

CHAPTER 3

Settlements Strategy and Rural Development Policies

3.0 Introduction

3.0.1 This Chapter is presented in two parts. Part 1 deals with the settlements strategy for the County and incorporates sections 3.1 to 3.5. In effect Part 1 examines the relationships and complementary roles between the settlements of the County and identifies the different functional areas and their relative importance or sphere of influence from a service provision perspective. This is important in order to inform policy makers in decisions relating to the most efficient use of resources throughout the County in order to maintain and promote the service provision in an area. It identifies the interrelationship between settlements and areas and also the hierarchy of service provision on a geographic basis.

3.0.2 Part 2, incorporating sections 3.6 to 3.10 outlines the policies dealing with residential development in rural areas. It identifies the different types of rural areas as required by the 'Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines' issued by the DoEHLG and the policies for development in these areas. It also identifies the different types of landscape amenity zonings and outlines the relevant policies for these areas.

PART 1

3.1. Settlements Strategy

3.1.1 The development of a coherent integrated settlement strategy for the County is a major component of the County Development Plan. The settlement strategy will provide a framework indicating the existing role of, and future strategy for the development of the settlements throughout the County. It will identify the role and overall development policies for settlements throughout the County.

3.1.2 The settlement strategy will inform infrastructural investment priorities over the coming years in order to ensure that available funding is invested in a focussed, efficient manner which will be of greatest benefit to the citizens, communities and the economy of the county, while ensuring that the best value is being achieved for the investment being made. It will provide for the integrated provision of services throughout the county.

3.1.3 Strong settlements are the mainstay of a strong region with a competitive economy. Vibrant and viable settlements that provide a range of jobs, services and housing choice not only provide the basis of strong economies and communities, but also support a greater range of viable, sustainable infrastructure and modes of transport, both within and between settlements. The development of a range of complementary settlements that work together to the benefit of the region and all of its inhabitants, including those in the rural areas, can only occur in a planned way. It is intended therefore to define a network of strong settlements throughout the county which can provide a high level of service provision and act as focal points for their surrounding hinterland.

3.1.4 In determining the settlement strategy a number of factors were considered which contributed to and informed the recommended strategy. The factors included:

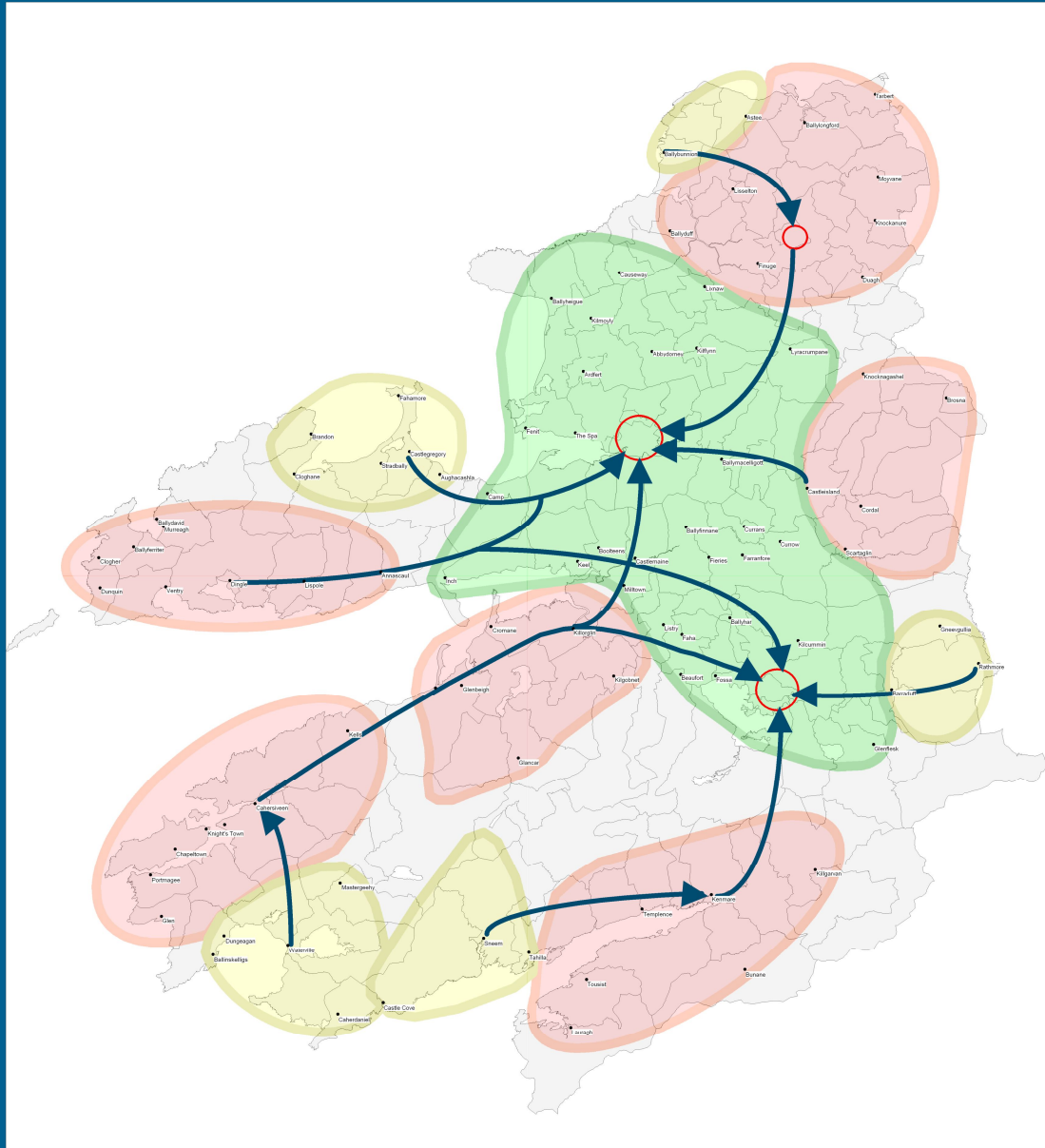
- The settlement strategy must be consistent with achieving the overall objectives of the Plan.
- The peripherality of the County and the peripherality of settlements within the County.
- The National Development Plan, as implemented through the National Spatial Strategy, which is committed to the promotion of balanced regional development. It is critical that this objective of developing the Tralee-Killarney Hub as a focus for inward investment and population growth is implemented.

