

Cork County Development Plan Review Planning for Cork County's Future

Section 11 Consultation Document • January 2013











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Section 1 - Introduction

Why do we need a new County Development Plan?

Cork County Council starts the preparation of a new County Development Plan on 7th January 2013. A planning authority must make a development plan every 6 years. The current plan will expire in January 2015 and the new plan replacing it will last for 6 years. The plan will set out the overall planning and sustainable development strategy for the county which must be consistent with the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 and the South West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022.

What is a Development Plan?

A development plan is a document which details the overall strategy of the planning authority for the proper planning and sustainable development of an area and generally consists of a written statement and accompanying maps. The Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010 set out mandatory objectives which must be included in a Development Plan. These include, inter alia, objectives for the zoning of land, the provision of infrastructure, the conservation and protection of the environment, and the integration of the planning and sustainable development with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population. Other non-mandatory objectives are also referred to in the Planning and Development Acts. The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 places an obligation on the planning authority to prepare a 'core strategy' consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines.

How can I influence the plan?

The prescribed process gives a 99 week period in which to make the development plan. (See Figure 1.1 which shows the main stages of the development plan review process). The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 provides for an additional period of time in the event that Strategic Environmental Assessment or Appropriate Assessment is required for any material amendment. The Act provides for three periods of public consultation. The first of the four key stages is the preliminary consultation period which will run from 7th January 2013 to 4th March 2013. Details of subsequent public consultations will be publicised during 2013 and 2014.

What is the purpose of this Consultation Document?

This document is designed to be the focus for getting people involved and encouraging debate before a draft of the next Cork County Development Plan is prepared. This document is intended to stimulate debate and to encourage people to think about County Cork, what it represents and means to them, what are the important strategic planning issues that the plan should address?

The document is not exhaustive in terms of themes or issues discussed but is designed to act as a starting point. It identifies the main areas where it is considered changes to the current plan are needed and these are the following:

- Topics where legislation (particularly matters introduced in the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010) now requires a different approach;
- Topics where current approach to County policy is not in alignment with Ministerial Guidance; and
- Topics where policy change is required to secure consistency with the South West Regional Guidelines, 2010-2022.

Closing Date of Public Consultation 4th March 2013



Section 1 - Introduction



The document presents key facts on each topic, outlines the issues raised and suggests a possible policy response. Each of the main areas such as population distribution, housing, rural housing, retail, renewable energy and the environment are addressed in turn.

The document also includes a draft Core Strategy in order to comply with the requirements of the Planning and Development Acts. This draft core strategy demonstrates that if the policy suggestions in this consultation document are adopted in the draft plan, then the draft development plan (to be issued in late 2013) and its objectives will be consistent with national and regional development objectives as set out in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and Regional Planning Guidelines.

This Consultation Document is supported by a series of Background Documents where more detailed survey information in relation to each of the key areas of change is set out. These Background Documents can be downloaded from www.corkcoco.ie and cover the following topics:

- **Population**
- **Draft Joint Housing Strategy**
- **Rural Housing**
- **Retail**
- **Energy**

There will be an opportunity to comment on the detailed provisions of the Plan when the Draft Plan is published later in the process.

How do I get involved?

You can become involved by making your views known through an online submission or by writing in to us. We will also be holding three public consultation and stakeholder events around the county in January 2013 as follows;

- South Cork – Tuesday 29th January in the Council Chamber, County Hall from 2pm to 4pm and from 6pm to 8.30pm.
- West Cork- Thursday 31st January in the Quality Hotel, Clonakilty from 6pm to 8.30pm.
- North Cork- Tuesday 5th February in Hibernian Hotel, Mallow from 6pm to 8.30pm

How do I make a submission?

Submissions can be made from 7th January 2013 to 4th March 2013 (8 weeks). Submissions can be lodged with the council in a number of ways as detailed below. Please make your submission by one medium only either electronic or hard copy.

1. By making an on-line submission, just log on to our website www.corkcoco.ie/ and follow the instructions provided

OR

2. By making a written submission and addressing it to:

Senior Planner
Planning Policy Unit
Floor 13
County Hall
Cork

The deadline for receipt of all submissions is 4pm on Monday 4th March 2013. For legal reasons we cannot accept submissions for this pre-draft stage outside these dates and times. It is important that you include your name and address when you send us your views.



Section 1 - Introduction

STAGE 1:

Notice of intention of Planning Authority to review County Development Plan and to prepare a new Plan and invite written submissions and observations

7th January 2013 to 4th March 2013 (8 weeks)



STAGE 2:

Draft Development Plan and SEA Environment Report on display for inspection and receipt of written submissions and observations.

9th Dec 2013 to 26th Feb 2014 (10 weeks)



STAGE 3:

Amendments to Draft Plan on display for inspection and receipt of written submissions or observations.

4th Sept 2014 to 2nd October 2014 (4 weeks)



STAGE 4:

Adopt Development Plan with or without amendments

Adopt Plan on the 8th December 2014 and shall then come into force 4 weeks later on the 15th Jan 2015

Figure 1.1: Main Stages of County Development Plan Review

Section 1 - Introduction



Section 2 – Principles, Vision and Key Aims for County Cork

Principles

The next Cork County Development Plan will provide a blueprint for the development of County Cork for the latter part of this decade. The Development Plan vision for the County will be underpinned by the principles of sustainability, social inclusion, quality of design and climate change adaptation.

Sustainability - the concept of sustainable development can be defined as "development which meets the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" Sustainable development is one of the major challenges facing society. How and where we live, work and take recreation make demands on the earth's resources. The Development Plan will adopt the principle of sustainability by promoting and encouraging the integration of economic, environmental, social and cultural issues into the policies and objectives of the plan to ensure the needs of urban and rural communities are met.

Social Inclusion - Social inclusion affects the wellbeing of individuals, families, social groups and communities. Creating a more socially inclusive society by alleviating social exclusion, poverty and deprivation is a major challenge. Steps towards achieving a more socially inclusive society include the provision of good quality affordable housing, community infrastructure and improving access to information and resources.

High Quality Design - Good design adds quality to the places we live, work and enjoy. Ensuring high quality design adds value to our towns, villages and countryside and improves our quality of life. The Development Plan will promote high quality design by encouraging its integration into every aspect of the plan.

Climate Change Adaptation - While we do not have a complete understanding of how climate change in Ireland will unfold, it is clear that human activity is influencing climate, and that this in turn will lead to a range of current and future impacts. The climate change impacts include rising sea levels, more intense rainfall events and flooding. Adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change is vital in order to reduce the impacts of climate change that are happening now and increase resilience to future impacts. The National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012 has set a target to cut emissions by at least 20% by 2020. The main areas where this can be achieved are energy, land use planning, transport, waste management and biodiversity.

Vision

“To plan for and support the development of County Cork as an even more attractive, prosperous and sustainable county and an excellent place to live, visit and do business renowned for the quality of its natural and built environment, culture and the strength and viability of its communities”



Section 2 – Principles, Vision and Key Aims for County Cork

Suggested Key Aims

a) Enhanced quality of life for all, based on high quality residential, working and recreational environments and sustainable transportation patterns;

b) Sustainable patterns of growth in urban and rural areas, reflecting the need to reduce energy consumption and green house gas emissions, reduce use of non-renewable resources while taking account of the need to plan for the effects of climate change, that are well balanced throughout the County;

c) Sustainable and balanced economic investment, in jobs and services, to sustain the future population of the County together with wise management of the County's environmental, heritage and cultural assets;

d) An effective physical and community infrastructure supporting living, economic recovery, enterprise and social integration;

e) A quality built environment integrating the conservation of County Cork's built heritage with best practice modern architecture and urban design;

f) A network of enhanced natural resources of clean water, biodiversity, nature conservation areas, landscape, coastline, greenbelts, parks and open spaces, and agricultural land;

g) Responsible guardianship of the County so that it can be handed on to future generations in a healthy state.



Section 3 – Proposed Core Strategy

National and Regional Policy

This section of the consultation document addresses the issues that the County faces in developing a 'Core Strategy' for the next County Development Plan and therefore focuses on the following topics:

- Issues arising from the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and the South West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 (SWRPG);
- **Population** – Issues arising from recent patterns of population change and the consequent need to consider adjustments to current policies so that the next County Development Plan is properly aligned with the SWRPG;
- **Housing** – The need for policy changes to reflect the SWRPG, Ministerial Policy changes and the dramatic changes to market conditions since the current County Development Plan was prepared;
- **Rural Housing** – The need to develop policy that is consistent with Ministerial policy and effective in delivering a future pattern of population growth that is consistent with the SWRPG;
- **Retail Development & Town Centres** – The need for policy changes so that the next County Development Plan is properly aligned with Ministerial policies and reflects the economic circumstances prevailing in the County.

The National Spatial Strategy

The National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (NSS) generally proposes a more balanced pattern of spatial development for the state as a whole, based on continued growth in Greater Dublin but with a significant improvement in the rate of development in nine 'Gateway' cities and nine 'Hub' towns. The strategy emphasises the critical role of 'Gateways' and 'Hubs' in delivering future economic growth and designates Cork as a 'Gateway' City and Mallow as a 'Hub' town. See Figure 3.1.

South West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 (SWRPG)

prepared by the South West Regional Authority provides a broad canvas to steer the sustainable growth and prosperity of the region in line with the key principles of the national strategy. The Regional Planning Guidelines were reviewed in 2009 and adopted in July 2010. The population targets provided by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government provides for growth to 2022 and for the first time, planning authorities now have to ensure that their development plans are consistent with these targets. The population targets in the draft core strategy are consistent with the 2022 population targets set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines. See Figure 3.2.

Key Issues for the County Development Plan

- Focus population and economic development on the Cork 'Gateway';
- Provide a sustainable framework for the development of Mallow as a 'Hub' town;
- Providing improved linkages and connections with other 'Gateway' Cities, particularly Galway, Limerick and Waterford; and
- Develop policy to ensure that future population growth is in line with SWRPG targets and correct any imbalances that have occurred in the past.

Section 3 – Proposed Core Strategy

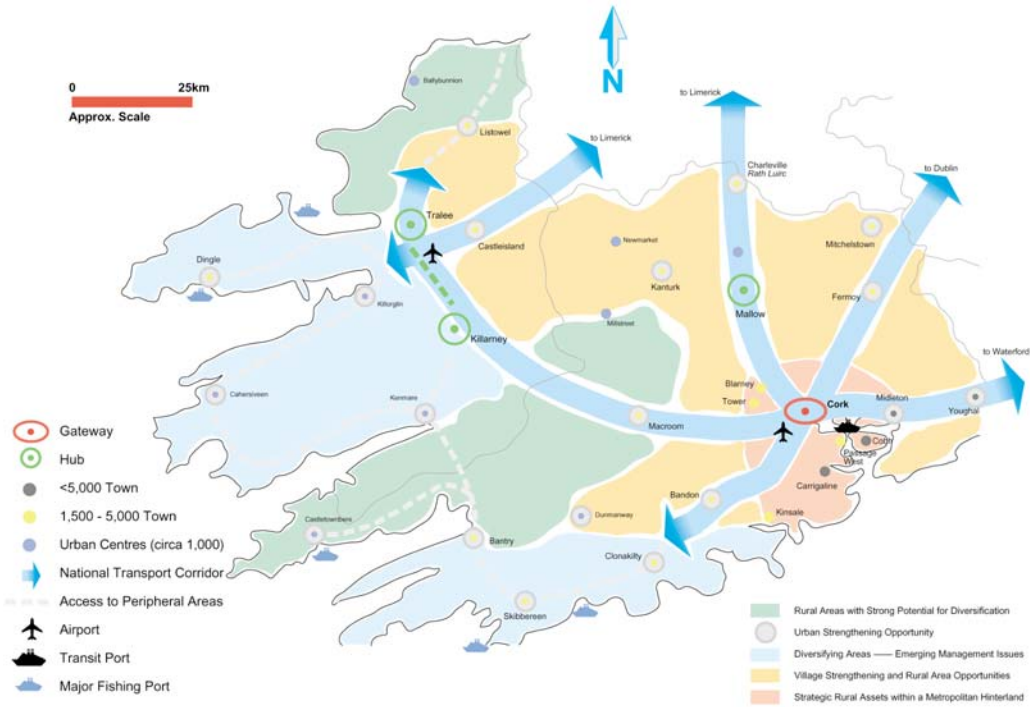


Figure 3.1: National Spatial Strategy: South West Region

South-West Region Spatial Development Strategy

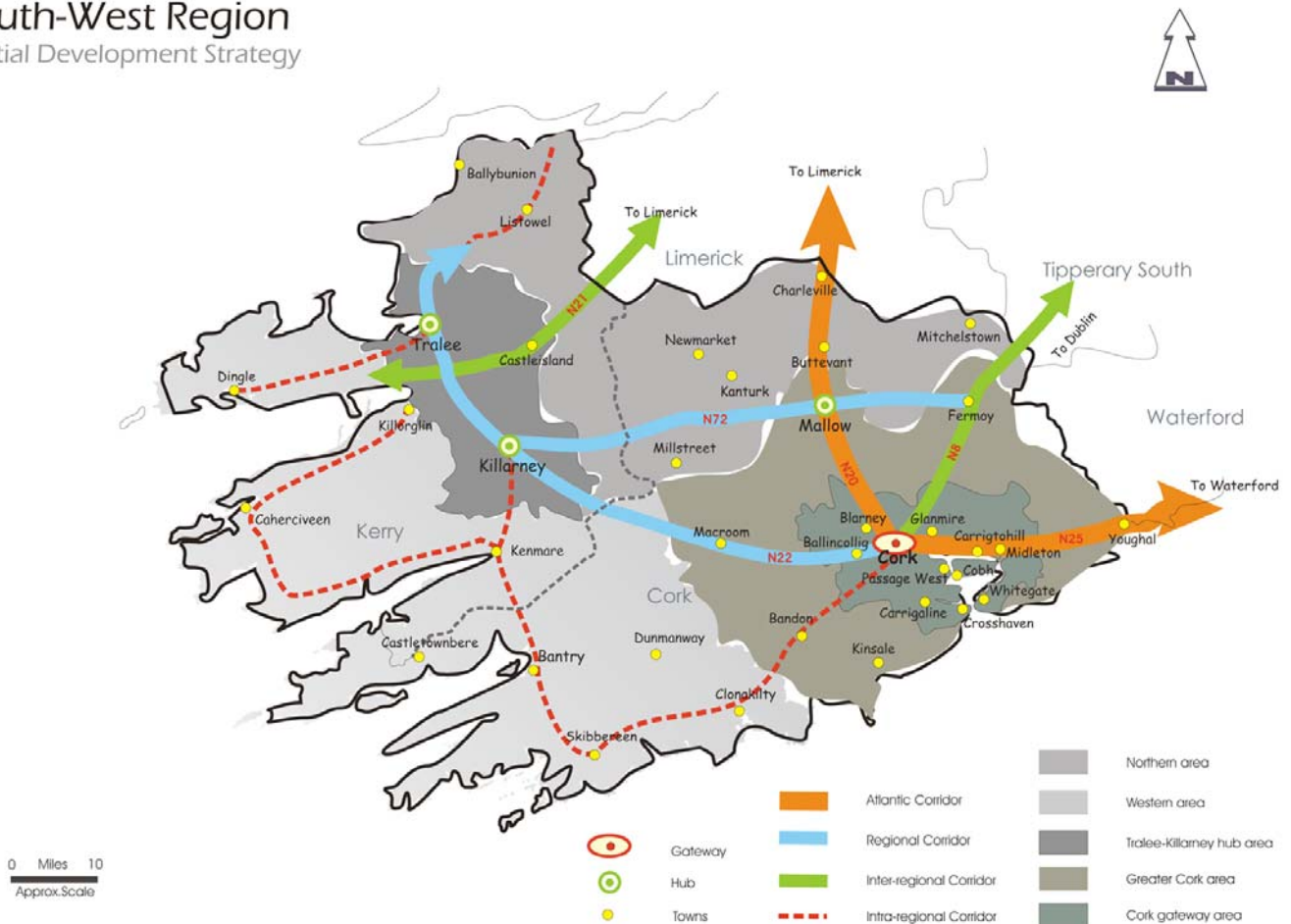


Figure 3.2 Spatial Development Strategy for the South West region

Closing Date of Public Consultation 4th March 2013



Section 3 – Proposed Core Strategy

Population

Background & Key Challenges

This section of the consultation document considers recent patterns of population change and the need for policy changes to reflect the SWRPG

In common with much of Ireland, for Cork, the last decade was characterised by generally strong population growth. The delivery of the results of the Census 2011 provide an opportunity to measure progress towards the 2022 population targets in the SWRPG. For the Strategic Planning Areas that make up the County, Table 3.1 sets out the 2011 Census population results and compares this to the SWRPG 'target' for 2022 and an 'Interim 2011 Target' figure that has been calculated to help measure progress towards the 2022 target.

