing needs of people with disabilities need to be considered in the design and construction of additional social and affordable housing units. Part M of the Building Regulations 1997-2000 will assist in this. In particular, regard needs to be had for the following:

- location - must be accessible to public transport
- accessible design - must suit the requirements of individual tenants, and therefore requires direct and on-going consultation with the prospective tenant with respect to size, design and accessories.

Objective No.	Persons with Disabilities
	It is an objective of the Council to
<b>HS 4-11</b>	Assist in the provision of additional accommodation or necessary works of adapting houses to meet the needs of persons with disability through the Disabled Persons Grant Scheme.

As of March 2008, there are 24 housing units as part of the Local Authority Housing stock that can cater for individuals with disabilities, with 32 persons approved.

### *Traveller Accommodation*

4.9.3 Under The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, the Council has adopted a 4-year accommodation programme for travellers. The Traveller Accommodation Plan 2005-2008 takes into consideration the age profile of existing travellers and the rate of new family formations in the county.

It is expected that an additional 24 new families will require accommodation during the period of the programme, with an overall figure of 87 families requiring permanent housing during the lifetime of the plan.

4.9.4 Traveller families by and large wish to be accommodated in standard housing and halting sites are seen as a temporary accommodation measure while awaiting standard housing. Houses in new Local Authority estates are allocated to travellers on the Council's approved waiting list taking into account the need to counteract undue segregation in housing between persons of different social backgrounds.

Objective No.	Traveller Accommodation
	It is an objective of the Council to
<b>HS 4-12</b>	Cater for the accommodation needs of travellers by implementing the recommendations of the Traveller Accommodation Programme as adopted by the Council.

#### *Housing for the Elderly*

4.9.5 Housing designed for older persons should, as with housing for people with disabilities, have regard to:

- location - must be accessible to public transport and retail outlets
- accessible design - one-storey smaller housing units are recommended, although not all older persons have physical constraints and therefore double-storey accommodation may be appropriate.
- both sheltered and independent accommodation is required.

Objective No.	Housing for the Elderly
	It is an objective of the Council to
<b>HS 4-13</b>	Design 10% and 12% of all social & affordable housing specifically for older persons.

#### *Homelessness*

4.9.6 Homelessness is a complex social problem that requires not only a prompt and adequate response but also an integrated and co-ordinated response from Housing Authorities, the Health Service Executive and Voluntary bodies. A Forum for the homeless with representatives from all these groups has been established and has produced a "Homeless Strategy".

Objective No.	Homelessness
	It is an objective of the Council to
<b>HS 4-14</b>	Maintain a dedicated homeless administration unit in Tralee and that consideration is given to establishment of a similar unit in Killarney.

*Refugees / Asylum Seekers*

4.9.7 The Local Authority has facilitated the provision of emergency accommodation for Asylum Seekers as part of the process of reception, dispersal and direct provision for Asylum Seekers in Ireland. The number of such persons in Kerry is increasing.

Objective No.	Refugees / Asylum Seekers
	It is an objective of the Council to
<b>HS 4-15</b>	Implement Government Policy in relation to the provision of accommodation for Refugees / Asylum Seekers.

**4.10 Current Social Housing Stock Standards**

4.10.1 All housing authorities are required to draw up and adopt, as a reserved function, a written statement of Policy on Housing Management, as per Section 9 of the *Housing Act, 1992*. The policy objectives in Kerry are to:

Objective No.	Current Social Housing Stock
	It is an objective of the Council to
<b>HS 4-16</b>	Improve the quality of life of tenants by improving our service to them and by giving them a more meaningful and positive role in estate management
<b>HS 4-17</b>	Improve the level of maintenance of our stock of houses
<b>HS 4-18</b>	Endeavour to raise the standard of general estate services and thereby to improve the appearance of our estates
<b>HS 4-19</b>	Protect the value of the housing stock as an asset and to take all necessary steps to achieve this aim
<b>HS 4-20</b>	Achieve the maximum return for the considerable financial outlay required to meet the objectives.

## 4.11 Housing Mix

4.11.1 It is the policy of the Council to create sustainable mixed communities which provide for a greater choice and a better mix of the size, tenure and location of housing in all areas in order that a variety of housing is provided that reflects the differing needs of people within the County.

Objective No.	Housing Mix
	It is an objective of the Council to
<b>HS 4-21</b>	Seek to increase the variety in house types and size to adapt to changing demographic trends. It will encourage the private sector to build smaller housing units such as flats / apartments to take account of the reduction in the average household size.

## 4.12 Density

4.12.1 In general, development plans should give specific recognition to the importance of achieving higher residential density in appropriate areas, such as sites within town and village centres. The Council will have regard to the Department of the Environment and Local Government publication “Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas” (2008), in assessing applications.

4.12.2 Higher densities must not be achieved at an unacceptable amenity cost to the surrounding dwellings and the residents of the proposed development. A high quality of design and layout and a good quality living environment, including the availability of adequate shopping, social, transport and leisure facilities, are essential if increased residential densities are to be acceptable.

Objective No.	Density
	It is an objective of the Council to
<b>HS 4-22</b>	Promote, where appropriate, increased residential density in the exercise of its development management functions.
<b>HS 4-23</b>	Encourage increased densities that contribute to the enhancement of a town or village form by reinforcing street patterns or assisting in the re-development of backlands.

### 4.13 Housing Design and Standards

4.13.1 Poorly laid out estates and inappropriately designed developments can have a serious negative impact on the landscape and on the residential amenity of an area. The Council will promote and support the highest design standards and a high quality public realm in new housing in Kerry, both in its own building programme and in private housing developments in all areas of the county.

Objective No.	Design and Standards
	It is an objective of the Council to
<b>HS 4-24</b>	Assess planning applications for housing developments in accordance with the standards of layout and design outlined in the Development Management Section of this Plan.
<b>HS 4-25</b>	Provide assistance to developers and the general public by producing a detailed “Design Guide” in relation to housing developments

### 4.14 Regeneration of Vacant and Derelict Sites

4.14.1 Since the introduction of the Derelict Sites Act, 1990 there has been a marked reduction in the amount of dereliction throughout Co. Kerry. Nevertheless, there remains a core of properties, which still need to be addressed. The development of these derelict sites along major tourist routes and within towns and villages leads to the regeneration of these areas and has a knock on effect in improving all existing non-derelict properties within the area.

Objective No.	Regeneration of Vacant and Derelict Sites
	It is an objective of the Council that
<b>HS 4-26</b>	All derelict sites within built up areas and on the major tourist routes will be dealt with in accordance with procedures of the Derelict Sites Act. This process will involve the necessary action to remove the dereliction including acquisition by Compulsory Purchase.