Objective No.	Settlements Strategy Overall Objectives
	It is an objective of the Council to:
SS 3-1	Ensure that the development of the settlements throughout the County is carried out in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
SS 3-2	Promote the development of the Tralee-Killarney Hub as a focus for inward investment and develop the critical mass necessary to fulfil its role as an economic driver for the region.
SS 3-3	Facilitate the provision of a network of vibrant settlements throughout the County providing the necessary services to their residents and the population of the surrounding hinterland.
SS 3-4	Ensure that development within the settlements is carried out in accordance with the policies of the relevant local area plan and relevant legislation including the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004.
SS 3-5	Ensure that the settlements throughout the county are developed in accordance with the urban design principles outlined in chapter 13 of this plan thereby making them attractive environments in which to live.
SS 3-6	Zone sufficient lands in the settlements throughout the county in order to provide an alternative to one-off rural housing, thus promoting vibrant settlements, affordability and sustainability.
SS 3-7	Ensure that residential development within the settlements throughout the County promotes the development of attractive, sustainable, integrated neighbourhoods.
SS 3-8	Regulate development in the Settlements throughout the County in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 10 of this Plan, 'Urban Design, Amenity and Development Management'.

- County Kerry is the fifth largest county in Ireland. Its mountainous topography and its geographic layout, incorporating two major peninsulas and extending into a third, raises many issues in relation to the provision of services, the complementary role of settlements and the efficient provision of infrastructure. In certain instances relatively close settlements can have little or no interaction due to geographical and topographical factors.

- The level of service provision in the settlements throughout the County was assessed in order to identify the relative strengths of each settlement and identify which towns would act as the major service anchors for their areas.
- The sphere of influence of the service centres throughout the county was considered in the context of ensuring that the entire population of the County would be within a reasonable distance of the necessary services.
- Future energy costs, in particular oil, will increase commuting costs and make access to higher order services more expensive. An analysis of the existing population distribution throughout the county indicates a clear need for sustainable travel patterns and reduced reliance on private transport.
- Services and employment opportunities must be provided as close as possible to people in need of them. The settlement strategy will consider the complementary roles of settlements and consider, within each catchment, the range and accessibility of services and employment opportunities.
- The sustainable development of rural communities is dependent on employment and attractive settlements. The provision of the necessary infrastructure required to promote and facilitate large scale industry and employment opportunities should be concentrated in key towns servicing the complementary settlements and rural hinterlands.
- The identification of smaller settlements for growth will be considered in the context of their realistic potential to capture or recapture services as a result of population growth. It is not considered sustainable to provide services for what are effectively rural housing estates with the population commuting to obtain the employment and services required.

Functionality and Complementary Roles



Map 3.1
Functional Areas and Complementary Roles
(Indicative Boundaries)

3.2 Functional Areas and Complementary Roles

3.2.1 Access to services, or social infrastructure, has a significant effect on where people live and the quality of life that they experience. The size of a settlement and demand from the local population determine to a large extent the level of service provision which can be supported. Higher order services such as third level education facilities and hospitals need a much higher level of population to support them and are therefore generally located in the larger settlements. Smaller settlements such as rural villages need more essential daily access to services such as a primary school, a post office and a shop. These communities use the adjacent larger towns for less essential, or less frequently used, higher order services. In effect these settlements provide a complementary service role. It is important to identify the functional areas and complementary roles of the settlements throughout the county in order to be aware of the needs of local communities and to identify areas where consolidation and strengthening of services is required. It is the purpose of this section to identify the different service centres throughout the county, their areas of influence and their strategic roles for the future. This will assist in ensuring that a network of viable service centres is maintained for the population throughout the County and guide infrastructural investment decisions in establishing and maintaining this network.

3.2.2 An analysis of functionality and sphere of influence of settlements has identified 1 hub functional area, 6 primary functional areas and five local functional areas as outlined in table 3.1 below and indicated on map 3.1(above).

Hub Area	Primary Functional Areas	Local Functional Areas
Tralee Killarney Hub	An Daingean Area Caherciveen Area Castleisland Area Kenmare Area Killorglin Area Listowel Area	Ballybunion Area Castlegregory Area Rathmore Area Sneem Area Waterville Area

Table 3.1
Functional Areas and Complimentary Roles

3.2.3 These areas have been identified on the basis of service provision of the principle towns, their sphere of influence and their strategic role in the development of the county.

Objective No.	Settlements Strategy Overall Objectives
	It is an objective of the Council to:
SS 3-9	Ensure that each of the functional areas is facilitated in providing the necessary services commensurate with the area and population served.
SS 3-10	<p>a) Prepare local area plans for each of the functional areas of the County during the lifetime of the plan in accordance with relevant legislation including the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004.</p> <p>b) Include as part of the Caherciveen Functional Area Local Area Plan, a plan for Valentia Island as well as for the individual settlements.</p>
SS 3-11	Provide the necessary linkages between the functional areas in order to ensure the efficient functioning of their complementary roles.
SS 3-12	Identify a phasing programme for the development of land and the coordinated provision of physical infrastructure and community facilities through the Local Area Plan preparation process.

3.3 Hub Area

3.3.1 Hubs, as defined in the National Spatial Strategy, are large to medium-sized towns, which support the national and international role of the gateways and in turn energise smaller towns and rural areas within their sphere of influence. Hubs tend to be well positioned to act as strong market and service centres for an extensive rural hinterland.

The NSS indicates that the Tralee-Killarney linked hub *‘will capitalise on the combined capacities of both towns, such as those in third-level education, developing links between industry and centres of learning, surface and air transport links and key natural resources such as scenic landscape.’*

The Strategy also states that, *‘for the linked-hubs to function effectively, improved local linkages will be required through the road network and bus-based public transport options, improved energy and telecommunications and all co-ordinate through the integrated planning frameworks...’*

The NSS envisages that the hubs will need to grow substantially to 2020 and beyond.