Table 3.2 compares the population change recorded in the Census for the years 2006 and 2011 with the amount of growth that would be expected (based in the 'Interim 2011' target in Table 3.1) for that period in order to achieve the SWRPG Target for 2022. In overall terms, the County has performed well, achieving population growth of just fewer than 38,000 persons. However, there were significant variations in the individual pattern of population growth recorded by the Census 2011 in the four SPA's that make up the County.

The Metropolitan area (including Cork City) recorded a significant underperformance (16,852 persons or 49%) relative to the rate of growth required to reach the SWRPG target by 2022. At the same time, the CASP Ring area recorded a significant over performance of 10,724 persons or 406%. This means that the Metropolitan area is growing at about half the rate intended by the SWRPG and at the same time the CASP Ring area is growing at over four times the rate intended by the SWRPG.

In North Cork the rate of population growth exceeded the SWRPG expected rate but by a more modest extent.

In West Cork the rate of population growth did not reach the SWRPG expected rate but by a modest extent.

Table 3.3 below looks in more detail at the Metropolitan Cork area comprising the City and the County Metropolitan SPA.

The population recorded in Cork City (which excludes some of the rapidly growing suburbs in adjoining County areas) was expected (by the SWRPG) to grow by over 9,000 persons but, by 2011, its population had remained broadly static.

Although the County Metropolitan area recorded strong population growth of over 17,000 persons, by 2011, it had still not achieved the full growth intended by the SWRPG by over 7,000 persons or 29%.

Section 3 – Proposed Core Strategy

Table 3.1: Recorded population change and RPG Targets

	Census		SWRPG Targets	
	2006	2011	Interim 2011**	2022***
Metropolitan*	272,541	289,739	306,591	381,500
CASP Ring	105,055	118,418	107,694	113,500
North	46,248	50,498	49,403	56,343
West	57,271	60,377	61,012	69,243
TOTAL County	361,877	399,802	395,860	620,586

Including Cork City ** Estimated *SWRPG 2010*

Table 3.2: Population change (Census) relative to SWRPG expected population change

	2006-2011		Excess Over/Under Interim Target	
	Population Change	SWRPG Projected Growth	Persons	% Projected Growth
Metropolitan*	17,198	34,050	-16,852	-49 %
CASP Ring	13,363	2,639	+10,724	+406 %
North	4,070	3,155	+1,095	+34 %
West	3,106	3,741	-635	-16 %
TOTAL County	37,925	43,585	-5,660	-13 %

**Including Cork City*

Table 3.3: Population change (Census) relative to SWRPG expected population change (Metropolitan Cork)

	2006-2011		Excess Over/Under Interim Target	
	Population Change	SWRPG Projected Growth	Persons	% Projected Growth
Cork City	-188	9,557	9,745	-101 %
County Metropolitan SPA	17,386	24,493	-7107	-29 %
Total Metropolitan	17,198	34,050	-16,852	-49 %

Section 3 – Proposed Core Strategy

Table 3.4 and Figure 3.3 examines the pattern of population change in the Main Towns and the Villages and Rural Areas of the County.

In the County Metropolitan SPA most population growth (63%) occurred within the main towns reflecting the strong underlying urban structure of that area. However, the villages and rural areas also recorded significant growth, perhaps reflecting the potential for growth in many of the villages in that area where there are good levels of infrastructure provision. In the County Metropolitan SPA 824 houses were constructed in rural locations outside any of the network of settlements during the 2007-2011 period. This relatively modest figure, in what would otherwise be likely to be, the area of highest demand, reflects the success of current County Development plan policies in managing the demand for rural housing in this area.

In the CASP Ring SPA the pattern of population change is almost the opposite of that in the County Metropolitan SPA. Here, notwithstanding the robust urban structure consisting of six towns including the 'Hub' town of Mallow, only 37% of population growth occurred within the main towns. In contrast, the villages and rural areas recorded the most significant growth (63%). In the CASP Ring SPA 2816 houses were constructed in rural locations

outside any of the network of settlements during the 2007-2011 period which, at typical occupancy rates, is sufficient to accommodate a population of over 7,500 persons. These high rates of rural house building, and the consequent effects on the pattern of population change, indicate that the current County Development Plan policies intended to manage this demand require review.

In the North SPA 38% of population growth occurred in the main towns and 62% occurred in the villages and rural areas. There is a weaker underlying urban structure in this area but the North and West Cork Strategic Plan adopted by the County Council in 2002 suggested that the optimum balance between rural and urban population growth for this area would be closer to 50/50 and the next County Development Plan could consider appropriate policy adjustments. Improvements to the road network, and shorter resultant commuting times, may have resulted in an increased demand for rural housing in this area. A total of 1,366 houses were constructed in rural locations outside any of the network of settlements during the 2007-2011 period.

In the West SPA 36% of population growth occurred in the main towns and 64% occurred in the villages and rural areas. There is a weaker underlying urban structure in parts of this area, and similarly to the North SPA, the

Table 3.4: Population Change 2006-2011(Census) – Main Towns vs. Villages & Rural Areas

	2006-2011 Population Change			
	County Metropolitan	CASP Ring SPA	North SPA	West SPA
Main Towns	10,968	4,927	1,565	1,127
Villages and Rural Areas	6,418	8,436	2,505	1,979
Total	17,386	13,363	4,070	3,106

Section 3 – Proposed Core Strategy

North and West Cork Strategic Plan adopted by the County Council in 2002 suggested that the optimum balance between rural and urban population growth for this area would be closer to 50/50. It is notable that in this area 3,759 houses (43% of all the rural houses built in the County) were constructed in rural locations outside any of the network of settlements during the 2007-2011 period which, at typical occupancy rates, is sufficient to accommodate a population of over 10,000 persons yet the villages and rural areas population grew by less than 2,000 persons. The census also recorded very high vacancy levels in this area. This very high level of rural house building, and high vacancy levels, linked to only modest population growth suggests that many of the rural houses constructed may be used as second homes rather than being used to meet the housing needs of the rural communities' in this area.

Figure 3.4 shows the longer term pattern of population change in the main areas of the County.

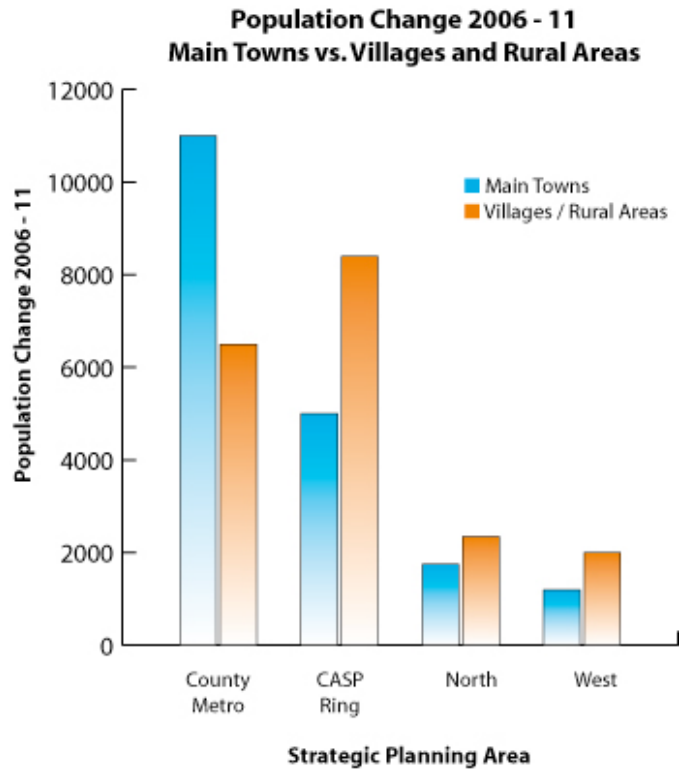


Figure 3.3 Population Change 2006-11- Main Towns vs. Villages/Rural Areas

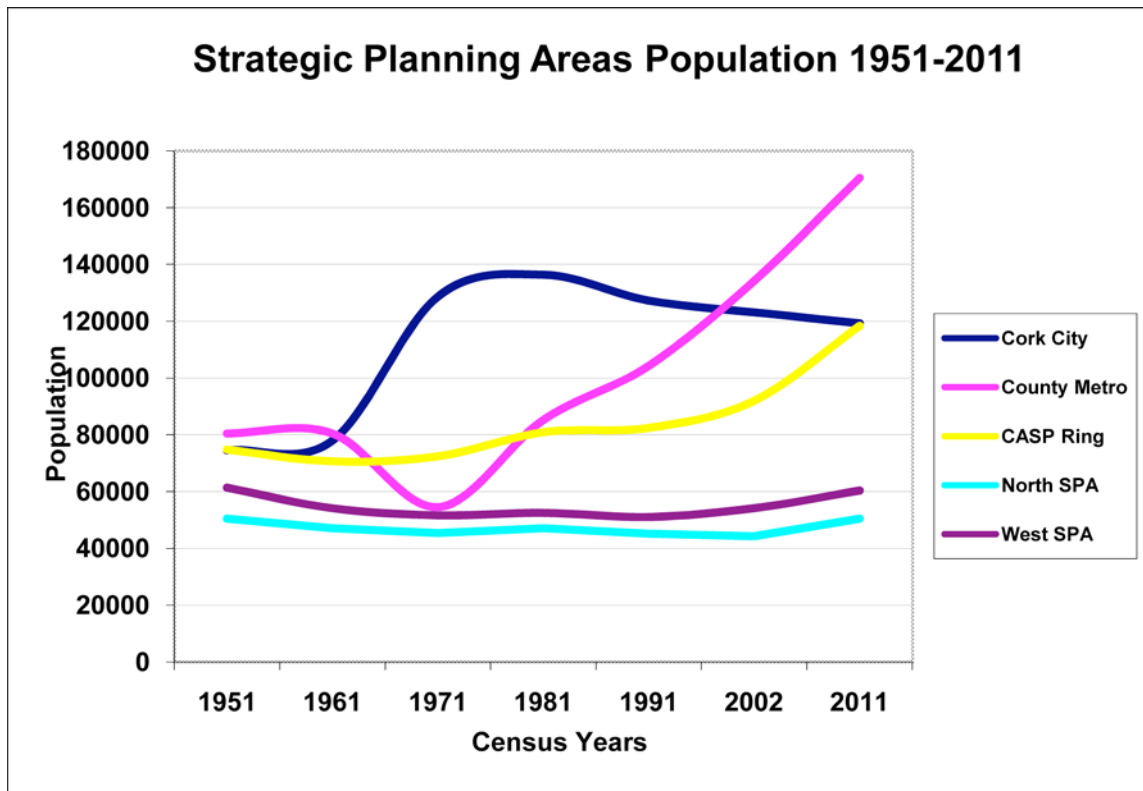


Figure 3.4: Strategic Planning Areas Population 1951-2011

Section 3 – Proposed Core Strategy

Although population growth across the County as a whole between 2006 and 2011 was broadly in line with the SWRPG targets, the 2011 census gives rise to a number of concerns:

- That the population of the CASP Ring SPA has been growing at a rate that is four times greater than that proposed in the SWRPG. There are indications to suggest that this is linked to the high rate of rural house building in the area.
- That population growth in the Metropolitan area has been growing at only half the rate proposed in the SWRPG
- That the population of the North SPA has been growing at a rate that is about one third faster than that proposed in the SWRPG and there are indications to suggest that the balance between urban and rural population growth requires some measure of adjustment in the future.
- That the population of the west SPA has grown only slowly against a background of both high construction rates and high vacancy rates in the rural area outside settlements suggesting that the demand for second homes in rural locations may be preventing the housing needs of rural communities from being met.

Table 3.5 sets out the projected population for the four strategic areas that comprise the County, on the basis that the trends evident during the 2006-2011 period continue until 2022. Metropolitan Cork (including the City) will under-achieve the SWRPG target for that area by 53,926. At the same time, the CASP Ring SPA will exceed the SWRPG target by 34,316.

Concerns regarding high rates of house building and population growth in the CASP Ring SPA have been expressed in recent years. The South West Regional Authority in the RPG 2010 themselves express concerns on this issue pointing out that:

“high rates of development in the villages and rural areas in the CASP Ring area have contributed to unnecessarily low growth rates for the Gateway (mainly the City); thereby resulting in excessive car based commuting in order to access employment, shops and other services. This trend, if allowed to continue, represents a significant weakening of the Urban Structure of the Cork Gateway, itself the urban core on which the South West Region depends. If not corrected, this trend may cause a weakening in the attractiveness of the gateway to inward investment in future jobs and services.”

Table 3.5: Recorded population, SWRPG Targets and likely 2022 outcome without policy change

	Census	SWRPG Targets	2022 Outcome - No Policy Change	
	2011	2022	2011 - 2022 Growth	2022 Projected Population
Metropolitan*	289,739	381,500	37,835	327,574
CASP Ring	118,418	113,500	29,398	147,816
North	50,498	56,343	9,350	59,848
West	60,377	69,243	6,833	67,210
TOTAL County	579,032	620,586	83,416	602,448

**Including Cork City*

Section 3 – Proposed Core Strategy

If the vision for Cork set out in the SWRPG and CASP of a competitive, vibrant and strong City and Metropolitan area is to be delivered then the pressure for growth in the CASP Ring SPA needs to be more clearly directed towards the City and Metropolitan area in the future.

The city population has more or less stabilised in the last 5 years reflecting the increase in house construction that occurred. This followed decline over the previous decades due to smaller average household sizes, lack of 'Greenfield' land and the growth of the suburbs in the County area. There is sufficient capacity to meet the SWRPG target through redevelopment within the city, particularly in docklands but it may take longer to deliver this target that originally envisaged.

However, to secure the economic future of Cork and its region, it is critical to adjust the planning policies for the area so that pattern of future growth will be more closely aligned that envisaged in the SWRPG This will require the development of a range of policies to redirect growth pressure from the CASP Ring SPA and to support the further acceleration of growth in the County Metropolitan area, complemented by significant investment in infrastructure.

Whilst the Hub Town of Mallow and the other Ring Towns have a role to play, critical to this strategy, is the development of a policy framework to attract growth towards the Metropolitan towns. With growth only likely to occur at a slower than originally envisaged pace in the City, they key to delivering a strong and vibrant Metropolitan area as the engine for growth in the Cork 'Gateway' will be to accelerate growth in the Metropolitan Towns to deliver the full quota allocated to them in the SWRPG. This will require the delivery of significant new infrastructure and a review of the approach to new housing development to ensure that many of the housing demands being previously met in the rural areas of the CASP Ring can, in future, be accommodated within these towns.

The Local Area Plans adopted by the Cork County Council in 2011 have set out improved policies to better manage the level of development in the villages of the CASP Ring SPA. A key challenge for the new County Development Plan will be to develop a policy framework to better manage the pressure for rural housing development and deliver future population growth in line with the pattern envisaged in the SWRPG .

Other Considerations Arising from the 2011 Census

The issue of an increasingly ageing population will need to be addressed at a more detailed level in the next County Development Plan. Nationally the numbers over 65 are projected to increase to 1,105,000 by 2036, thereby increasing the number of people over 65 as a percentage of working age population from 18% to 39%.

In Cork, statistics reflect this situation and significantly, the population of older persons in Cork County (excluding Cork City) has increased from 37,911 in 2006 to 44,430 in 2011 which equates to a 17% increase. Persons 65+ accounted for 10.48% of the County's population in 2006, which increased to 11.11% in 2011.