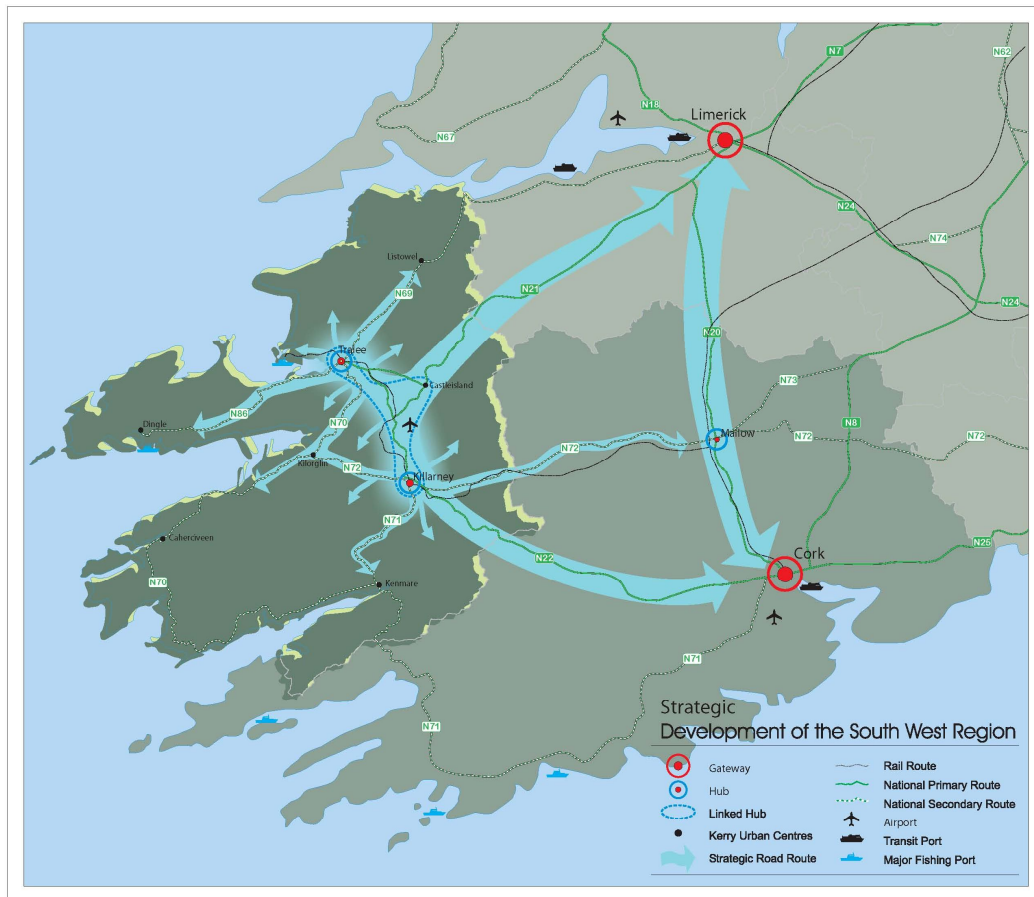
3.3.2 Key concepts from the NSS are:

- that each area should develop to its full potential through the use of its various natural, economic and social resources;
- that critical mass plays a key role in economic and social development. In effect, that size and density of population enable a location to enhance its services, economic activity and consequently, quality of life;
- and, those linkages supported by highly efficient public transport and modern Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) are critical to enable areas of the Region to develop to their full potential.

3.3.3 The Hub area is the principal functional area within the County. As a designated Hub under the National Spatial Strategy it will ‘support and be supported by the gateways’. It will act as the economic driver for the region and the focal point for investment into the County. In April 2007 Kerry County Council adopted the development strategy for the Hub. This set out the vision for the Hub as:

‘a well-connected urban network that is a source of creativity, economic generation, community involvement and cultural value, and is distinctive for its tourism attractions, lifestyle choice and unique quality of life offer.’

These concepts of economic generation and quality of life are critical to the future of the hub as the population growth envisaged cannot be achieved through natural regeneration of the indigenous population. Through creating a vibrant economy with employment opportunities and maintaining the exceptional quality of life available, the strategy envisages making Kerry an attractive location in which to live thereby attracting inward migration.