Section 3 – Proposed Core Strategy

Table 3.6 Population Change 65+ 2006 – 2011 (Census) – County and City						
Area	2006 Total Population	2011 Total Population	Aged 65+ 2006	Aged 65+ 2011	Increase in Population 2006-2011	% Increase
Cork City	119,418	119,230	16,847 (14.12%)	17,950 (15.05%)	1,103	6.5%
Cork County	361,877	399,802	37,911 (10.48%)	44,430 (11.11%)	6,519	17%
Total City and County	481,295	519,032	54,658 (11.36%)	62,380 (12.09%)	7,722	14%

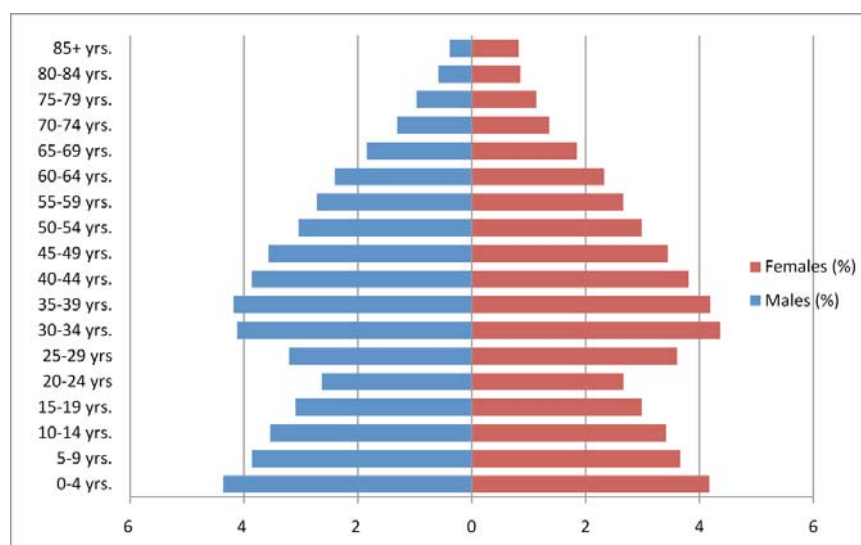


Figure 3.5: Population Pyramid for County Cork (Census 2011)

The population pyramid shows how the population is structured in terms of males and females and the proportion of younger and older people and at each age in between. At present the State ODR (Old Dependency Ratio i.e. the number of older people as a percentage of the working age population) is 17.4% while Cork County is 16.9. (Cork City and County is 17.9). When comparing population growth the 65+ age group is one of the age groups which experienced the greatest growth over the 2006 to 2011 period which has implications for the overall structure of future population.

Key Issues for the County Development Plan

- Develop policies and other measures to stimulate and focus future population growth on the towns in Metropolitan Cork;
- Develop policies to better manage development pressure in the rural areas of the CASP Ring so that its population stabilises during the period of the next plan;
- Develop policies to manage pressure for growth in the North SPA to achieve a balance between growth in the network of settlements and that in the rural areas;
- Develop policies to manage development pressures in the West SPA so that the needs of rural communities are prioritised and
- Develop policies to manage the Counties overall population growth in a way which reflects its future likely age profile.

Section 3 – Proposed Core Strategy

Housing

Introduction

This section addresses the need for changes to the County Development Plan to reflect up to date Ministerial Guidance and the dramatic changes that have occurred in the housing market since the last County Development Plan was prepared.

In Cork, all the local authorities (the City Council, the County Council and the nine Town Councils) adopt a common strategy (The 'Joint Housing Strategy') towards the provision of housing, and the shared principles of this document are included in all the authorities Development Plans. The strategy is currently being reviewed so that it can inform the Development Plans of all the authorities in the Cork Area when they next fall due for review.

The Draft Housing Strategy for the period of the next County Development Plan is being published for consultation separately and addresses the following topics:

- The overall need for housing in the period 2015-2022 taking account of the population targets set out in the South West Regional Planning Guidelines;
- To ensure there is a mixture of house types and sizes to meet the needs of various households;
- To ensure that housing is available for people on different income levels and
- To plan the provision of social housing for households who may not be able to access housing through the market.

Background

The review of the current Housing Strategy, undertaken during 2007-8 coincided with the peak of the property boom. The significant changes in the economy and in particular, in the housing market since then mean that the assumptions underpinning the previous strategy have fundamentally changed. The most notable factors which have a serious impact on the Housing Strategy are, in particular, house price but also income variation, taxation and the credit conditions.

On average, since 2006 there has been a dramatic fall in construction rates in Cork. The graph below shows the pattern of new house completions in County Cork (excluding Cork City and Town Council Areas) from 2001-2011. Housing completion rates in County Cork peaked in 2006, with a total of 8,076 units being built in the County as a whole. In contrast, the DoECLG house completion figures reveal that a total of 1459 new houses were built in 2011. These figures show that between the end of 2006 and the end of 2011 the house completion rate in the County had dropped by 84%.

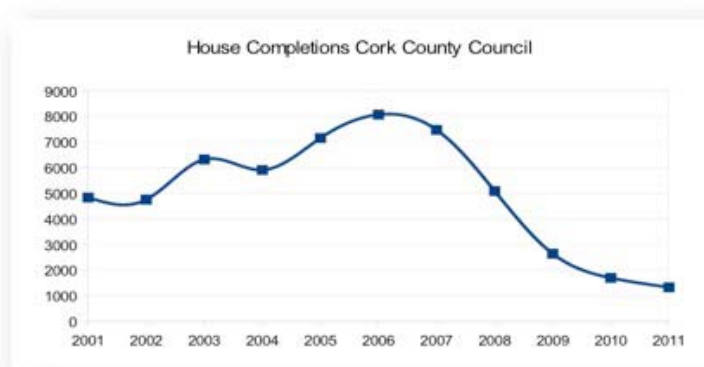


Figure 3.6: House Completions Cork County Council
Source: DOECLG, Annual Housing Statistics Bulletins

Section 3 – Proposed Core Strategy

Given the current difficulties in the housing market and, if the population targets for the Cork region generally and the County in particular (set out in the SWRPG) are to be met, then a key challenge for the next County Development Plan will be to provide conditions where the recovery of housing construction can occur to sustainable rates (in line with the SWRPG) and, with this aim in mind, it is important that the next County Development Plan addresses the following issues:

- Ensuring an appropriate supply of land suitable for house building in quantities and locations that are consistent with the SWRPG;
- The prioritisation of key infrastructure projects (particularly water, waste water and transport infrastructure projects) to support development that is consistent with the SWRPG;
- The need to provide a broader range of housing (in terms of quality and house types) on zoned land in locations consistent with the SWRPG; and
- The need to establish the appropriate approach to the provision of future social housing through the application of Part V of the Planning & Development Acts.

The draft Joint Housing Strategy that has been published for consultation by the Cork local authorities sets out proposals to address these issues. As far as the County Council is concerned, proposals for the location and volume of future housing construction and for the prioritisation of key infrastructure to support that development are outlined elsewhere in this document.

So far as the need to provide a broad range housing on zoned land is concerned, concerns have been raised in recent years regarding the approach to housing density in main settlements suggesting that this sometimes serves as a factor limiting the range and diversity of housing development and, perhaps, encouraging demand for individual rural houses outside settlements. It has been suggested that a revised approach to residential

density could assist in achieving this aim and diverting some of this demand into the main settlements.

Clearly, there is a need to ensure that the application of density standards and the mix of residential zoning objectives in the main settlements do not act as a barrier to recovery in the housing market.

The housing density standards should better reflect current and medium term market conditions having regard to our obligations under the NSS, Regional Planning Guidelines and the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines.

There is concern that even in the larger towns within the public transport corridors a minimum density of 50 dwellings per ha will be very difficult to achieve given the challenges the Council and the industry, have had in delivering medium density development in the 35-50 unit per ha range.

The principle of 'higher' densities in town centres and along public transport corridors should be supported. However there are relatively few "Public Transport" corridors in the County, within the meaning of the Guidelines. The Cork-Midleton/Cobh railway line could be considered such a corridor and appropriate land close to stations should be reserved for higher density developments. It should be recognised that towns on this route have an important role to play in attracting growth to the Metropolitan area that in previous years has tended to locate in the CASP Ring SPA. Bus route corridors through Douglas, the City South Environs, Ballincollig, Glanmire and the North City Environs also warrant consideration for higher density development. Outside of these areas the higher densities sought in the Guidelines may not be applicable given the significant variation in the quality and coverage of public transport infrastructure.

With regard to the provision of 'social and 'affordable' housing through Part V of the Planning & Development Acts, the Government's Housing Policy Statement (16th

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June, 2011) announced important changes. The fall in the market price of housing that has occurred in recent years has reduced the need for 'affordable' housing schemes and these have been formally discontinued. The other provisions of Part V of the Planning & Development Acts (where developers are required to contribute land for social and affordable housing development) are now under review.

The Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency published the Housing Needs Assessment (2011) which provides a 'snap-shot' assessment based on an extract of data from each housing authority in respect of each household that has been approved for social housing support at 31st March, 2011. In this document, Cork County is recorded as having a net housing need of 4,271 households.

The delivery of social housing is challenging in the current economic climate as the Capital Allocation for the Social Housing Investment Programme (SHIP) has been cut from €74.3 million in 2009 to €16.6 million in 2011. In future, the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) and the Social Housing Leasing Initiatives will provide a much greater part of social housing provision.

In 2007 there were 21,702 private rented housing registrations in Cork and the most recent published Register from the PRTB (Private Residential Tenancies Board) in 2012 shows that this figure has increased to a total of 30,312. The strong growth in rented accommodation has been recorded in the most recent Census (2011) where the number of households which were rented either from a private landlord or a voluntary body rose by 63.6% from 195,797 in 2006 to 320,319 in 2011. Houses or apartments which were rented from a local authority also experienced gains in the inter-censal period, increasing by 22% from 105,509 to 129,033. This sharp increase has caused the overall home ownership rate to drop from 74.7% to 69.7%.

The private rental sector currently provides accommodation for about 11,431 (or about 76%) of Social Housing Applicants. The Rental Accommodation Scheme introduced in 2005 and the Social Housing Leasing Initiative(s) introduced in 2009 will continue to strengthen the development of this sector. These schemes are examined in more detail in the social housing section of the strategy.

Issues for the County Development Plan

- Develop improved mechanisms to focus future housing growth on zoned land within Metropolitan Cork;
- Develop policies to encourage the development of a broader range of housing types and quality on zoned land;
- Consider changes in the approach to housing density on zoned land, taking account of market conditions and Ministerial Policies and
- Adjust the current arrangements for social and affordable housing under Part V of the Planning and Development Acts to reflect changes in Government Policy, the cost of housing and income levels.



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Rural Housing

Background

This section addresses the need for changes to the CDP policies for Rural Housing because:

• The Ministerial Guidelines for Planning Authorities addressing rural housing were issued in 2005 and identify important categories of rural generated housing need referred to in the Ministerial Guidelines that are not currently recognised, such as;

- Returning Emigrants,
- Persons who intend to operate a bona fide full time business,
- Persons with exceptional health related circumstances,
- Persons whose work is linked to a particular rural area
- In addition in some parts of the County the following categories of rural housing need are not recognised in current CDP policies;
 - Farmers and their sons and daughters,
 - Sons and daughters of non farming persons,
 - Persons with a strong social connection to the area,
 - Persons involved in full time farming etc.
 - Persons involved in part time farming etc.
- Policies are not applicable across the entire county;
- Areas under 'strong urban influence' and 'structurally weak rural areas' have not been identified.
- Developing policies to better manage rural housing pressures in the CASP Ring SPA is an important part of the measures necessary to realign future growth with the proposals set out in the SWRPG and CASP;
- In the West SPA, the large number of rural houses built in recent years has not resulted in a similar pattern of population growth.

A 'Background Study on Rural Housing' has been prepared in parallel with this consultation document, and it sets out the basis for the identification of the main rural area types within the County. The study findings analysed the 2011 Census and Geo-directory databases of houses built in rural areas between 2007 and 2011. The following paragraphs summarise the key findings:

- County as a whole - 8,765 houses were built in rural areas of the County outside settlements between 2007 and 2011 with positive rural housing growth in all but 6 of the Rural DED's in County Cork.
- Metropolitan Cork - 824 houses were built in rural areas outside settlements between 2007 and 2011, suggesting that the 'Greenbelt policy' applied in these areas has been effective in managing demand where demand would otherwise have been at its highest.
- CASP Ring Strategic Planning Area - 2,816 houses were built in rural areas outside settlements between 2007 and 2011. This rural housing growth has contributed to the population imbalance in the CASP Ring area, as there are no rural housing policies in large parts of this area.
- West Strategic Planning Area - 3,759 houses were built in rural areas outside settlements between 2007 and 2011 which equates to 43% of all new rural houses in the County.
- North Strategic Planning Area - 1,366 houses were built in rural areas outside settlements between 2007 and 2011.
- The highest levels of population growth were experienced within CASP with the majority of DED's experiencing above average population growth.
- There were lower levels of population growth in the DED's of the West and North Strategic Planning Areas. In these areas, population growth was normally clustered among several DED's which were primarily characterised by either proximity to

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a main town or within the commuting catchment of Cork City.

- The highest levels of vacancy rates are in the West Strategic Planning Area, Coastal Areas of the County, and to a lesser extent the North Strategic Planning Area.

Metropolitan Cork and CASP Ring

The Metropolitan Green Belt has been successful in managing the demand for rural housing in the area where demand would otherwise be at its highest. However, the basis for the current policies in the A1/A2/A3 zones (which were developed in 1996) of the Metropolitan Greenbelt is not supported in the 2005 guidelines.

The areas outside the Metropolitan Greenbelt have been less successful in managing this demand and as a result the population of the CASP Ring SPA has already exceeded the SWRPG Target for 2022. Large parts of this area have no policies in place to help manage demand and consideration should be given as to how this could be addressed.

Although the recent decline in house building activity has slowed the rate of growth in this area, without a new policy framework, there are serious risks that, when market conditions improve, unplanned high growth rates will resume in the rural parts of this area in a manner that will ultimately threaten the achievement of the established goals for the CASP area.

The Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines highlight the need to focus rural housing policies on areas under significant urban pressure for additional rural housing. The background report suggests that pressure for rural housing is strongest within a 1 hour (total journey time) commuting distance of Cork City and the other employment locations in Metropolitan Cork. This area has been represented by a 45 minute Peak hour drive time from the city centre.

The strategy to better manage rural housing demand in areas under Strong Urban Influence will need to provide sustainable and attractive alternative opportunities for housing development within the settlement network.

West Cork Strategic Planning Area

The background study results indicate above average rural housing growth in large parts of the West Cork Strategic Planning Area, in particular the coastal areas which have higher levels of environmental and landscape sensitivity. The census results indicate that this area also experienced lower levels of population growth and has recorded the highest percentage of vacant dwellings in the County, suggesting that demand for second homes or holiday homes is a significant factor affecting the overall demand for rural housing.

The Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines suggest that planning authorities should take account of the impacts of holiday home / second home developments in coastal areas, where there is a limited environmental capacity to accommodate significant number of such developments. The guidelines highlight the need to strike an appropriate balance between demand for such developments and the need to channel them into appropriate locations.

The study also identified inland parts of West Cork which are more distant from the major urban areas and the associated pressure from urban generated housing and have a more stable population base and less evidence of population decline. These areas also exhibit characteristics of a weaker economic structure and have higher levels of environmental sensitivity. These areas require a planning policy response which strikes a reasonable balance between accommodating proposals for individual houses in the rural area and actively stimulating and facilitating new housing development in smaller towns and villages with the aim of strengthening the economic base.

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North Strategic Planning Area

The background study has identified the area to the north-west of the County as a 'Structurally Weaker Rural Area', exhibiting characteristics such as persistent and significant population decline as well as a weaker economic structure. The Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines recommend that planning policies in this area should accommodate any demand for permanent residential development subject to good planning practice.

The background study has identified the area to the north of the County as a 'Strong Rural Area' characterised by stable population levels within a well developed town and village structure and the wider rural areas around them. The Guidelines recommend that planning policies in this area should strike a reasonable balance between accommodating proposals for individual houses in rural areas and actively stimulating and facilitating new housing development in smaller towns and villages to provide for balanced urban and rural choices in the new housing market.

Recent transport improvements have resulted in parts of this area being within a convenient commuter distance from the Cork City area.

Issues for the County Development Plan

- Develop policies to prioritise the housing needs of rural communities, recognising the differing characteristics of rural areas throughout the County;
- Develop policies to replace those applicable in the current Metropolitan Green Belt with new policies reflecting the approach set out in the Ministerial Guidelines;
- Develop appropriate policies for the CASP Ring to manage pressure for rural housing and stabilise the population of the area so that future population change is more in line with the SWRPG
- Prioritise rural housing needs in the North SPA so that future growth is shared equally between the network of settlements and rural areas.
- Prioritise rural housing needs in the West SPA which have been overtaken by the demand for second or holiday homes.

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Retail

Background

This section addresses the need for changes to the County Development Plan policies for retail development and town centres generally taking account of likely future market conditions and recent Guidelines for planning authorities issued by the Minister.

These Guidelines outline 5 key policy objectives which must guide planning authorities in addressing retail development issues in their development planning and management functions, namely:

- Ensuring that retail development is plan-led (the requirement that future retail development should first be set out in Development and local areas plans) ;
- Promoting city/town centre vitality through a sequential approach to development (Ensuring that new retail development is not permitted in edge of town locations when town centre or edge of centre locations are available);
- Securing competitiveness in the retail sector by actively enabling good quality development proposals to come forward in suitable locations;
- Facilitating a shift towards increased access to retailing by public transport, cycling and walking in accordance with the Government's Smarter Travel strategy; and
- Delivering quality urban design outcomes

For Metropolitan Cork, the County and City Councils are preparing a Joint Retail Study to inform the draft Development Plans of both authorities. The study will be the subject of a separate public consultation process to take place in the Spring of 2013.

This document therefore focuses on retail planning issues in the County outside the Metropolitan SPA (i.e. including Bandon, Bantry, Charleville, Clonakilty, Fermoy, Kanturk, Kinsale, Macroom, Mallow, Mitchelstown, Skibbereen and Youghal.)

This consultation document is supported by a Background Document setting out some of the key retail facts and figures and sets out a 'town centre health-check' in relation to many of the towns that are not included in the study of the Metropolitan SPA.

Some General Trends:

- The retail sector in Ireland has grown markedly in recent years with the emergence of new sectors. Online shopping in particular has become a recent feature with the proportion of sales increasing. Unofficial estimates place it with a 13% market share of overall retail spend but commentators suggest that within 10 years it could be as much as 30%.
- The balance between national and international retailers continues to change with an increasing presence of international retailers in the Irish market.
- Retail unit size - The last decade in particular has seen many retail operators seek larger retail units in order to be more commercially viable.
- The Retail Sales Index in recent years demonstrates a considerable drop off in retail activity linked to reduced disposable income with vacancy becoming a problem in a number of towns.
- Reduced demand for retail floorspace - some commentators suggest that in some areas peak floorspace has been exceeded while lack of finance and weaker demand is posing difficulties for retail operators.

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Retailing and Town Centres in County Cork:

- The wholesale and retail trade sector in the County as a whole employs 30,542 or 14.7% of all workers (CSO 2011).
- Nationally Tesco has the largest share of the Irish retail market followed by Dunne's; in the County areas outside the Metropolitan Cork these firms have a presence in 3 and 4 locations respectively.
- Supervalu has the highest representation being present in 16 of the 18 towns. Supervalu and Centra appear to represent a stronger share in Cork than nationally perhaps reflecting the local influence of the Musgrave Group.
- The representative share of both Lidl and Aldi supermarkets (previously known as discount stores) has expanded significantly in the non-metropolitan towns in recent years. Lidl now have 9 stores and Aldi 4 stores. 3 Aldi stores are currently pending planning permission. Many of these stores are in edge of town centre locations.
- Mallow (of the towns outside Metropolitan Cork) is the only town which currently has a representation of all 3 of the largest national retail operators. This is perhaps reflective of its hub town status within the National Spatial Strategy.
- Mallow and Clonakilty are the leading towns in terms of overall provision of retail floorspace in the non-metropolitan towns.
- Vacancy is becoming more pronounced in some towns particularly Bandon, Skibbereen and Youghal. Skibbereen has the highest overall gross vacant floorspace (general) of towns surveyed.
- A considerable level of growth in convenience retailing in the CASP Ring SPA in particular is in evidence in the period 2007 to 2012. The quantity of floor space developed has exceeded the guidance set out in the Cork Strategic Retail study, 2007.
- Bantry, Bandon and Fermoy appear to have less retail floor space relative to their catchment populations than other towns.
- Outstanding Planning - There is a notable level of unimplemented retail planning permissions. At present it is estimated that there over 8000sqm convenience, 1400sqm comparison and 2400sqm retail warehousing in extant planning permissions in the non-metropolitan towns. A number of other significant decisions are currently pending or awaiting appeal decisions primarily for supermarket-type developments.
- The more physically remote towns particularly those to the West are those with the highest number of independent traders while higher order towns closer to Cork City have a higher representation of multiples.

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Issues for the County Development Plan

- The County Development Plan needs to provide guidance on the pattern of retail development appropriate for the years ahead. The key aim should be to provide efficient and sustainable retail facilities so that Cork remains an attractive and competitive place for both residents and businesses.
- One of the biggest issues for the next County Development plan is how to tackle increasing vacancy levels that are evident in many town centres (often caused by declining or changing spending patterns).
- A small number of towns have not expanded their retail floorspace as much as others in recent years perhaps due to weaker demand or unsuccessful planning permissions. Also, in a number of towns, pre-planning queries and planning applications show evidence that there may be a market for an expanded retail capacity. The County Development Plan will need to give guidance on the need for new floor space in the future, taking account of vacancy and changing spending patterns.
- Expansion of retailing and retail warehousing in more peripheral and out of centre locations has the potential to threaten the vibrancy and vitality of many town centres. The County Development Plan needs to develop policies to manage pressure for out-of-centre retail development so that this only occurs where there is a clear need for the development and it is unrealistic or impractical to accommodate the development within or close to the centre of the town.

- A major challenge will be to develop policies to enhance town centres in what may well be a period of low growth. Part of the solution may be to develop policies to encourage shopping activities in town centres to combine with other activities, perhaps in the leisure and entertainment sectors.
- Accessibility - Improvement of town centre car parks in relation to quality, connectivity and accessibility is required. No consistent approach is evident within the county in relation to parking charges in the town centres which may be a disadvantage when competing with out of town centres many of which have free car parking. Few town centres offer appropriate facilities for cyclists.
- Public realm improvements are necessary in order to enhance footfall and permeability, overcome clutter and improve overall public realm and environmental amenity of towns.

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Environmental Overview

This section outlines some of the key environmental considerations for the County and provides an environmental baseline against which the alternative scenarios were initially assessed (See Section 5 below).

Biodiversity Flora and Fauna

- Cork County is 7,454 km² in area with circa. 1,100 km of coastline, 44,608 km of hedgerow, 4,406 km of tree line and 79,188 ha of forest cover (17% Broadleaf).
- County Cork has a diversity of wildlife and natural heritage, which includes native wild plants and animals, natural habitats, geology and landscape.
- Nature conservation designations are spread throughout the County with particular concentrations of designations in West Cork, particularly along the coastline, in the vicinity of Cork Harbour and along the Blackwater River valley in North Cork.
- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) have been selected because they support habitats and plant and animal species that are rare or threatened in Europe and require particular measures, including the designation of protected sites, to conserve them. There are 29 SACs or candidate SACs in the County.
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs) have been selected in the County because they support populations of birds of particular species that are rare or threatened in Europe and require particular measures, including the designation of protected areas to conserve them. There are 13 SPAs of particular environmental importance within the County. Together with the SACs they form part of the Natura 2000 network of sites throughout Europe.
- Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) cover nationally important semi-natural and natural habitats,

landforms or geomorphological features, wild plant and animal species or a diversity of these natural attributes. There are 8 NHAs and 127 proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) in County Cork.

- Under the European Communities (Quality of Salmonoid Waters) Regulations 1998, which transposes the European Freshwater Fish Directive 1978 (78/659/EEC), certain waters in the County are designated as Salmonoid waters and include the Argideen, Blackwater, Bride and Lee rivers.
- A large proportion of the water catchment areas in the County have been identified as being "at risk" or "probably at risk" of not meeting the objectives of the Water Framework Directive. Water bodies identified as being "at risk" are particularly evident along the Blackwater and Bandon rivers together with areas in the vicinity of Cork City and Midleton/Carrigtwohill.
- Shellfish waters in County Cork are designated and afforded protection through the Quality of Shellfish Waters Regulations 1994 and the Shellfish Waters Directive 1979 (79/923/EEC), which is transposed into Irish law through the European Communities (Quality of Shellfish Waters) Regulations 2006. There are 15 designated shellfish water areas afforded protection in County Cork.

Population, Human Health

- The 2011 census shows that the population of County Cork increased from 361,877 to 399,802 between 2006 and 2011, an increase of 37,925 or 10.48%.
- The combined population of the city and county of Cork in 2011 was 519,032.
- 51% of the population of County Cork live in urban areas with 49% living in rural areas.
- The average household size in the 2011 was 2.80.

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- There are 57,993 permanent private households serviced by individual septic tanks, individual treatment systems or “other” in County Cork. There were 78,087 permanent private household served by public sewerage schemes. (Census 2011)
- There were 6,772 permanent private households getting their water supply from the local authority group schemes, 2,633 from private group schemes and 29,406 from other private sources. (Census 2011).

Soil

- There are 143 sites of geological interest in County Cork which are afforded protection in the County Development Plan. Some of the sites listed are also protected under Natural Heritage Area Designations.
- Brown Podzolic and Grey Brown Podzolic soils are the dominant soil types in County Cork and are medium to heavy texture with a great depth of profile. These are good productive agricultural soils with a wide range of uses, particularly suitable for arable farming, which should be protected where possible.
- To the northwest of the County, there are heavy textured gley soils which are poorly drained due to a combination of heavy texture, gently undulating topography and/or high ground-water level. These soils are more suitable for supporting grassland based agricultural activities.
- High Level Blanket Peat soils and Low Level Peat soils are found in western and north-western parts of the County. High Level Blanket Peat soils occur above 150 metres and also at the higher levels in mountain areas in the western parts of the County. Low Level Peat soils occur in flat or undulating topography below the 150 m contour line. These soils have limited agricultural value but often have important nature conservation value.

Water

- County Cork has the greatest number of rivers of any county in Ireland. There are approximately 1,200 km of main channel rivers in County Cork, including the Argideen, Bandon, Blackwater, Bride, Glashaboy, Ilen and the Lee. Notably, most major rivers in the County run from west to east. In addition, there are approximately 2,000 km of streams and drains in the County. There are also many lakes in the County, including Inniscarra, the largest manmade lake in Cork. In excess of 25 million gallons, or 80% of all the clean drinking water supplied by Cork County Council is sourced from the County's rivers and lakes.
- The catchments of the Blackwater, Lee and Bandon rivers in particular show high proportion of “at risk” water bodies. Similarly, water bodies in east and northeast Cork, particularly, in the vicinity of Middleton/Carrigtwohill, Fermoy, Mallow, Buttevant and Mitchelstown are also “at risk” of not meeting the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.
- In the case of estuarine water bodies, those “at risk” in County Cork include the Lower Blackwater Estuary and Youghal Harbour, Cork Harbour, the Lower Bandon Estuary and Inner Bantry Bay.

Air Quality and Climate

- The dominant influence on the climate in County Cork is the Atlantic Ocean. The mean annual windspeed in the County is approximately 5-6 m/sec. Mean annual rainfall varies across the County, ranging from up to 1800-2000 mm in the western parts to 1000-1200 mm in the eastern parts. The prevailing winds in the County are also predominantly from the south, southwest, west or northwest.
- Air quality is generally good in the County and Cork is located in an area with a relatively mild climate and has an almost continuous movement of clean air. The

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biggest threat now facing air quality is emissions from road traffic.

- Air quality monitoring and assessments are undertaken at 5 locations within County Cork, of which 3 are located within Cork City Council area and 2 locations are within the administrative area of Cork County Council.

Cultural Heritage

- County Cork's rich archaeological heritage spans a diverse spectrum of age and variety, with 17,300 known archaeological monuments identified to date.
- There are approximately 12,000 monuments listed on the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP). The list of monuments includes megalithic (wedge) tombs, standing stones, fulachta fiadh, ringforts, souterrains, medieval churches, tower houses and water-powered mills.
- There are currently 6,425 properties on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), in the County Area, not including those in the City Environs of the County.
- There are currently over 1300 structures listed for protection in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS), where structures or buildings are of architectural, historical, cultural, artistic, archaeological, scientific, social or technical merit.
- There are 43 Architectural Conservation Areas within County Cork where the special character of an area is protected and generally comprised of a collection of buildings and their setting, in many cases also including the presence of a historic demesne estate or park.
- There are 6 Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) in the County

Landscape

- Landscapes comprise the visible features of an area of land which includes physical elements such as landforms, living elements of flora and fauna, abstract elements such as lighting and weather conditions, and human elements, such as human activity or the built environment. County Cork contains significant areas of landscape importance which are important not only for their intrinsic value as places of natural beauty but also because they provide a real asset for residents and tourists in terms of recreation and other uses.

Material Assets

- There has been relatively large population growth and residential development in County Cork in recent years and in some areas of the County, development has exceeded infrastructural development. Residential development has preceded the provision of waste water infrastructure in some areas or has resulted in cases where the capacity of existing treatment facilities has been exceeded and put under increasing pressure. This is becoming a significant consideration around the county but particularly for the towns within the River Blackwater Catchment and the also the Lower Cork Harbour Towns.
- In parts of County Cork there is a lack of appropriate waste water treatment infrastructure, where existing facilities are overstretched or where they do not treat waste water to a sufficient degree. Infrastructural difficulties in the County threatens water quality and is likely to be adversely affecting water bodies, particularly those which have been identified as being "at risk" or "probably at risk" of not achieving the objectives of the WFD by 2015.
- In order to accommodate recent and particularly future growth in the County, programmes to improve waste water treatment plants and networks, water supply infrastructure, stormwater infrastructure and

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transport infrastructure need to be implemented. See Table 4.6 “Key Public Infrastructure Required”.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA)

The policies and objectives contained in the next County Development Plan will be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA). An initial assessment of environmental impacts has been carried out to identify the preferred alternative scenario on which the principles set out in the Proposed Core Strategy below are based (See Section 5).

Core Strategy – Outline of Main Policy Proposals

Introduction

At the initial stage of the preparation of a new development plan, the Planning & Development (Amendment) Act 2010 require planning authorities to set out an outline of main policy proposals suggested for inclusion in the Core Strategy of the next County Development Plan. Together with supporting tables and a strategy diagram, these comprise a written statement of the key policy principles which are being suggested as the basis for the Draft County Development Plan to be prepared in the Autumn of 2013.

The policies and objectives of the new CDP must be consistent with the National Spatial Strategy, the South West Regional Planning Guidelines and take account of Ministerial Guidelines.

Population & Housing Strategy

The key challenge for the next County Development Plan is developing a set of measures that can bring the pattern of future population growth back into line with that pattern envisaged by the SWRPG whilst respecting the needs particularly of rural communities. Table 3.7 sets out suggested population targets to achieve this aim.

The proposed overall aims for the network of settlements throughout the County are set out in Appendix C.

Successfully realigning the pattern of population growth with the pattern set out in the SWRPG will deliver a strong, vibrant and competitive Metropolitan Cork that will be well equipped to perform as the principal engine for sustainable growth in Cork and throughout the South West Region in future generations. Failure to achieve this will risk allowing Cork becoming increasingly less competitive as an international location for investment because of the rising economic costs associated with a more dispersed population especially in;

- Providing housing and services;
- Meeting environmental standards;
- Travelling to work;
- Providing education and social facilities.

Critical to this approach is the acceleration of growth in the Metropolitan area so that, even if growth remains slow in the City, the full quantum of growth envisaged by the SWRPG is delivered for the County Metropolitan SPA. Allied to this is the need to:

- Develop policies to improve the attractiveness of the Metropolitan Towns as places to live and work (for all age groups);
- Develop policies to improve the range and quality of housing available in the Metropolitan Towns so that they can better meet some of the demand for housing previously locating to the rural areas of the CASP Ring;

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- Maintain growth rates in the Hub Town of Mallow and the other Ring Towns;
- Manage the pressure for growth in the rural areas of the CASP Ring so that the population remains stable and the viability of existing services is not undermined

In the West SPA, develop policies to manage the apparent demand for second homes so that rural housing is available principally to support the housing needs of rural communities rather than focussing on demands for second homes.

In the North & West SPA's, develop policies to manage the demand for rural housing to deliver the optimum mix of future population growth for these areas.

Table 3.7: Summary of Population, Households and Net New Houses for County Cork to 2022

Strategic Planning Area*	Housing Requirement				Housing Supply	
	Census 2011	Population Target for 2022	Total New Households 2011-2022	New Units Required 2011-2022	Net Residential area zoned in CDP / LAP / TC (ha)	Total Units
Total County Metropolitan	170,509	213,891	27,855	31,036	1222.94	41,027
Total CASP Ring	118,418	131,882	12,430	13,407	705.63	19,984
Total North	50,498	56,012	5,206	5,688	261.50	7,142
Total West	60,377	68,837	7,000	7,872	360.90	9,716
Total Cork County	399,802	470,622	52,492	58,003	2550.97	77,869

* Further detail supplied in appendix A

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Housing Delivery

Housing Strategy

The aim of the Joint Housing Strategy being developed by the Cork local authorities is “to help enable the people of Cork, now and in the future, to have a place to live, suited to their needs, at a price that they can afford’

The four key principles that guide the Housing Strategy are as follows:

Principle 1: To provide for a diverse range of housing needs to suit varying income levels and social circumstance.

Principle 2: To promote a socially balanced and inclusive society in all housing areas within Cork City and County.

Principle 3: To promote high quality and sustainable communities in the Urban and Rural Environment through the implementation of the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas published in May 2000.

Principle 4: To monitor the Housing Strategy and to allow for consultation with those who are central to the implementation of the policies of the strategy.