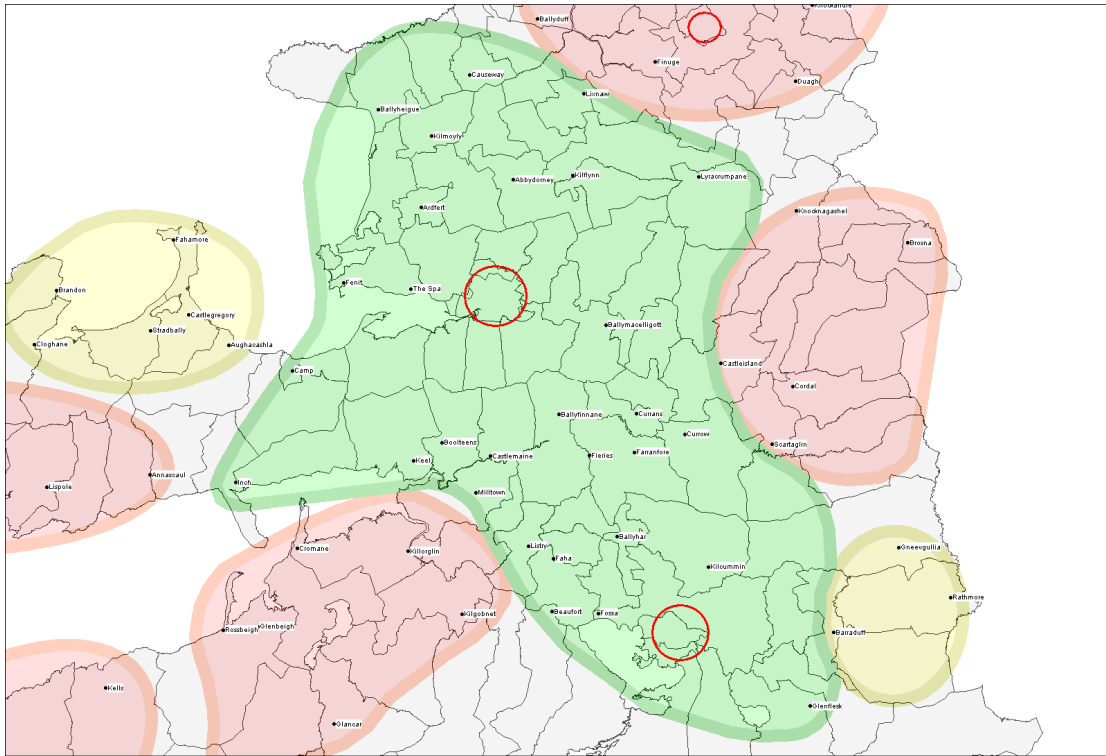


Map 3.2
Kerry Linked Hub - Context Relative to Regional Gateways

3.3.4 The two main towns in the Hub are Tralee and Killarney. These towns acting as a linked hub enable the development of a higher level of facilities and services – particularly higher order services such as third level education, advanced health care facilities, industrial sites and employment centres, cultural centres of excellence, sport venues, etc., - far exceeding the possibilities of either town on their own.

3.3.5 At a National level if the Kerry Hub is to be successful and fulfill its role as envisaged under the NSS, as well as developing national linkages, it will also need to establish strong linkages between Tralee and Killarney and also to the other functional areas throughout the County (Map 3.2). At the local level, Tralee and Killarney will need to provide for the demand generated from the population base within their respective towns, while at the broader subregional and county level, there will be services and facilities that will demand a higher population base than either town can provide on its own.

3.3.6 The NSS does not ignore the role of other towns or villages and rural areas. It acknowledges the fact that urban and rural areas are intrinsically interdependent and seeks to develop rural potential and strengthen the rural economy by capitalising on local economic strengths in these areas. Tralee and Killarney are surrounded by a network of smaller towns and villages within their immediate sphere of influence (Map 3.3). These towns, providing a more rural village option for dwellers, provide a significant demand for the services within the larger towns. The option of developing these smaller towns as residential villages while retaining their rural character will consolidate local services, contribute to the demand for higher order services in Tralee and Killarney and provide an attractive residential option. The development of high quality public transportation is critical to the future sustainability of this option.



Map 3.3
Hub Functional Area
Complementary Settlements

3.3.7 A number of villages within the Hub functional area have a significant level of service provision and are well positioned to develop as attractive complementary settlements in excess of their existing role. This development is constrained in many instances due to lack of infrastructure, particularly wastewater and water facilities. It is not possible over the period of the plan, with the resources available, to provide the necessary infrastructure in every settlement. Based on an analysis of the settlements, their functional role, location and sphere of influence, it is essential to prioritise the development of infrastructure in certain villages.

3.3.8 The strategy of this Development Plan is that the Hub

- Will act as the main economic driver for the county
- Will achieve its role as envisaged under the National Spatial Strategy
- Will continue as the location of higher order service provision for the region
- Will develop the complementary roles between the two main centres of Tralee and Killarney
- Will develop its linkages with Limerick and Cork in order to provide the supporting role as envisaged to the Gateways.

Objective No.	Settlements Strategy Hub Area
	It is an objective of the Council to:
SS 3-13	Promote the development of the Tralee Killarney Hub as the economic driver for the region and the focal point for investment into the County.
SS 3-14	Promote the development of the Tralee Killarney Hub in accordance with the provisions of the Hub strategy as adopted.
SS 3-15	Prioritise the provision of the necessary infrastructure over the period of the plan, in order to develop their role as centres for their rural hinterland and their complementary role to the Hub Towns.
SS 3-16	Provide, and where appropriate facilitate, the necessary transportation linkages to facilitate the complementary role of the Hub with the Gateways.
SS 3-17	Facilitate the provision of infrastructure to promote the 'Developing Areas initiative' throughout the Hub.

3.4 Primary Functional Areas

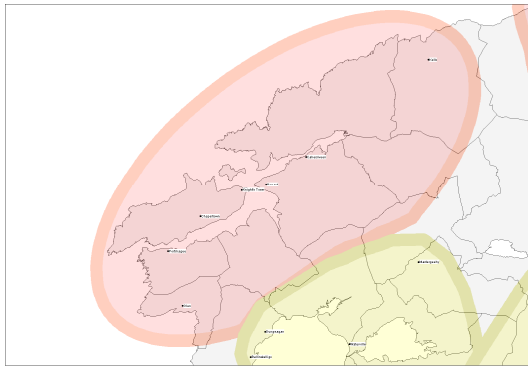
3.4.1 These constitute the larger functional areas throughout the County. They are provided with their higher order services from a large district town whose sphere of influence extends over a wide geographic area. These towns play a strategic role in servicing their rural catchments as well as supporting and driving the rural economy of the County. They possess a high level of infrastructural capacity and function as significant employment centres. Their catchment populations contribute to the critical mass necessary to support the higher order services provided in the main Hub centres. The development of communities is dependent on the provision of employment opportunities. It is envisaged that these centres will act as the focal point for future job creation within sustainable commuting distance for their populations. It is intended they will form a network of strong centres acting as strategic service anchors for their respective areas.

3.4.2 The larger towns are supported by a network of smaller villages. These villages provide for the daily needs of their hinterlands. It is important that these settlements continue to maintain their existing population and services and to function as intermediate settlements between the rural dwellers and the larger towns.

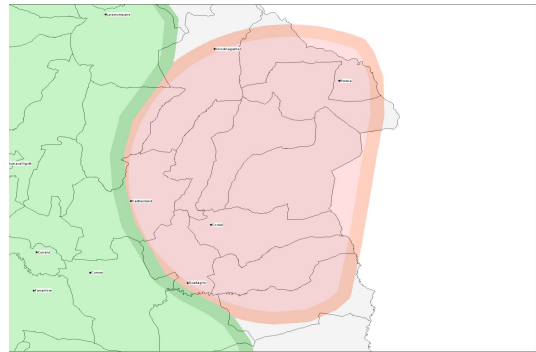
3.4.3 The plan identifies six primary functional areas.