Based on the analysis carried out in preparing this strategy a set of policies have been developed and the key policies are set out below;

- Following a detailed historical and future assessment of the housing market using best available data from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, the CSO and the Central Bank, the strategy proposes that the Planning Authorities will have a requirement that 14% of units on all land zoned for residential uses, (or for a mix of residential and other uses) or lands within the development boundary of a settlement will be reserved for the

purpose of social housing and/or specialized housing needs.

- The actual mechanism used to satisfy the Part V requirement will be by the one that best facilitates the development of strong, vibrant, mixed tenure communities. The options for the discharge of Part V obligations include:
 - Payment of a financial contribution where the authorities will be open to the principle of phased payments to be agreed with the authority.
 - Transfer of a reduced number of units or lands in lieu at no cost to the Council. Units will only be accepted in areas where there is a recognized housing need.
 - Transfer of a reduced number of units that are adapted for disabled persons or persons with a specialized housing requirement at no cost to the Council.
 - A combination of two or more of the above.
- Each Local Authority in its development plan may give a further indication of preference for discharge of development under Part V.
- The Cork Local Authorities will ensure a mix of house types and sizes within individual developments and within communities to promote a socially balanced and inclusive society. Planning Applications for multiple housing units will be required to submit a Statement of Housing Mix detailing the proposed housing mix and why it is considered appropriate. The statement should set out the established mix in the area, design, location, market considerations and recent societal trends. The needs of special groups such as the elderly and disabled should be considered as part of this process. It is proposed that the draft

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development plan will include specific policies to secure housing mix.

- The County Council will continue to recognise and support the central role that the voluntary and co-operative sector will play in the coming years and in addition, will support the development of housing for special needs, including the concept of independent living for older people and people with a disability and ensure where possible that housing for such groups is integrated with mainstream housing.
- The County Council will facilitate the establishment of a Joint Housing Strategy Stakeholders' Forum, to include representatives of the main stakeholder groups dealing with housing issues in Cork. It is intended that this group would be set up when required to discuss and formulate policies on particular areas of local or national importance. It is proposed that the first of these Stakeholder Groups will focus on our ageing population.

medium density standard giving greater flexibility and encouraging a wider choice of housing provision.

- Proposals to meet medium density standards should not normally require apartments as part of the solution. Retaining the upper limit for medium density at 50 units would still allow apartments, but only where market conditions suggest they would be a viable development proposition.
- Provide clearer guidance on the meaning and use of the terms 'net density' and 'gross density'.
- Encourage a wider range and quality of housing on lands zoned for medium density development.
- Develop a set of reduced density standards based on the Guidelines for Smaller Towns i.e. under 5000 population.
- Encourage wider provision of detached and/or serviced sites in the main settlements.

Housing Density

The following measures should be considered in the review of the County Development Plan in as part of the range of measures needed to help make the county towns, particularly those in Metropolitan Cork, more attractive places to live, for all age groups, to help secure the realignment of future population growth as proposed in Table 3.7.

- Delivering a better range and quality of housing, particularly in the Metropolitan Towns will require a review of density standards, particularly for high density developments. It is suggested that the lower threshold to high density residential development should be reduced from 50+ units per ha to 40+ units per ha while retaining the current standard for medium density at 20 to 50 units per ha. This would allow for an overlap between the lower end of the high density standard and the upper end of the

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Rural Housing

The Census 2011 suggests revised rural housing policies are required in order to:

- Help deliver a pattern of future population growth more in line with the SWRPG; and to
- Make provision for categories of rural housing need identified in Ministerial Guidelines to Planning Authorities

In developing policies planning authorities must follow closely the approach set out in the Ministerial Guidelines for Sustainable Rural Housing and these recommend that planning authorities adopt:

- A plan led approach in identifying the different types of rural area and then to develop an appropriate policy framework for each of the area types identified.
- Identify different types of rural areas.
- Develop appropriate policy responses for each area type.

Figure 3.7 identifies the different types of Rural Areas in County Cork based on a detailed set of criteria, which include analysis of rural housing growth, census results, environmental sensitivity and peak hour drive times from Cork City. This map is based on the study and map of the rural areas of the County set out in the 'Background Document' on this topic (Map 14 on page 36 of the "Rural Housing Background Document") but that map has been adapted to:

- Retain the outline of the former Metropolitan Green Belt to reflect the area under strongest urban influence from Cork City (former A1, A2 and A3 Areas) where there have been more limited opportunities for rural housing compared to the rest of the area under strong urban influence.

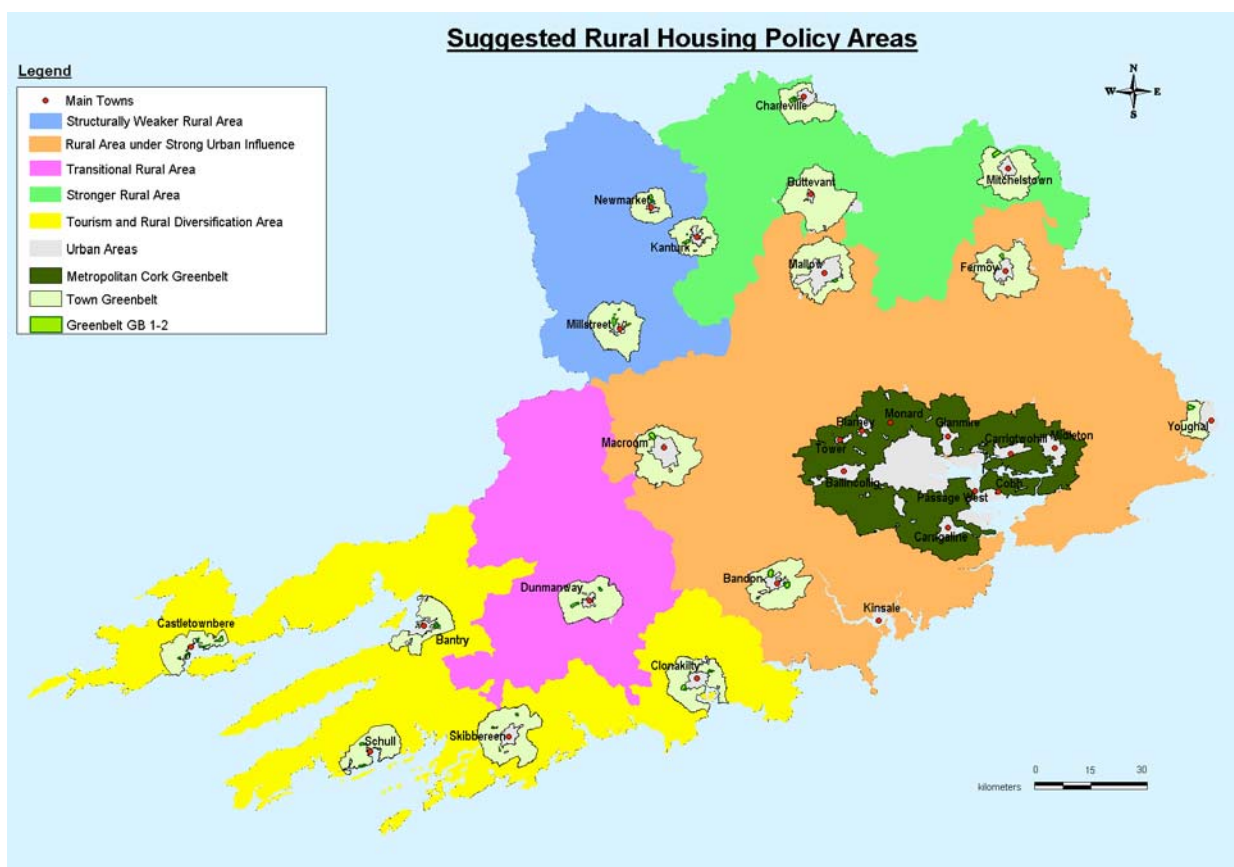


Figure 3.7: Suggested Rural Housing Policy Areas in County Cork

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- It is suggested that the three current zoning designations for Metropolitan Greenbelt lands (A1, A2 and A3) be amalgamated to form a single Metropolitan Greenbelt area (Inner Area under Strong Urban Influence) and a single set of policies for rural housing should, in future, apply in this area. This approach eliminates the confusion sometimes caused by the complexity of the current policies for the A1, A2, and A3 zones and simplifies the approach to the assessment of planning applications in this area.
- It is suggested that the boundaries of the "Rural Area under Strong Urban Influence" be reduced to broadly match the outer boundary of the CASP Ring Strategic Planning Area in order to better reflect the current strategic planning area boundaries.
- The former town green belts have been included to recognise the "Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence" around the main settlements.

Tables 3.8 to 3.13 suggest how the broad categories of rural generated housing need, which are based on the 2005 Ministerial Guidelines on Sustainable Rural Housing, could be applied to the six different rural area types identified in County Cork.

Under this approach applications for planning for individual dwellings in Rural Areas would need to meet one of the rural housing need criteria within an individual rural area type, in order to be considered.

Table 3.8 - Metropolitan Greenbelt - Area under Strong Urban Influence

- Farmers/landowners, their sons and daughters.
- Persons involved in full-time farming etc.
- A "bona fide" full time business.
- Exceptional health circumstances.

Table 3.9 - Outer Area Under Strong Urban Influence and Town Greenbelts

- Farmers/landowners, their sons and daughters.
- Sons and daughters of non-farming persons
- Persons with a strong social connection to the area.
- Persons involved in full-time farming etc.
- Returning emigrants.
- Persons who intend to operate a "bona fide" full time business.
- Exceptional health circumstances.

Table 3.10 - Tourism & Rural Diversification Area

- Farmers/landowners, their sons and daughters.
- Sons and daughters of non-farming persons
- Persons with a strong social connection to the area.
- Persons involved in full-time farming etc.
- Persons involved in part time farming etc.
- Returning emigrants.
- Persons who intend to operate a "bona fide" full time business.
- Exceptional health circumstances.

Table 3.11 - Stronger Rural Area

- Farmers/landowners, their sons and daughters.
- Sons and daughters of non-farming persons
- Persons with a strong social connection to the area.
- Persons involved in full-time farming etc.
- Persons involved in part time farming etc.
- Persons whose work is linked to a particular rural area.
- Returning emigrants.
- Persons who intend to operate a "bona fide" full time business.
- Exceptional health circumstances.

Table 3.12 - Transitional Rural Area

- Farmers/landowners, their sons and daughters.
- Sons and daughters of non-farming persons
- Persons with a strong social connection to the area.
- Persons involved in full-time farming etc.
- Persons involved in part time farming etc.
- Persons whose work is linked to a particular rural area.
- Returning emigrants.
- Persons who intend to operate a "bona fide" full time business.
- Exceptional health circumstances.

Table 3.13 - Structurally Weak Rural Area

- Accommodate residential development for permanent occupation as it arises.

Section 3 – Proposed Core Strategy

Retail Development and Town centres

Policies in the next CDP should deliver an integrated package of measures to ensure

- That new retail development, wherever possible supports the role of town centres as the principal location for shopping activities;
- The continuing vitality and viability of town centres is maintained and enhanced;
- Provision in the new CDP for retail activities appropriate to meet the needs of the population targets for 2022.

Policy for Metropolitan Cork (Cork City, suburbs and Metropolitan Towns) will be developed from the findings of the Joint Retail Study which is currently being prepared and there will be separate public consultation in relation to this.

The Retail Planning Guidelines require that;

- The CDP must set out strategic guidance on the location and scale of retail development taking account of the retail requirements of the county and
- Should include general statements of policy for the retail function of specific towns and note additional retail development requirements, reflecting the local evidence of market interest and the need to provide good opportunities for retail provision.

Table 3.14 identifies the main retail centres in the County, outside Metropolitan Cork, and makes suggestions on their possible roles in meeting the future retail needs of the County.

Table 3.14 - Suggested Retail Network		
	Towns	Suggested Policy Approach
Main Settlement centres which have a Regional Role within the North and West of the County.	Mallow, Clonakilty.	Convenience at level to support own catchment*. Comparison should have no upper limit provided location is acceptable. Planned retail parks appropriate where justification is evident.
Ring Towns and the larger settlement centres within the North and West SPA's.	Youghal, Bandon, Macroom, Mitchelstown, Charleville, Fermoy, Skibbereen, Bantry, Kanturk, Kinsale.	Convenience and Comparison to be provided which is in line with its catchment*. Cautious approach to out-of-centre retail warehousing.
Smaller population centres within the North and West SPA's which generally function at electoral area level.	Millstreet, Castletownbere, Dunmanway, Newmarket, Schull, Buttevant.	Primarily convenience with some comparison as appropriate. Cautious approach to out-of-centre retail warehousing.

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*The catchment area of a retail centre is the product of the distribution of population, physical geography of the area, the transportation network and the location of competing centres. The catchment population is normally assumed to be within a drivetime of 15-20 minutes from that retail centre.

Vacancy and Vitality in Town Centres

Throughout the County, the County Development Plan should include a clear expression of policy in favour of adapting existing property in town centre areas for retail and other town centre activities.

In towns with above average vacancy (Mallow, Mitchelstown, Fermoy, Ballincollig, Skibbereen, Youghal, Bandon and Cobh), it is suggested that the following approach should apply

- Proposals for new retail development outside the designated town centre would need to be supported by an assessment of vacant floorspace within the town centre and a statement demonstrating that it was not possible or practical to provide that retail floor space required by the developer within the town centre area.

Retail Warehousing

Ministerial Guidelines require that development plans should identify whether or not there is a need for the provision of additional retail warehouses. The size and potential location of additional units should also be specified. In general the guidelines state that there should be a presumption against a further development of any retail parks. Mallow and Clonakilty, as higher order centres in the North and West, could merit some consideration for retail parks where a need is demonstrated and adverse effects on the town centre can be avoided.

It will be necessary to apply a cautious approach in relation to retail warehousing proposals particularly in towns where there is evidence of higher vacancy levels. Vacant units firstly and under utilised sites within or at the edge of the town centre in a sequential manner must be identified as priority locations.



Section 3 – Proposed Core Strategy

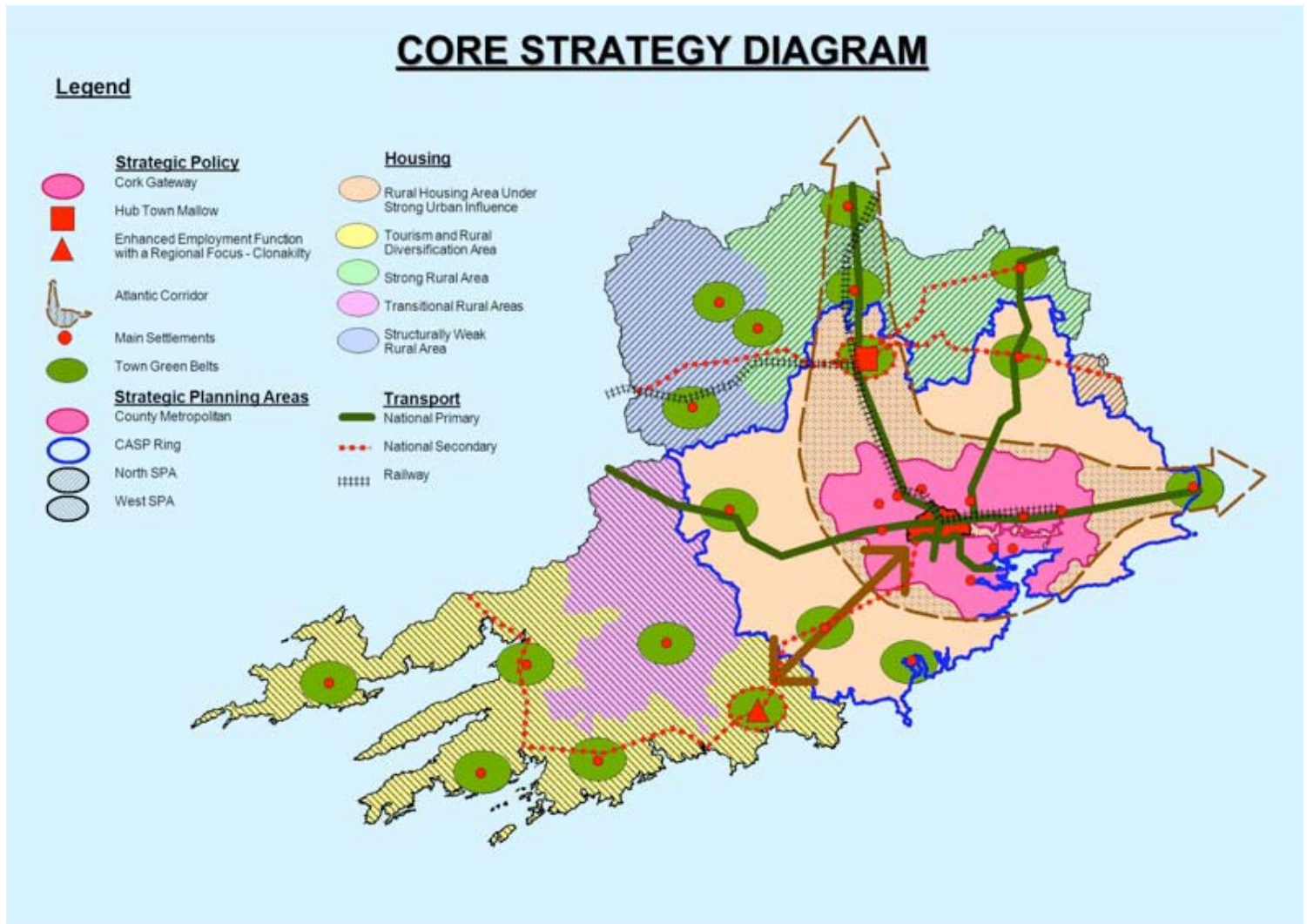


Figure 3.8: Proposed Core Strategy Diagram

Section 4 – Other Key Policy Topics

This section of the consultation document addresses the other key policy topics, where changes to the County Development Plan need to be considered but where the Planning & Development Acts require that these are not part of the 'Core Strategy' for the new plan. The main topics to be addressed under this heading are:

- Economic Development & Employment**
- Energy**
- Green Infrastructure**
- Transport & Water Services Infrastructure**
- Car Parking**

Economic Development and Employment

The purpose of this section is to present an overview of the pattern of business development and the overall provision of zoned land for business and employment development in County Cork.

Key information on the spatial pattern of the County's economy is provided by the GeoDirectory. This An Post/CSO database recorded a total of 12,041 businesses within the County in 2011. Table 4.1, below, shows the overall distribution of businesses across the Strategic Planning Areas that make up the County. Although the number of businesses in the Metropolitan area is lower than some areas, the assumption is that, in terms of employment, businesses in the Metropolitan area are larger than elsewhere. It is also likely that businesses outside the Metropolitan area include a greater proportion of farms and smaller rural businesses. The higher number of businesses relative to population in the West SPA perhaps reflects the importance of tourism in that area.

Table 4.1: Number of Business's by Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning Area	Population 2011	Business Numbers	Business' per 1000
1. County Metropolitan	170,509	8,691	50.97
2. CASP Ring	118,418	10,096	85.26
3. North SPA	50,498	5,482	108.56
4. West SPA	60,377	8,361	138.48
County Business Total & Total per 1000 Pop	399,802	32,630	81.62

The 2011 Local Area Plans identified a total of 1108.98ha zoned for Business and Employment within the 29 main settlements, a further 1051 ha is zoned within the development boundaries of strategic employment areas at Carrigtwohill, Ringaskiddy, Little Island, and Whitegate. In addition, currently redundant industrial land at Marino Point has also been included

Zoned land for future development is provided under the following headings:

Business: A new category introduced in the 2011 Local Area Plans. This new category represents a more radical and flexible approach than the former category "commercial" which had been used in Plans up until 2011. It allows for a wider range of uses than the former category. This new zoning is intended to be suitable to the demands of a modern economy and would provide for activities such as light industry, wholesale and non retail trading uses, car showrooms, small/medium scale manufacturing/repairs/warehousing/distribution uses. Uses specifically excluded from this category include waste management activities and general retail development. Retail warehousing can only be permitted where the specific zoning objective allows.

Industry: This category is intended to focus on medium and large scale development where the process or activities carried on may not be consistent with the higher environmental standards likely to become



Section 4 – Other Key Policy Topics

prevalent in 'business' developments. Industrial includes manufacturing, repairs, warehousing and distribution development including waste management activities but excluding land fill and incineration. Lands zoned for Industrial Use may be made the subject of a long term reservation for large scale or stand alone industry as part of the strategic supply of land for these specialist developments.

The 'Enterprise' land use category has been reserved for a very limited number of very high quality employment uses and is protected from other forms of employment development.

Table 4.2 summarises the provision of zoned land across the County for business, industry and enterprise. The overall rate of provision is high but is set to reflect:

- The desire to protect land from other forms of development over a significant period, extending beyond the life time of current plan;
- The need to offer intending developers a choice of sites in terms of location and quality;
- The need to maintain a strategic supply of large sites suitable for single users (or a small number of larger users); and
- The need to maintain a supply of specialised sites (e.g. with potential for port or marine related development)

Table 4.2: Total amount of zoned land by Strategic Planning Area

Strategic Planning Area	Population (2011)	Population (2022)	Special Uses	Business	Industry	Enterprise	Total (Ha)
1. Metropolitan	170,509	213,891	589.2	113.4	686.65	57.1	1446.35
2. CASP Ring	118,418	131,822		139.1	45.5	33.5	218.1
3. North SPA	50,498	56,012	2.46	213.42	31.7		247.58
4. West SPA	60,377	68,837		134.2	72.1	11.5	217.8
Total	399,802	470,622	591.66	600.12	835.95	102.1	2129.83*

**An additional land area of approximately 121 ha has been zoned within the Town Council areas.*



Section 4 – Other Key Policy Topics

Of the majority of the lands zoned, approximately 68%, are contained within the County Metropolitan SPA reflecting the 'medium-larger firms' economic structure of this area.

Large scale transport distribution and warehousing developments should normally be located where they have easy access to the national road network.

Issues for County Development Plan

The current County Development Plan includes a hierarchy of employment locations including the following categories:

Major Employment Centres (including large-scale, strategic and specialised manufacturing areas);

District Employment Areas (the main towns);

Local Employment Centres (small towns and key villages)

Rural Employment Areas (the rural areas)

The purpose of the hierarchy is to provide a basis for developing an appropriate policy framework for each type of area and for prioritising the provision of services to facilitate future development.

To better reflect the different economic climate and issues that the County now faces, it is suggested that this aspect of the County development plan should be revised along the following lines:

Table 4.3: Suggested Employment Hierarchy

	Principal Locations	Overall Strategy
Tier 1 Cork Gateway Locations & Mallow Hub Town	City Environs & Cork Airport Ballincollig, Blarney, Carrigaline, Carrigwohill, Cobh (inc. Marino Point), Little Island, Midleton, Monard, Ringaskiddy & Mallow	Strategic Employment Areas suitable for larger scale development at Carrigwohill, Little Island, Ringaskiddy and Whitegate. Specialised roles for Cork Airport & Marino Point Seek funding and prioritise to ensure the advance provision of infrastructure. Identify a choice of sites for large, medium & small enterprise/business/industry.
Tier 2 Other Towns and Key Villages	Bandon, Bantry, Castletownbere, Clonakilty*, Fermoy, Kinsale, Macroom, Mitchelstown, Skibbereen, Youghal	Focus on local catchment employment. Infrastructure programme to service identified supply of land for future employment development focused on medium to small business/industry.
Tier 3 Rural Areas		Support agriculture, fishing & food processing sectors Encourage rural diversification (especially tourism but also on and off farm employment activities such as processing of agricultural produce, manufacturing of crafts and specialist farming) and support innovation in indigenous enterprise.
*Clonakilty: Enhanced employment function with a regional focus		

Section 4 – Other Key Policy Topics

Energy

(including Wind & Renewable Energy)

Since 2007, the contraction in Ireland's economy has reduced energy demands by 9%, back to 2003 levels, and energy-related CO2 emissions have fallen by 12%, back to 2000 levels. Ireland's energy import dependency has fallen to 86% (2010) from a peak of 90% in 2006.

The vast bulk of Irish energy comes from imported fossil fuels with the overall breakdown of energy sources as follows:

Oil	52%
Natural Gas	29%
Coal	8%
Peat	6%
Electricity from renewable sources	4%
Electricity imports	1%

In County Cork 1,238MW of electricity are currently generated from conventional fossil fuel power stations and hydro electric plants. Whitegate, in east Cork, plays a strategic role, with 25 per cent of all national energy produced in one square mile. Also, 90 per cent of the oil reserves held in the state are stored here and elsewhere in the Cork region.

What was, until relatively recently, the states sole Natural Gas field (The Kinsale Field) is located a short distance off the East Cork coast, close to Whitegate. One of the National Gas Distribution Network's only two 'induction points' (points where gas can be introduced into the network) is located nearby at Inch. Whilst output from the Kinsale field is declining, the residual under-sea voids have a current and future role as locations for the strategic storage of gas reserves and possibly in relation to future carbon-capture technology.

Recent under-sea oil discoveries off this stretch of coastline, that are not yet commercially developed, emphasise the likely future importance of the Whitegate

area. It is important to ensure that the future potential for large-scale energy industry in that area is not compromised by inappropriate development.

The Government's aim is to reduce CO2 emissions and national reliance on imported energy by increasing the proportion of energy generated from the State's renewable energy resources and the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) sets out the overall approach. The overall target is to achieve 16% of the national gross final consumption of energy comprising energy from renewable sources by 2020 by delivering the following changes:

- 40% consumption from renewable sources in the electricity sector (RES-E),
- 12% of energy consumption in the heat sector from renewable sources and
- 10% of transport energy from renewable sources.

The NREAP target for 2010 was to generate 15% of electricity consumption from renewable sources and electricity generated from renewable sources reached 14.8% of gross electricity consumption in that year. The NREAP suggests that in the year 2020, wind energy will contribute 90% of Ireland's renewable electricity target of 5,111 MW.

On shore wind energy developments will continue to be the main contributor to meeting national renewable energy targets for electricity generation up to 2020. Off shore wind or other renewable energy generation projects, whilst they should be encouraged where appropriate, are only likely to play a relatively minor role.

In the State as a whole, onshore wind farms currently make the major contribution to the quantity of renewable energy with 2053.16MW of electricity generated from 175 commissioned wind farms. In Cork, there are 20 commissioned wind farms generating 283.46MW which is approximately 13.8% of the Ireland's overall wind energy.

Section 4 – Other Key Policy Topics

In Cork, the summary table below shows that there is the potential for a total of 720 MW (more than double the current capacity) of wind energy as a result of the existing, permitted and pending wind farm applications, should planning permission for all these be granted. If all these projects are authorised and connected to the grid, their cumulative effect would equip Cork well to meet its share of the National Targets for 2020.

Other sources of renewable energy in County Cork include:

Inniscarra/Carrigadrohid Hydro Electric	27MW
Other small scale hydro projects (Bandon Weir Coolfadda & Lee Road Hydro)	0.3MW
Residential & Commercial Biomass plants	22 units
Combined heat and power plants	4 units

Facilitating the sustainable development of the renewable energy resources of the County will play a key role in attracting inward investment to the County, help the State meet its' targets and international obligations and at the same time support the development of a green/low carbon economy.

Future improvements in the current transmission network in the County would allow for greater renewable penetration into the grid from both the wind and other renewable energy sources.

Whilst all energy generating and transmission development results in environmental impacts, many renewable energy projects can have widespread or far-reaching impacts, for example, hydro-electricity schemes based on impoundment (dams) often result in the permanent flooding of entire river valley networks. Wind energy projects involve the erection of very tall turbine equipment, inevitably visible over long distances and with uncertain impacts on the natural habitats, particularly those of birds. Of necessity, they are often located in the most prominent and exposed locations so that advantage can be taken from the highest wind speeds.

Table 4.4 Summary of Onshore Wind Energy Planning Applications in County Cork

Wind Energy Application Status	Number of Wind Farm Applications	Total Power/Capacity MW	Number of Turbines Permitted	Number of Turbines Refused
Commissioned	20	283.46 MW	160	
Granted	23	308 MW	117	
Pending	10	143 MW	47	
Refused	27			228
Total	79	720 MW	324	

The current County Development Plan Policy for wind energy development originated in the early years of the last decade, when wind energy development was less common and, perhaps, less socially acceptable than it is today. Because of the potential for visual impact on the County, the policy was developed primarily from a 'landscape impact' perspective, perhaps giving less weight to other considerations such as effects on natural habitat or human habitation. Evolving public attitudes to wind energy may mean that turbines are now considered acceptable in some locations that were originally ruled out on visual grounds.

Since the original policy was developed, the Minister has issued guidelines to planning authorities setting out a step-by-step approach to the development of policy so that all the relevant considerations can be given an appropriate weight in the determining policy. The guidelines suggest that the aim should be to set out a policy for the whole County that identifies the following areas:

Section 4 – Other Key Policy Topics

Areas of strategic importance for wind energy development;

Areas where wind energy projects are not normally encouraged; and

Areas where wind energy projects can be considered and assessed in relation to relevant criteria.

Also, the four planning authorities in adjoining counties have each developed policies for wind energy and there is a requirement, where possible and practical, to secure a good level of alignment in the policy approach between adjoining authorities. Of particular importance to the development of policy for County Cork are the instances where adjoining Counties have adopted a policy discouraging wind energy projects and these areas are shown in Table 4.5 and on Figure 4.1 below.

Issues for the County Development Plan

The challenge for the next County Development Plan is to develop an overall policy approach in relation to energy that:

- Facilitates the sustainable development of the Counties oil and gas reserves;
- Protects the Counties future capacity for the development of energy generating, processing, transmission and transportation infrastructure;
- Encourages the sustainable development of the Counties renewable energy resources
- Provides up-to-date strategic guidance for wind energy development, identifying those areas of the County with potential and those areas of the County that should be protected from this in the future.

Clearly, the potential of the Whitegate area, as a preferred location, to play a key role meeting the State's energy requirements should be supported and the area protected from inappropriate development so that it can achieve its future potential. Many large scale energy projects can have significant environmental impacts but these vary considerably, on the nature of the individual project. The County Development Plan needs to make a commitment to the full assessment (including cumulative impacts) of these impacts as particular projects arise.

The County Development Plan also needs to provide guidance for the development of renewable energy projects. Excluding wind energy projects (which are addressed below), small scale projects (with localised environmental impacts) should be broadly supported and criteria, or other guidance for intending developers, set out to facilitate their assessment at the project stage.

Larger scale non-wind renewable energy projects may also arise in the lifetime of the next County Development Plan. Whilst these may well have significant potential to help deliver the state's renewable energy targets, their potential for significant and, sometimes, irreversible

Table 4.5: Areas not considered suitable for Wind Energy Projects in Adjoining Counties

Local Authority	Areas Not Considered Suitable
Waterford County Council	(1) Blackwater Estuary (near Youghal); and (2) Blackwater Valley near Ballyduff Upper.
South Tipperary County Council	(3) Knockmealdown Mountains, south east of Mitchelstown
Limerick County Council	(4) Ballyhoura Mountains, hilly area north west of Mitchelstown and Galty Mountains
Kerry County Council*	(5) Derrynasaggart Mountains (northern part) (6) Derrynasaggart Mountains (near N22) (7) Sheehy/Caha Mountains, Beara Peninsula

*Variation No. 8 to the Kerry County Development Plan 2009-2015- Renewable Energy Strategy 2012 was adopted on the 5th November 2012 and Figure 4.1 does not take account of the adopted changes.



Section 4 – Other Key Policy Topics

environmental impacts is also significant, particularly where projects involve the impoundment of large volumes of water. This category of project can only be fully assessed at the detailed stage.

The County Development Plan policy framework for wind energy projects is likely to have the most significant effects on the overall development of renewable energy generation projects throughout the County. Small scale projects to meet the on-site needs of individual electricity users or small communities with localised environmental impacts should be open to consideration throughout the County, including within urban areas and areas of high landscape value.

Large scale wind energy development projects have the greatest potential to help the County fulfil its role in meeting National targets for renewable energy generation but are more complex and often have the potential for more widespread environmental effects. The County Development Plan needs to provide strategic guidance to indicate which areas of the County have potential for this type of development and which areas do not.

Areas likely to be most suitable for large scale wind energy projects are:

- River Ilen Basin North of Skibbereen: This shallow basin has good wind speeds and potential for grid connections. It is of only local landscape importance and includes few significant nature conservation designations.
- Area South of Macroom: This is an elevated area of gently rolling hills to the south of the Gearagh nature conservation area, has good wind speeds and the potential for grid connections. There are no nature conservation designations.

The following areas are unlikely to be suitable for large scale wind energy projects:

- Towns & Villages: The urban areas comprising the towns and villages of the County are the locations where most people live and work. The overall density of human activity here is significantly higher than the more rural parts of the County where the emphasis is on agriculture and other similar land uses less sensitive to wind energy development. Appropriate protection for individual dwellings in rural areas can be provided at the project stage, ensuring that large scale wind energy projects are adequately separated from areas of human habitation.
- Nature Conservation Areas: Areas designated for nature conservation at national level (including SPA's, SAC's & NHA's) are generally inappropriate for large scale wind energy development because of the likelihood of significant adverse effects on the integrity of those areas particularly in relation to areas designated for the protection of birds but also in other areas where the general effects of construction would be damaging.
- Important landscapes (High): The main areas of the County where landscape and coastal scenery is of high importance include:

Cork City and Harbour (Subject to paragraph below*);
South Coast West of Cork Harbour;
West Cork Peninsulas;
Lee river valley; and
Gougane Barra.