The strategy for the principal settlements in these Primary Functional Areas is

- To maintain and expand their current level of service provision in order to underpin the viability of their rural hinterlands.
- To act as the main employment centres for their areas
- To act as focal points for the investment necessary to strengthen the areas.

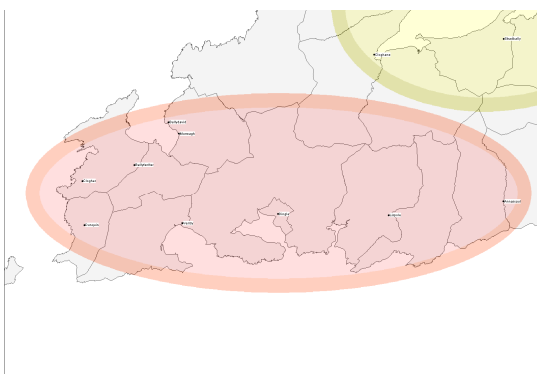


Caherciveen Area

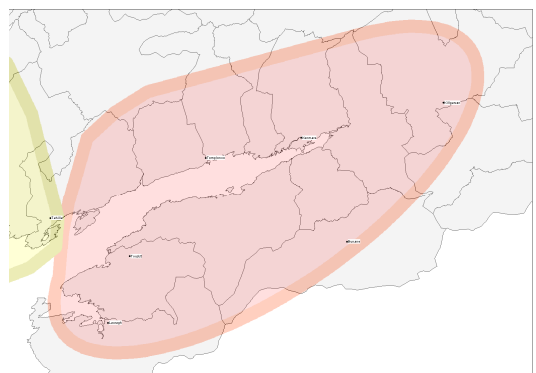


Castleisland Area

Objective No.	Settlements Strategy Primary Areas Principal Towns
	It is an objective of the Council to:
SS 3-18	Promote the development of the principal towns in the Primary Functional Areas in order to provide a network of strong settlements throughout the County.
SS 3-19	Provide the necessary infrastructure to promote industry and employment opportunities.
SS 3-20	Provide the necessary transportation linkages to facilitate the complementary role of these settlements within the Hub functional area and distribute the influence of the Hub throughout the county.
SS 3-21	Ensure that the development of these towns provides for the provision of public transportation facilities necessary to underpin their future sustainability and viability.
SS 3-22	Facilitate development which will promote the social, cultural and economic development of these towns where developments are in accordance with the objectives of this plan and relevant legislation.



An Daingean Area

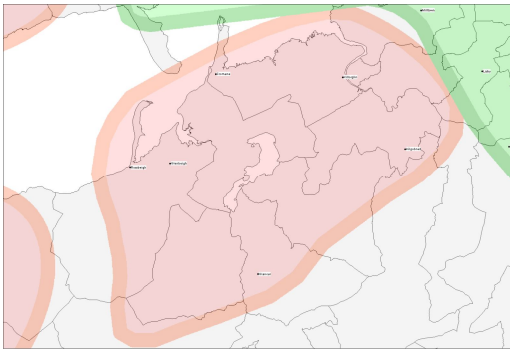


Kenmare Area

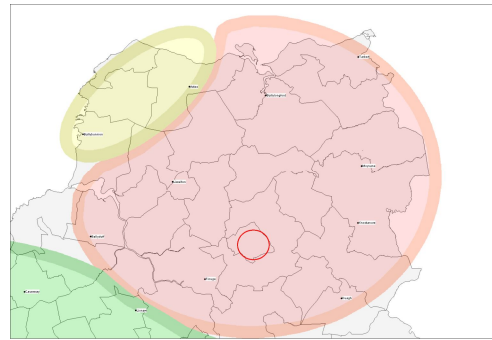
3.4.4 In the Primary functional area the strategy for the smaller settlements is

- To ensure that they retain their current level of service provision and develop as attractive settlements maintaining their existing character.

- To identify strategic settlements for improved infrastructural provision in order to consolidate their role.



Killorglin Area

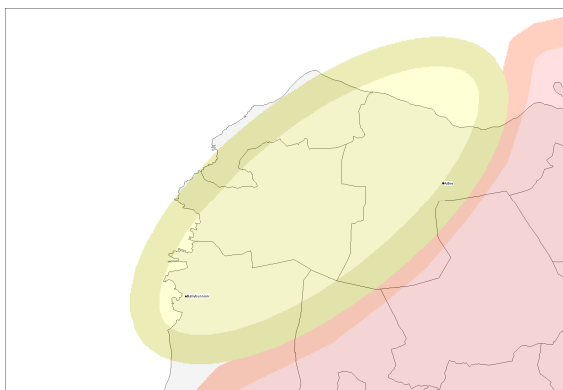


Listowel Area

Objective No.	Settlements Strategy Primary Areas Smaller Settlements
	It is an objective of the Council to:
SS 3-23	Consolidate the role of the smaller settlements throughout the county.
SS 3-24	Ensure that these settlements retain the character and develop as attractive settlements
SS 3-25	Prioritise the provision of wastewater infrastructure in order to ensure their continued growth.

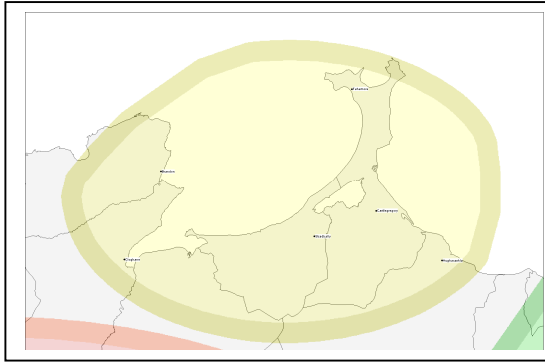
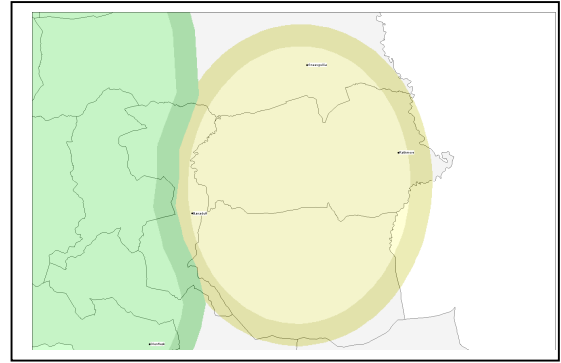
3.5 Local Functional Areas

3.5.1 These five functional areas have a smaller geographic catchment, smaller populations and, while their main town functions as a service centres for a small number of other settlements it is smaller and has a lesser service provision than the principle towns.

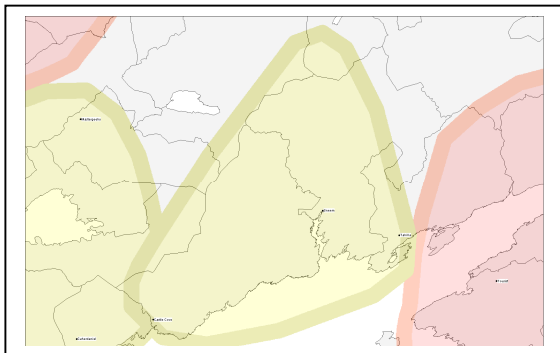
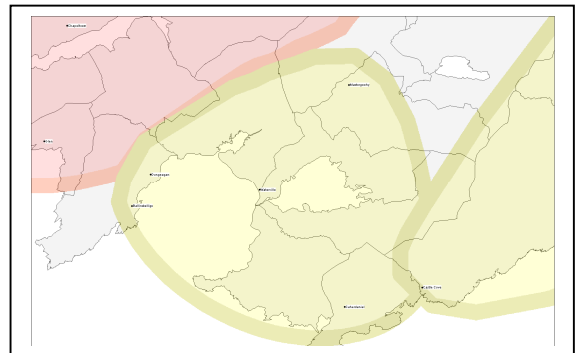


Ballybunion

3.5.2 These towns play a very important role as service providers for smaller villages and rural dwellers in more remote rural areas and are critical for viability of these rural communities. In many of these settlements, unlike the larger principle towns, the ongoing provision of services is marginal. The emphasis for these settlements will be to promote measures which will remove barriers to development and ensure population growth and ongoing demand for services.

**Castle Gregory****Rathmore**

3.5.3 The primary objective for these settlements is to retain and where possible increase their current level of population. While the settlements may not have the same level of service provision as the principle settlements, this will not prove too great a barrier once good water, wastewater and transportation linkages and communications infrastructure is available. Attracting population will subsequently depend on developing attractive well functioning settlements with a good character and a defined sense of place. Achieving this is what will distinguish these settlements from others as a location in which to settle. While this strategy will also apply to the bigger towns, its implementation for the smaller towns is critical as they do not have the same level of indigenous population to sustain the services and are relying to a greater extent on inward migration. Kenmare is a good indication of how this strategy can work. Infrastructural capacity, improved linkages and a planned town providing a defined sense of place and identity have made it one of the more popular places in which to settle in the Country.

**Sneem****Waterville**

Objective No.	Settlements Strategy Local Functional Areas Main Settlements
	It is an objective of the Council to:
SS 3-26	Promote the provision of good infrastructure, communication and transportation linkages to these settlements where linkages are in accordance with the objectives of this plan and relevant legislation.
SS 3-27	Ensure that these settlements develop as attractive settlements in which to settle.
SS 3-28	Work with local community groups to identify the character and potential of these settlements.

3.5.4 Similar to the smaller settlements in the primary functional areas the smaller settlements in these areas will continue to function as daily service providers and act an intermediate level between the rural areas and the larger towns.

3.5.5 The strategy for the smaller settlements is

- To ensure that they retain their current role as daily service providers for their rural areas.
- To retain their rural character.
- Provide an alternative location for rural style dwelling to one-off rural housing.

Objective No.	Settlements Strategy Local Functional Areas Smaller Settlements
	It is an objective of the Council to:
SS 3-29	Facilitate development which will promote the role of these smaller settlements as local service centres where developments are in accordance with the objectives of this plan and relevant legislation
SS 3-30	Ensure that these settlements retain their rural character and develop as attractive settlements

PART 2 RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

3.6 Rural Development Policy

3.6.1 The rural areas constitute the vast bulk of the landmass of the county. Traditionally the majority of dwellings in the rural areas were occupied by people involved in rural related activities such as farming. Over the last 20 years, this pattern has changed significantly with the majority of new dwellings being built by persons with no previous rural connections. The availability of sites due to the decline of agriculture, the cost of urban dwellings and the lack of choice of dwellings available in urban areas has contributed to this phenomenon.

3.6.2 In certain areas of the County, particularly in more remote, less populated areas, while there may be questions of environmental sustainability, this additional housing, and associated population increase, has reinforced the traditional rural communities and contributed to local services demand such as schools and local shops. The concept of rural sustainability therefore, encompasses not only environmental but also social and economic aspects of development. Achieving sustainable rural development involves achieving a balance between these different and sometimes contrary criteria.

3.6.3 The importance of development for sparsely populated threatened rural communities must be acknowledged. In other areas however, the increase in rural dwelling has not had the benefits for the rural areas or communities that it has had with more remote areas. Landscape, servicing costs, and unsustainable transport patterns must be balanced against the benefit to and needs of traditional rural communities, rural depopulation and local social and economic issues with regard to relevant legislation on European site protection.

3.6.4 County Kerry is rich in culture. Its literature, music, traditions and its linguistic heritage is unsurpassed throughout the country. Much of this culture is preserved and continued in the traditions of rural communities, whose identity is often defined by their involvement and interaction through these activities.

The County is also famous for its landscapes which, in addition to their intrinsic beauty, constitute a major economic asset which must be protected for future generations. Protecting the environment and maintaining it for future generations is at the core of sustainable development. In addition, a major factor in attracting visitors to the county is the clean unspoilt environmental image. In certain instances the development of rural housing can impact on the natural resources of the County such as aquifers needed for drinking water purposes. It is also important that rural development should not impact on the economic assets of the County. This can occur in circumstances where the carrying capacity of existing roads is compromised or where development can impact on potential infrastructural development such as roads, telecommunications and power. The natural environment, including the designated Natura 2000 sites constituting the rarest and most sensitive sites, needs a special level of protection in order to ensure its integrity and ongoing biodiversity for the future. Similarly the built heritage of the county, including its architectural and archaeological assets, need to be protected for future generations. While many of these topics will be dealt with individually throughout the following chapters of the plan, they all need to be considered in the formulation of policies for rural housing.