**However around Cork City and Harbour it is suggested that in the major employment centres of Ringaskiddy, Whitegate, Carrigtwohill, Kilbarry and Little Island the current policy provision that allows for consideration of wind farm projects should be maintained.*

Section 4 – Other Key Policy Topics

While these areas have intrinsic landscape qualities they also are significant destination areas for the County's tourism industry and large scale wind energy projects here could undermine this function.

Consideration could also be given to the need to protect other areas with the potential for sensitivity to wind energy development. These areas include areas of important landscape and coastal scenery that, although not of high importance, are considered to be of medium importance at a more local level. These areas contribute to the overall attractiveness of the County for tourism and recreation purposes and include the following:

South Coast East of Cork Harbour: Wind speeds along this coast are appropriate for large scale wind energy projects

particularly on south facing stretches of shore area. However, there are also important nature conservation designations and the area is attractive for tourism and recreation. Adjoining this area Waterford County Council has designated the area as unsuitable for wind energy projects.

North East Cork (including part of the Blackwater Valley): Wind speeds in this area of attractive landscape are generally low and, at best, large scale wind energy development would be marginal from the economic perspective. Adjoining this area, Limerick, South Tipperary and Waterford County Councils have designated a total of three areas as unsuitable for wind energy projects.

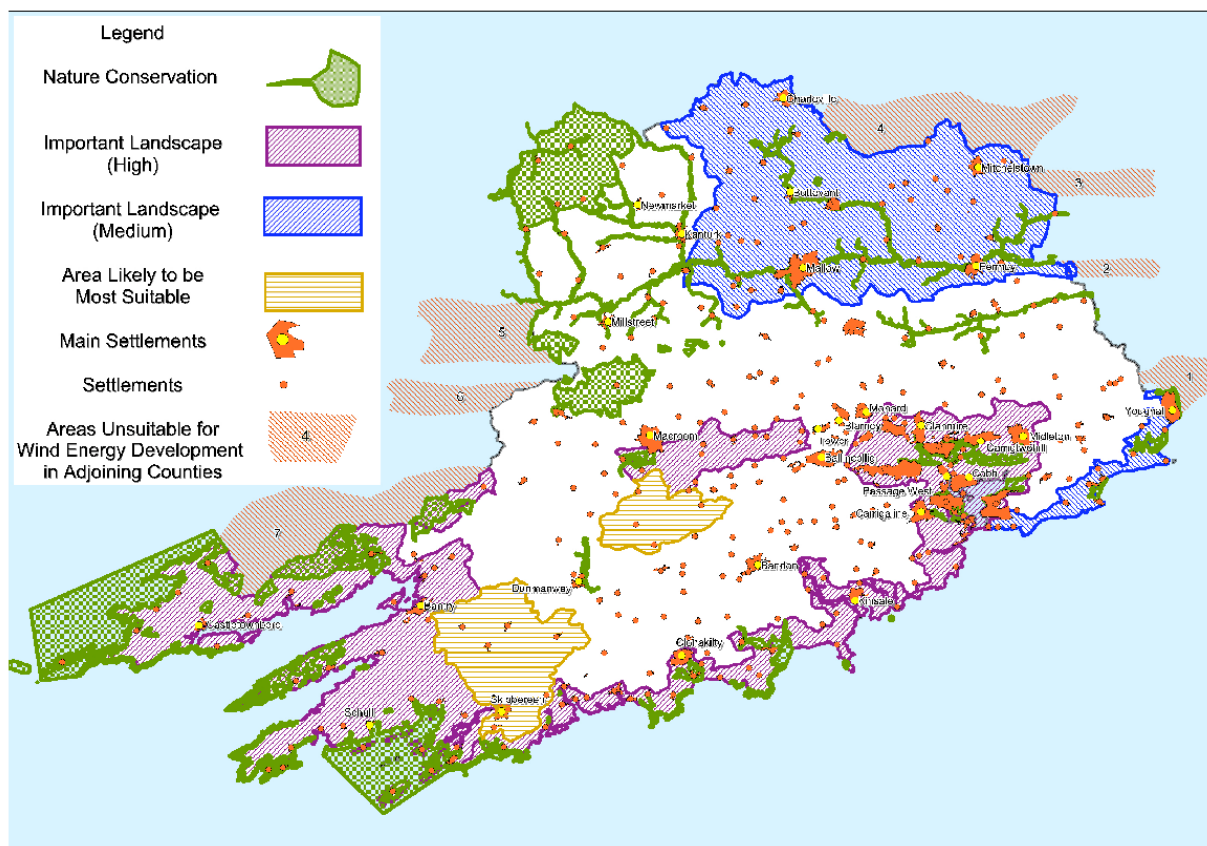


Figure 4.1: Policy Considerations for Wind Energy Projects

The suggested policy considerations, identified above, that need to be taken into account in the preparation of any future wind energy policy, (nature conservation, important landscapes (high), important landscapes (medium), towns and villages, areas likely to be most suitable for wind energy projects and areas unsuitable for wind energy projects in adjoining counties) are identified on Figure 4.1.

Section 4 – Other Key Policy Topics

Green Infrastructure

Background

The Planning and Development Amendment Act, introduced a requirement for development plans to provide 'a framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes', 'management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species' and 'the preservation of public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility'.

It is suggested that the most appropriate and effective way to address this broad requirement is through the inclusion in the draft County Development Plan of a 'Green Infrastructure Strategy'.

The Green Infrastructure concept involves the identification, protection, management and development of green corridors and spaces which can serve a number of functions and provide a range of benefits including the protection of water quality, protection against flood risk, protection against rising sea levels, provision of recreational spaces and protection of biodiversity. Green Infrastructure is about 'joined up' thinking; it is an integrated approach to planning and links land-use, landscape, services, ecology, heritage and transportation. It also leads to the effective integration of biodiversity and spatial planning.

The development of a Green Infrastructure Strategy can provide an overall framework for the development of existing and future amenity facilities across the county. The protection of a river corridor from inappropriate development for instance, not only has benefits in terms of protecting water quality and preventing flood risk, but can also provide significant opportunities for recreational

facilities including walkways and cycleway in these areas, which can provide opportunities for tourism, attracting visitors, increasing income and employment.

The County Development Plan 'Green Infrastructure Strategy' should address the following key issues:

- Policies that seek to identify, protect, enhance and develop green corridors that can provide multiple benefits relating to the protection of the environment as well as providing opportunities for the development of tourism and recreational resources.
- Promote and highlight the natural assets and key resources of the County as part of the approach to sustainable development in the future.
- Aim to protect and where possible encourage the enhancement of biodiversity in the management of new development.
- Help deliver 'green' solutions to issues such as flooding, climate change and coastal erosion.
- Promote uses and activities which would protect and enhance the biodiversity value of an area.
- Improving awareness of the concept of green infrastructure with the aim of providing a framework for the development of existing and future amenity facilities across the County.
- The need to incorporate the best principles of green infrastructure into new developments.

Section 4 – Other Key Policy Topics

Transport and Water Services Infrastructure

The following table sets out a list of key infrastructure required in order to meet targets set out in Proposed Core Strategy.

NSS Status	Table 4.6: Key Public Infrastructure Issues				
	Settlement	Transportation	Surface Water	Water Supply	Wastewater
Cork 'Gateway' Locations	Cork Gateway	Remaining Stages of the Cork Suburban Rail Network- Dunkettle Park & Ride, Blarney & Monard Stations			
	Cork Gateway	M8 Cork – Dublin Motorway Dunkettle interchange			
	Cork Gateway	M20 Cork to Limerick			
	Cork Gateway	N22/N20/N8 Cork Northern Ring Road			
	Cork Gateway	N71 Linking Cork Gateway with the Western Area			
	Cork Gateway	N28 Cork Gateway to Ringaskiddy employment area			
	Cork Gateway	N28 Cork City to airport			
	Cork Gateway	N22 Ballyvourney Macroom-Ballincollig Road Improvement scheme (including Macroom By Pass)			
	Ballincollig	Network upgrade.			WWTP upgrade
Blarney			Water supply upgrade	WWTP upgrade	

Section 4 – Other Key Policy Topics

NSS Status	Table 4.6: Key Public Infrastructure Issues (continued)				
	Settlement	Transportation	Surface Water	Water Supply	Wastewater
Cork 'Gateway' Locations	Carrigaline	Network upgrade.			Cork Lower Harbour Sewage Scheme.
	Carrigtwohill	N25 Carrigtwohill-Midleton			WWTP upgrade.
	Cobh Environs	R624 Linking Cobh with M25			Cork Lower Harbour Sewage Scheme.
	Cork City – North Environs	Network upgrade.	SUDS Strategy	Water supply upgrade	New network provision
	Cork City – South Environs	Network upgrade.			Network upgrade.
	Douglas	Network and Junction Upgrade			
	Glanmire	Network upgrade.			
	Midleton	N25 Midleton – Youghal Midleton Relief Road R630 Linking N25 at Midleton to Whitegate Energy Area		Water supply upgrade.	WWTP upgrade.
	Monard	Network upgrade.	Implement SUDS Strategy	Water supply source and infrastructure.	Wastewater disposal infrastructure
	Passage West	Network upgrade.		Water supply upgrade.	Provision of Cork Lower Harbour Scheme required.
'Hub' Town	Mallow	Network upgrade.	SUDS Strategy	Water distribution network upgrade.	Foul sewer network upgrade. Foul sewer network WWTP upgrade.

Section 4 – Other Key Policy Topics

Car Parking Policy

Background

It is a requirement of the Planning & Development Acts that Development Plans include standards for car parking. The car parking standards in the current County Development Plan date from 1996 and a review is now required.

In the period since the current standards were first prepared the view has emerged that parking should not be considered as a 'standalone' issue, but should be part of a framework of integrated land use and transportation policies or measures.

This approach is reflected in the Ministerial policy document, "Smarter Travel - A Sustainable Transport Future" published by the Minister for Transport in February 2009. Whilst recognising the importance of continued investment in transport to ensure an efficient economy and continued social development, the Minister stresses the importance of developing policy to ensure that wherever possible people choose more sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport.

In order to encourage a shift to more sustainable modes of transport many authorities within Ireland and internationally have moved towards the concept of limiting parking provision, or setting a maximum level (rather than the more traditional 'minimum parking levels') in relation to particular developments. For example, as a result of this type of policy, lower 'maximum' levels are likely to be set for town centres, strategic employment areas and other areas that are more readily accessible by walking, cycling or public transport.

In Cork, many retail or employment developments in recent years are characterised by the high levels of parking provision provided on-site. This is a costly

additional expense to intending developers but is generally free-of-charge to users and facilitates increased levels of car use and generally poor levels of walking, cycling and public transport use.

The Cork Area Strategic Plan Update carried out in 2008 made a number of recommendations in relation to parking policy including:

The development of a co-ordinated Parking Policy between local authorities;

The provision of a managed supply of car parking in each urban settlement in Metropolitan Cork; and

The development of 'zone' based maximum parking standards throughout Metropolitan Cork.

Issues for the County Development Plan

The current County Development Plan parking policy seems unlikely to deliver the degree of modal shift required in Government targets and may even be encouraging greater car use and contributing to the problems of congestion that other policy initiatives and public investment programs are attempting to address.

At a strategic level, greater use of walking, cycling and public transport could be encouraged if County Development Plan parking policy was part of a range of measures to help achieve National Targets. The introduction of more progressive parking policies could be applied only in areas where walking, cycling or public transport use is already well facilitated (such as town centres) or, elsewhere, be linked to the introduction of walking, cycling and public transport alternatives so that increased modal shift does not adversely impact on the personal lives of individuals or the viability of businesses and services.

In town centres the current car parking policy requires intending developers to provide car parking spaces on

Section 4 – Other Key Policy Topics

site in locations where it may be difficult or even undesirable to do so. Developers here who cannot provide spaces are often required to pay a monetary contribution to the local authority to offset their inability to provide onsite parking. The net effect often discourages developers seeking to develop in town centre areas. A more appropriate approach would be to reframe current parking policy in line with the aims of other Government and County Council policies seeking to encourage town centre development.

In other areas, significant sustainable travel initiatives that make travel by more sustainable modes a practical option for many people have been executed or are in the planning stage for a number of areas, for example:

Re-opening of rail services to Carrigtwohill and Midleton;
Improved rail services to Cobh;
Strengthening and re-organisation of bus services in the North & South City Environs;
Douglas Land Use and Transportation Study proposals;
Development of a cycle network for Carrigaline/ Monkstown/ Passage; and
Development of Walking/ Cycle strategy/ projects

Parking Policy seeking to address these issues could be based on the following principles:

Town Centre Areas: In town centre areas the Council will not normally seek the provision of onsite car parking or a contribution in lieu of car parking where the development involves the reuse/refurbishment of an existing occupied or vacant building, any change of use or where new small scale infill developments are proposed. Larger format proposals such as large scale convenience retailing e.g. supermarkets and large scale office developments can still be required to provide onsite parking up to a maximum level.

Appropriate Parking standards: For the purpose of managing parking supply, Cork County will be divided into a number of different areas. Each area will have its own maximum parking standard set to reflect in particular the investment that has already been made in provision of public transport infrastructure, the type, accessibility and frequency of public transport provision, and the location and availability of local walking and cycling infrastructure, to facilitate the delivery of the Governments Smarter Travel policy.

Residential developments: For the purposes of residential developments, a single minimum standard will apply across the county.

Section 4 – Other Key Policy Topics



Section 5 – Environmental Assessment

This section deals with Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) and Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) processes, looks at alternative strategy approaches and assesses their impacts against a set of Environmental Protection Objectives (EPO's).

The policies and objectives contained in the Cork County Development Plan, 2015-2021 will be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA).

5.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the process by which environmental considerations are required to be fully integrated into the preparation and adoption of certain plans and programmes. The legislation relating to SEA in the Irish context may be found in SI 435 of 2004, European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 and SI 436 of 2004 Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Amendment Regulations 2011, and S.I. No. 201 of 2011, Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Amendment Regulations 2011. During the SEA process the local authority must consult with a range of designated statutory bodies. The DECLG has published guidance on the SEA Directive.

It is proposed as part of the SEA process to assess the impact on the environment of the policies and objectives to be included in the next Cork County Development Plan against the environmental protection objectives (EPO's).

An initial assessment of the environmental impacts of the various strategy scenarios was carried out to assess and identify the preferred alternative scenario on which the

principles set out in the Proposed Core Strategy in Section 3 are based.

Description of Alternative Scenarios

Introduction

The following section identifies and describes the alternative strategies considered during the preparation of this document and the preparation of the Proposed Core Strategy as part of the review of the Cork County Development Plan. Article 5 of the Strategic environmental Assessment Directive requires the consideration of "reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme" and the significant environmental effects of the alternatives selected. Alternatives must be realistic and capable of implementation.

The following broad alternatives/scenarios are reasonably distinct and provide an overview of the options available in deciding the proposed underlying strategy for the plan. In selecting realistic alternatives that could be implemented, it was considered that the scenario of "no further development" or "unconstrained development" in the County were unreasonable alternatives, as they are unlikely to be delivered and would not reflect the statutory and operational requirements of the Plan. Therefore these two scenarios were not considered as part of the initial SEA process.

During the preparation process for this document, the following 3 Scenarios of strategic population and housing growth were proposed. The level of growth proposed in these scenarios is based on the assumption that the required waste water infrastructure and water supply improvements identified by the Council will be delivered in a timely and sustainable manner subject to funding.

Section 5 – Environmental Assessment

Scenario 1 Low Urban and High Rural Growth

In this scenario a significant proportion of growth is allocated to the lower order settlements and rural areas with limited future growth allocated to the main settlements. This scenario would focus public investment in wastewater and water supply infrastructure in the smaller settlements within the County.

Advantages of Scenario 1

- The principle strength lies in the approach it takes the villages and rural areas where it targets significant population growth.

Disadvantages of Scenario 1

- Given the current economic climate and the small size of some of the settlements targeted for growth in this scenario, adequate infrastructure, would not be capable of being provided.
- This scenario would lead to inefficient provision of services and transportation patterns due to a lack of co-ordination between settlement planning, as a dispersed settlement pattern raises issues of cost inefficiencies in relation to service delivery for social services, particularly schools and health-care provision (especially in areas with an ageing population).
- The greater proportion of growth in rural housing outside the settlement network would give rise to further unsustainable commuting patterns and higher CO2 emissions caused by car dependency.
- Discharges from dwellings within smaller settlements and rural areas would largely be to septic tanks or to small scale wastewater treatment plants, which in the absence of adequate maintenance measures may give rise to groundwater pollution.