3.6.5 The overall strategy will therefore be developed in the context of providing for sustainable rural housing having regard to:

- Its social and economic impact
- Preserving the culture of the county
- Preserving and strengthening rural communities
- Protecting the environment and natural resources
- Sustainable transportation
- Economic assets
- Preserving the landscape of the County
- Protecting the natural and built heritage

Objective No.	Rural Housing Policy Overall Objectives
	It is an objective of the Council to:
SS 3-31	Provide for the development of sustainable rural housing in the county in accordance with the 'Sustainable Rural Housing' guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
SS 3-32	Ensure that the provision of sustainable rural housing encompasses its social, economic, cultural and environmental impacts.
SS 3-33	Facilitate where possible, in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development, family members on their own land.
SS 3-34	Ensure that the provision of rural housing will protect the landscape, the natural and built heritage, the economic assets and the environment of the County.
SS 3-35	Promote the preservation and strengthening of rural communities throughout the county in accordance with their social, economic and environmental sustainability.

3.7 Amenity Areas

3.7.1 As outlined in section 3.6.4 and in accordance with Objective OS 2-11 and SS-3-34 the protection of the landscape is a major factor in developing policies for rural areas.

The outstanding landscape of County Kerry is one of its defining features. Few counties in the country possess the range of different landscapes that are found here - from the beautiful unspoilt beaches and rolling hills and pastureland of North Kerry to the rugged coastline and elevated mountainous wilderness of South Kerry. This scenery and unspoiled landscape is of enormous amenity value to the people of the county.

3.7.2 Enjoying the amenity value of the landscape throughout the county is not just limited to the people of County Kerry. The scenery of Kerry is famous throughout the world and is one of the major features attracting tourists each year. The job creation and income generated as a result of this tourism is of enormous social and economic benefit to the county.

3.7.3 It can be seen therefore that the landscapes and scenery are not just of amenity value but constitute an enormous economic asset. The protection of this asset is therefore of primary importance in developing the potential of the county.

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

3.7.5 The sensitivity of a landscape is defined as its capacity to absorb development without altering its character to the extent where its character is changed.

3.7.6 The plan identifies three types of rural landscape as follows:

General	-A1
Secondary Special Amenity	-A2
Prime Special Amenity	-A3

3.7.7 General – A1

These areas constitute the least sensitive landscapes throughout the County. General landscapes have the ability to absorb a moderate amount of development without significantly altering their character. Residential development in these areas shall be regulated in accordance with the provisions of Section 3.6.1 to 3.10.5 and table 3.7.11

3.7.8 Secondary Special Amenity – A2

Areas of secondary special amenity constitute sensitive landscapes which can accommodate a limited level of development. The level of development will depend on the degree to which it can be integrated into the landscape. Residential development in these areas shall be regulated in accordance with the provisions of Section 3.6.1 to 3.10.5 and table 3.7.11 . The following provisions shall apply:

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

3.7.9 Prime Special Amenity – A3

This zoning constitutes the outstanding landscapes throughout the county. Rugged mountain ranges, spectacular coastal vistas and unspoilt wilderness areas are some of the features within this designation.

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

3.7.9.1 It is the policy of the Council that development in relation to amenity areas shall be regulated in accordance with the policies outlined in Section 3.6.1 to 3.10.5 and table 3.7.11 of this chapter.

3.7.10 For dwellings located on family lands the onus will be on the applicant to satisfy the planning authority, with supporting documentation in relation to length of tenure etc. The following principles shall apply:

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

3.7.11 Subject to the provisions of sections 3.9 and 3.10, all residential development in rural areas will be for the use as a primary permanent place of residence. In addition it shall be subject to the inclusion of an occupancy clause for a period of 7 years.

In verifiable changed circumstances, subject to a planning application, the Planning Authority will consider amending this clause for genuine applicants. The dwelling shall remain as a primary place of residence.

Prime Special Amenity Area	Farm family member engaged in agriculture or horticulture
Secondary Special Amenity Area	<p>Sons and daughters of the traditional landowner, or a favoured niece or nephew, the land having been in the ownership of the family for in excess of 10 years while being the location of the principal family residence.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <p>The applicant shall demonstrate a genuine rural employment need</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <p>The applicants family shall have lived in the immediate locality prior to Jan 1998 with the applicant having been reared in the locality.</p>
Rural General Area	The proposed dwelling shall be used as a permanent place of residence.

Table 3.7.11

3.7.12 In the implementation of rural development policies, the term ‘immediate locality’ shall be interpreted as ‘at a minimum people from the adjoining townlands’.

3.8 Rural Housing Categories

3.8.1 The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) recognises the need for differing policy responses for different types of rural areas. This principle was further expanded upon in the Planning Guideline No.14 for Planning Authorities – ‘Sustainable Rural Housing’ issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The overall objective for Planning Authorities arising from these guidelines is to deliver sustainable rural settlement.

3.8.2 The NSS and the subsequent guidelines identify two broad categories of rural housing as follows:

- **Rural generated housing** is housing demand from within the established rural community.
- **Urban generated housing** demand is housing demand which is not rural generated. In this regard the Departmental guidelines identified four broad categories of rural area which due to their rural circumstances required different policy responses.

These rural areas are defined as:

- Rural areas under Strong urban influence
- Stronger rural areas
- Structurally weaker rural areas
- Areas with clustered settlement patterns

3.8.3 Rural generated housing

In this Plan ‘rural generated housing’ is defined as housing demand from within the established rural community, or, from persons with an established need to live in the rural area due to the location and nature of their work. A rural area is land located outside boundaries of villages and towns.

Objective No.	Rural Housing Policy Overall Objectives
	It is an objective of the Council that:
SS 3-36	Residential development in rural areas will be regulated in accordance with the policies contained in sections 3.6.1 to 3.10.5 of this Plan

3.8.4 Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence

Rural areas under strong urban influence are those areas, generally adjacent to larger towns, where there is or has been ongoing pressure for residential development from the population of the adjoining urban centres. These areas typically display significant or rapid population increases, a high density of rural housing and have or are approaching their capacity in terms of absorbing further development. This type of development can have adverse impacts on the orderly development of the adjacent towns, create future demands for expensive, inefficient services, compromise infrastructural development such as roads in the vicinity of the towns and lead to inefficient public transportation patterns thereby undermining its viability.

3.8.5 It is the policy of the Council that in these rural areas where there is already significant development that the capacity for future development is protected for existing families from the area.

For persons wishing to reside in these areas the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate compliance with this policy.

3.8.6 Stronger Rural Areas

Stronger rural areas are characterized by generally stable or moderately increasing populations with a network of villages providing local services. In these areas it is important that the villages continue to grow and to develop in a manner which will provide an attractive alternative to the larger settlements. It is important also that the populations maintaining the services and community facilities are accommodated in a manner which is sustainable into the future. Public transportation and services such as broadband and wastewater treatment can only be provided in an efficient manner where the level of population is sufficient to support them. The provision of these facilities will attract further population into the area. It is important therefore that these villages are strengthened over the coming years to act as a focal point for the rural communities. It is the policy of the council to accommodate local people wishing to erect a dwelling house in these areas.

3.8.7 Weak Rural Areas

The weak rural areas of the County are areas which have demonstrated persistent population decline. It is important for the sustainability of the communities in these areas that population growth is encouraged. In current circumstances it is unlikely that population growth in these areas will recapture lost services, it is important, however, that sufficient population to maintain informal social links is encouraged.

It is recognised that the traditional employment in agriculture is unlikely to sustain or increase the population to levels which existed in the past. It is important therefore, in view of recent census figures indicating a continual decline in rural populations, to facilitate in-migration to these rural areas.

3.9 Renovation or Restoration of Existing Buildings Situated in the Open Countryside

3.9.1 The planning authority shall give positive consideration to the renovation and restoration of existing structures in the rural countryside for use as permanent primary residences and as holiday home accommodation. Consideration will be related to the specific location and condition of the structure and the scale of any works required to upgrade the structure to modern standards.

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

The following provisions shall apply:

- The structure to be restored/renovated shall constitute an identifiable dwelling, with the walls being generally intact

- In the case of refurbishment and extension proposals, the scale and architectural treatment of proposed works shall be sympathetic to the character of the original structure and the surrounding area including adjoining or nearby development.

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

3.9.3 The planning authority will also consider the limited conversion of outhouses and other structures attached to country houses or other heritage structures where acceptable conservation practice is observed in line with the other policies and objectives of this plan, where protected bat species have been assessed and where acceptable site suitability has been established in terms of access, car parking, open space, wastewater disposal and of maintaining the setting and amenities of the main structure.

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

3.10 Holiday / Second Homes

3.10.1 Definition of a Holiday Home / Second Home

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

Applicants will be required to provide relevant documentary evidence to support their applications.

3.10.2 The county has experienced extreme pressure for holiday / second homes in recent years, particularly in visually sensitive landscapes. It is apparent from the number of planning applications in these areas for individual houses that the demand far exceeds the needs of the local indigenous population. The overall result of this sporadic one-off development is an incremental deterioration of the visual and in some cases, the ecological qualities of the landscape.

3.10.3 In order to underpin the basis for sustainable long-term economic development of the county, particularly in the rural areas, holiday home developments should be concentrated adjacent to existing towns, villages and settlements thereby minimising the impact on the open landscape. Such developments should respect the existing fabric of the settlement, both in scale and design. The provision of limited holiday home development may be considered where it is integrated into or ancillary to an existing or proposed hotel. In this context, the number of holiday homes provided shall be determined by reference to the scale of the hotel development. The development of a holiday home scheme with an ancillary leisure facility to service them will not be considered. Any permission granted in such cases will be subject to a condition requiring the applicant to retain the property as an integral unit in the one ownership. "The provision of limited holiday home development may be considered where it is integrated into or ancillary to an existing or proposed Hotel or Golf Club. In the case of golf clubs this provision shall only apply to clubs in the full ownership of the members and for lands in club ownership in November 2008 to fund infrastructural investment in the club".

3.10.4 This approach will have greater added value, both immediate and long-term to the local economy. For holiday home developments located in or adjacent to existing settlements, the level and scale of development permitted shall relate to the availability of infrastructure and services and the scale of the existing settlement or the provision of individual Local Area Plans.

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

There is a long established tradition of people who have family ties to rural areas in the county and who return on a frequent basis for weekends, holidays or longer periods. In many cases, these people ultimately retire permanently in the area. Taking this into account and considering the contribution to the local economy it is considered that these people have established a need for a dwelling in the area. Consequently, objectives SS 37 and SS 38 of the holiday home policy will not apply to:-

(a) A person who is either a son/daughter, of a person permanently resident in the area for more than 10 years. Such developments shall be subject to the inclusion of an occupancy clause for a period of at least 7 years.

(b) Additionally, in the context of objective ECO 5-32 and the promotion of agri-tourism, consideration will be given to units of holiday accommodation on agricultural holdings which will remain an integral part of the land holding. These units shall be sited within or adjacent to the existing farm complex. . Any permission granted in such cases will be subject to a condition requiring the applicant to retain the property as an integral unit in the one ownership.

Objective No.	Rural Housing Policy Holiday Homes
	It is an objective of the Council to:
SS 3-37	Individual Holiday Homes in Rural Landscapes That holiday / second homes shall not be permitted in the rural landscape.
SS 3-38	Location of holiday homes That holiday / second homes shall be located in or close to established settlements, villages or towns.
SS 3-39	Integration of Individual Holiday Homes into Urban areas That individual holiday home units shall be designed and sited so as not to have an adverse impact on the character of the entire settlement, village, town or natural environment. Existing site features including trees and hedgerows shall be retained to form part of a comprehensive landscaping scheme.

Any permission granted in such cases will be subject to a condition requiring the applicant to retain the property as an integral unit in the one ownership.