Scenario 2 Strong Urban and Medium Rural Growth

In this scenario, significant population growth is set to take place in the main settlements with lower levels of growth targeted for the villages and rural areas. In order to deliver the population and housing targets identified in this scenario significant expenditure is required in water services infrastructure in practically all of the main settlements. Scarce public investment will be directed to where its impacts are maximised.

Advantages of Scenario 2

- The principle strength of this scenario lies in the balanced approach allowing for the majority of growth to take place in the main settlements but at the same time allowing for continued more modest growth in the villages and rural areas.

Disadvantages of Scenario 2

- Given the current economic climate and the small size of some of the settlements targeted for growth in this scenario, adequate infrastructure, may not be capable of being provided.
- This scenario would still give rise to the growth of rural housing outside the settlement network which would give rise to further unsustainable commuting patterns and higher CO2 emissions caused by car dependency.
- Discharges from dwellings within smaller settlements and rural areas would largely be to septic tanks or to small scale wastewater treatment plants, which in the absence of adequate maintenance measures may give rise to groundwater pollution.

Section 5 – Environmental Assessment

Scenario 3 Very Strong Urban and Very Low Rural Growth

In this scenario most of the target growth is allocated to the main settlements with very low growth allocated to the lower order settlements and rural areas. This scenario would focus public investment in wastewater and water supply infrastructure primarily within the main settlements, thus reducing the financial burden on the Council to provide treatment facilities in all of the lower order settlements within the County.

Advantages of Scenario 3

- In this scenario, a higher proportion of population growth is targeted for the main settlements, thereby providing for the more efficient provision of infrastructure services. By targeting a significant proportion of the population growth in the main settlements, infrastructural investment can be concentrated in the main towns in order to develop attractive, efficient settlements that would act as a focal point for social, commercial and residential growth whilst servicing the surrounding rural hinterland.
- Lower levels of housing growth in rural areas would also have beneficial environmental impacts, i.e., landscape protection, reduced levels of car dependency and CO2 emissions and protection of groundwater sources / flora and fauna.

Disadvantages of Scenario 3

- Many of the main settlements do not have the necessary wastewater treatment facilities to accommodate the population targets under this Scenario. Thus it would be imperative that infrastructure would be provided in order to avoid significant environmental impacts on water quality, biodiversity and human health. However, it is unclear how this infrastructure will be provided given the current economic climate.
- This approach would not achieve a spatial balance of population distribution in the County or provide adequate support to maintain rural communities.
- Under this scenario, all growth would be channelled into main settlements with very low levels of future planned population growth in the rural areas and villages which could lead to social stagnation and population decline of these areas.

Section 5 – Environmental Assessment

Evaluation of Scenarios against Proposed Strategic Environmental Objectives

It is proposed as part of the initial SEA process to assess the impact on the environment of the alternative scenarios set out above against the following environmental protection objectives (EPO's) in order to identify the "Preferred Scenario".

Biodiversity Flora and Fauna (BFF) Protect and where appropriate, enhance biodiversity, particularly protected areas and protected species.

Population, Human Health (PHH) Improve people's quality of life based on high-quality residential, working and recreational environments and on sustainable travel patterns.

Soil (S) Protect the function and quality of the soil resource in County Cork.

Water (W) Protect and where necessary improve water quality and the management of watercourses and groundwater to comply with the standards of the Water Framework Directive objectives and measures.

Air Quality and Climate (AQ/C) Contribute to mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change and air quality issues.

Cultural Heritage (CH) Promote the protection and, where appropriate, enhance the character, diversity and special qualities of cultural including Gaeltachtaí, architectural and archaeological, heritage in County Cork.

Landscape (L) Protect and, where appropriate, enhance the character, diversity and special qualities of landscapes in County Cork.

Material Assets (MA) Make best use of existing infrastructure and promote the sustainable development of new Infrastructure.

Table 5.1 Evaluation of the Alternative Scenarios

	No likely interaction with status of EPO's	Likely to improve status of EPO's	Probable conflict with status of EPO's – unlikely to be mitigated	Potential Conflict with status of EPO's – likely to be mitigated	Uncertain interaction with status of EPO's	Neutral interaction with status of EPO's
Alt. Scenario 1 – Low Urban High Rural			BFF, PHH, S, W, AQ/C, CH, L, MA.			
Alt. Scenario 2 – High Urban & Medium Rural		BFF, PHH, S, AQ/C, CH, L, MA.		W.		
Alt. Scenario 3 – Very High Urban & Very Low Rural			W, L, MA.	PHH, S, AQ/C.	BFF, CH.	

Section 5 – Environmental Assessment

The Preferred Alternative

Having regard to planning considerations including legislation and higher order plans such as the South West Regional Planning Guidelines “Scenario 2- High Urban Medium Rural Growth” emerges as the scenario that balances environmental protection and resources conservation with economic and social development and most resembles a sustainable option for the future development of the whole County.

5.2 Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA)

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC as amended) and the Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC as amended) form the cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy. The Directives provide for the designation of sites that are important for the protection of certain habitats and species of biodiversity importance which may be threatened or vulnerable to loss at a European level.

In accordance with requirements under the EU Habitats Directive (43/92/EEC) and EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) and Section 177 of Part XAB of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010, the impacts of the policies and objectives of all statutory land use plans on these sites must be assessed as an integral part of the process of making a land use plan. This is to determine whether or not policies contained in the plan could have negative consequences for the habitats or plant and animal species for which any of these sites are designated. This assessment process is called a Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) and must be carried out for all stages of the process of making a land use plan.

To assist planning authorities, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DECLG) published Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects

in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities (2009). The European Commission also provides guidance on this topic.

The new Cork County Development Plan will be assessed in accordance with these requirements as it is developed over the coming two years.

5.3 Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)

As part of the review of the current Cork County Development Plan and in order to meet the needs of the Strategic Environmental Assessment process and the requirements of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government / Office of Public Works Guidelines, “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management” (2009), Cork County Council will carry out a county wide Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of the policies and objectives contained in the next plan. This assessment will provide a broad assessment of flood risk within the county and informed strategic land-use planning decisions.

Section 5 – Environmental Assessment



Appendix A

Strategic Planning Areas (SPA's)

Based on the approach taken in national, regional and local strategic plans, for planning strategy purposes the County is divided into four 'Strategic Sub-Areas' (see Figure 1 below) that best reflect the differing mix of socio-economic, cultural and environmental issues that define the main areas within the County. These sub-areas are:

'County Metropolitan' Strategic Planning Area: the parts of Metropolitan Cork that fall within the County Council's administrative area. It consists of the suburban areas that adjoin the City administrative area to both the north and the south and the 'Metropolitan Towns' (formerly called 'satellite towns').

'CASP Ring' Strategic Planning Area: This area is within the area of the CASP plan but lies outside Metropolitan Cork but includes Mallow, designated as a 'Hub' town by the National Spatial Strategy, and the 'Ring' Towns.

'North' Strategic Planning Area: This area includes the northern part of the area of the North & West Cork Strategic Plan.

'West' Strategic Planning Area: This area includes the western part of the area of the North & West Cork Strategic Plan.

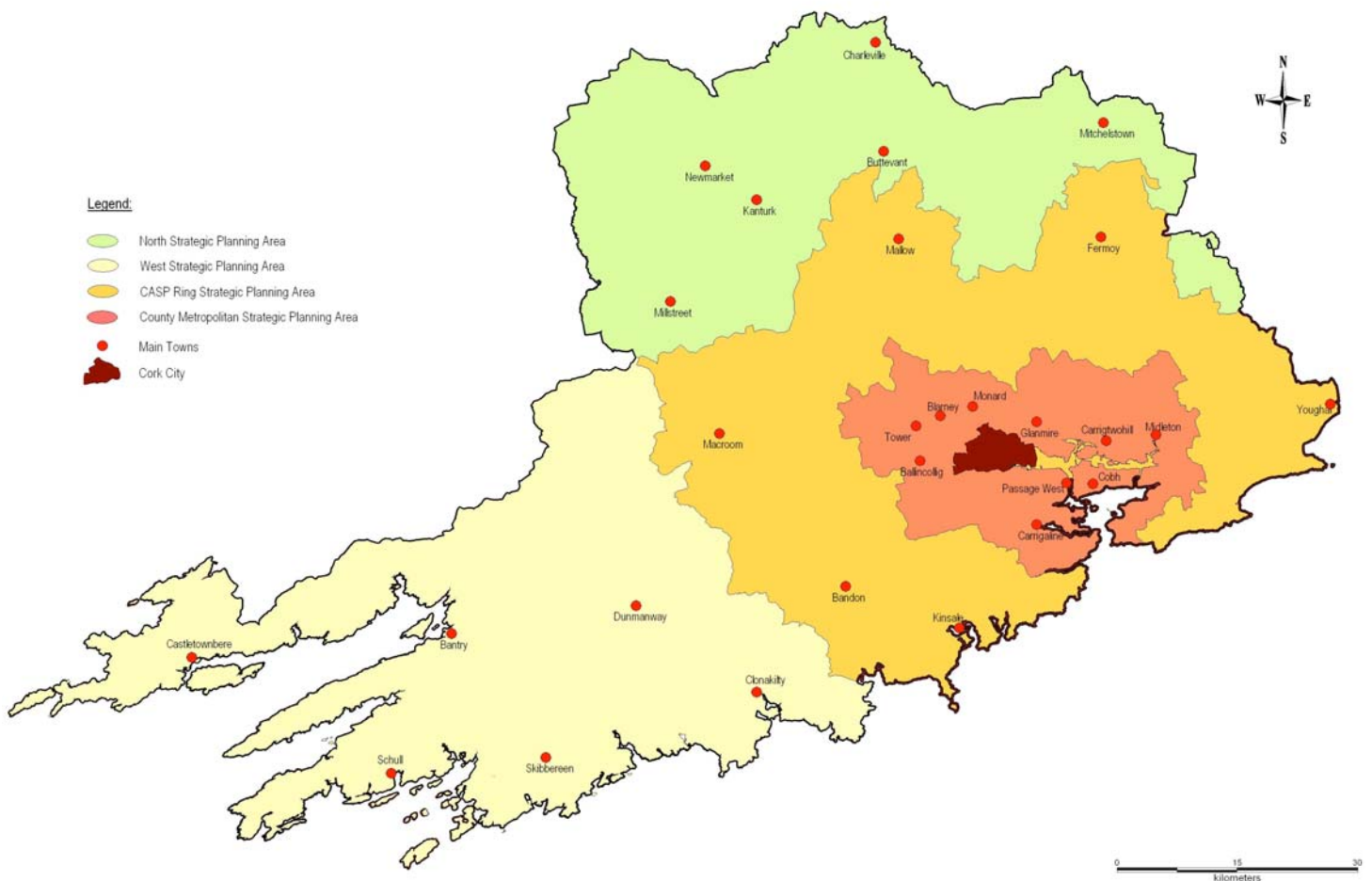


Figure 1: Strategic Planning Areas

Appendix B

Population, Households and Net New Houses for each Strategic Planning Area.

Table 1 Population, Households and Net New Houses for County Metropolitan Cork SPA to 2022						
	Census 2011	Population Target for 2022	Total New Households 2011-2022	New Units Required 2011-2022	Net Residential area zoned in CDP / LAP / TC (ha)	Total Units
Main Towns						
Cork North Environs	6,692	10,031	1,772	1,953	143.80	3,371
Monard	0	3,619	1,502	1,727	151.00	5,000
Glanmire	8,924	10,585	1,205	1,320	57.70	1,321
Blarney	2,437	7,533	2,255	2,566	92.00	2,792
Cork South Environs	32,635	31,308	1,336	1,284	93.00	1,285
Carrigaline	14,775	17,870	2,138	2,422	90.80	2,423
Passage West	5,790	6,278	537	597	33.90	929
Ballincollig	17,368	22,430	3,104	3,377	170.30	4,872
Midleton	12,001	21,576	4,667	5,243	190.11	5,255
Carrigtwohill	4,551	11,618	3,195	3,656	127.80	3,656
Cobh	12,347	14,543	1,625	1,778	72.53	1,907
Total Main Towns	117,520	157,391	23,336	25,920	1222.94	32,811
Villages						6,544
Rural						1,672
Total Villages and Rural	52,989	56,500	4,519	5,115	N/A	8,216
Total County Metropolitan	170,509	213,891	27,855	31,036	1222.94	41,027

Appendix B

Table 2: Population, Households and Net New Houses for CASP Ring SPA to 2022

	Census 2011	Population Target for 2022	Total New Households 2011-2022	New Units Required 2011-2022	Net Residential area zoned in CDP / LAP / TC (ha)	Total Units
Main Towns						
Bandon	6,640	7,765	851	892	91.84	1,766
Fermoy	6,489	7,589	831	938	94.56	1,601
Kinsale	4,893	5,722	627	714	39.80	856
Macroon	3,879	4,536	497	468	60.9	1,184
Mallow	11,605	20,000	4,154	4,552	339.93	6,961
Youghal	7,794	9,115	999	1,037	78.60	1,955
Total Main Towns	41,300	54,727	7,958	8,602	705.63	14,323
Villages						3,231
Rural						2,430
Total Villages and Rural	77,118	77,155	4,472	4,805	N/A	5,661
Total CASP Ring	118,418	131,882	12,430	13,407	705.63	19,984
Total County CASP	288,927	345,773	40,286	44,442	1953.27	61,011
Total CASP	408,157	495,773	58,078	64,475	2157.27	75,541



Appendix B

Table 3: Population, Households and Net New Houses for North SPA

	Census 2011	Population Target for 2022	Total New Households 2011-2022	New Units Required 2011-2022	Net Residential area zoned in CDP / LAP / TC (ha)	Total Units
Main Towns						
Buttevant	945	1,501	285	298	31.50	482
Charleville	3,646	4,925	741	804	72.50	1,124
Kanturk	2,263	2,400	188	141	29.20	329
Millstreet	1,574	1,756	166	177	23.80	475
Mitchelstown	3,677	5,346	905	1,041	79.60	1,293
Newmarket	988	1,189	141	155	24.90	345
Total Main Towns	13,093	17,117	2,426	2,614	261.50	4,048
Villages						1,384
Rural						1,710
Total Villages and Rural	37,405	38,895	2,780	3,074	N/A	3,094
Total CASP Ring	50,498	56,012	5,206	5,688	261.50	7,142

Appendix B

Table 4: Population, Households and Net New Houses for the West SPA

	Census 2011	Population Target for 2022	Total New Households 2011-2022	New Units Required 2011-2022	Net Residential area zoned in CDP / LAP / TC (ha)	Total Units
Main Towns						
Bantry	3,348	5,484	1,080	1,242	103.85	1,393
Castletownbere	912	1,439	271	309	37.75	443
Clonakilty	4,721	7,218	1,309	1,500	94.53	1,600
Dunmanway	1,585	1,976	254	273	36.84	593
Schull	658	748	75	87	12.60	205
Skibbereen	2,670	3,035	306	332	75.33	1,300
Total Main Towns	13,894	19,900	3,295	3,741	360.90	5,534
Villages						2,167
Rural						2,015
Total Villages and Rural	46,483	48,937	3,705	4,130	N/A	4,182
West	60,377	68,837	7,000	7,327	360.90	9,716

Appendix C

Settlement Network

	Settlements	Strategic Aim
Cork Gateway	<p><i>City Environs</i> (North and South),</p> <p><i>Metropolitan Towns</i> (Monard, Glanmire, Blarney, Carrigaline, Passage West, Ballincollig, Middleton, Carrigtwohill, Cobh)</p>	<p>Growth in population and employment so that the Cork Gateway can compete effectively for investment and growth.</p> <p>Develop to complement & consolidate the development of the city as a whole and providing enhanced potential to rebalance the City through new development in the north.</p> <p>Critical population growth, service and employment centres within the Cork "Gateway", providing high levels of community facilities and amenities with high quality and integrated public transport connections</p>
Hub Town	Mallow*	Develop as a major integrated employment centre so that it fulfils its role at regional and county level.
Ring Towns	Bandon, Fermoy, Kinsale, Macroom, Youghal	To provide a better balance of development throughout the CASP area, and fulfil their economic and potential as quality urban centres providing
County Towns	<p><i>North</i>(Buttevant, Charleville, Kanturk, Millstreet, Mitchelstown, Newmarket)</p> <p><i>West</i>(Bantry, Castletownbere, Clonakilty**, Dunmanway, Schull, Skibbereen)</p>	To provide a better balance of development between each town and its rural hinterland and fulfil their role as economic and employment centres providing for the needs of their extensive rural hinterlands.

*Mallow is also considered to be a Ring Town

** Clonakilty is also designated as having an "Enhanced Employment Function with a regional focus".

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