

Blarney-Kilbarry Special Local Area Plan - 2005



Cork County Council

**Cork Suburban Rail Network
Special Local Area Plans**



Blarney – Kilbarry Special Local Area Plan

This Special Local Area Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). It is one of three Special Local Area Plans prepared to guide development at important locations along the Blarney – Midleton rail corridor. Local Area Plans were also prepared for each of the 10 Electoral Areas in County Cork.
It should also be noted that where indicative diagrams are included in the plan these are for illustrative purposes only and the map entitled 'Zoning Map' is the official legal map.

Schedule

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Containing</u>
No. 1	September, 2005	Adopted Blarney-Kilbarry Special Local Area Plan

FOREWORD

Note From The Mayor

The adoption of these Special Local Area Plans is a significant milestone in the joint efforts of the County Council and Iarnród Éireann to secure the establishment of a suburban rail network for Cork. They also follow an extensive process of public consultation with a broad range of interested individuals, groups and organisations who put forward their views and ideas on the future development of this area and how future challenges should be tackled.

We in the Council have built on these ideas, suggestions and local knowledge in formulating the Special Local Area Plans, which establish a location for both the railway stations and future development providing a critical mass in each of these settlements. This has been achieved with the encouragement and expertise of our planners in the Planning Policy Section and with the support of the County Manager and his other officials.

The end result, I believe, is a series of Special Local Area Plans that set out a clear and shared vision for the future sustainable development of the suburban rail corridor serving Metropolitan Cork.

Cllr. Michael Creed
Mayor of the County of Cork

September 2005

Note From The Manager

The framework established by the Cork Area Strategic Plan, County Development Plan 2003, and the Feasibility Study commissioned by Iarnród Éireann guides these Special Local Area Plans. They form a critical part of our sustainable rail network for Cork because they ensure that future population will be focused in the hinterland of the new rail stations

The Plans are the outcome of a lengthy process of public consultation and engagement by the Elected Members of Council.

I wish to express my appreciation to the Mayor and Members of the Council, to the officials of the Council who worked on and contributed to the preparation of the plans and to the very large number of the general public who engaged in the consultation process and expressed their views. All have contributed to the formulation of a series of Special Local Area Plans of which we can all be proud.

The Statutory Procedures for the re-opening of the railway will begin in 2006 and the reopened line is hoped to be operational by Autumn 2008. I am confident that this project will make an important contribution to the sustainable growth and development of the county as a whole into the future.

Maurice Moloney,
Cork County Manager

September 2005

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Section 1

Introduction to the Blarney – Kilbarry Special Local Area Plan

1.1 The Need for this Special Local Area Plan

Overall Aim

1.1.1. This Special Local Area Plan has been prepared to establish an agreed development framework for the rail corridor from Blarney to the edge of the Cork City Council area at Kilbarry that will guide new development to take advantage of the proposals to establish a suburban rail network for Cork including the opening of new railway stations on this section of the route. The plan will augment the County Development Plan 2003 looking forward to the year 2020.

Planning Context

1.1.2. The proposals for the development of the Cork Suburban Rail Network have emerged from the Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP). This establishes a strategic planning framework up to the year 2020 and was adopted by the City, County and Town Councils in 2001. CASP is a vision for the Cork area as a whole shared by the County, City and Town Councils. It sets out a broad-brush strategy guiding the general direction and scale of growth for the Cork area as a whole.

1.1.3. An important element of CASP is the proposal to develop a major growth corridor in the northern and eastern part of Metropolitan Cork between Blarney and Midleton to be served by the suburban rail network. This will be a major engine for future economic growth by reducing congestion, particularly to the south and west of the city, and helping achieve greater social inclusion by improving access to public transport, jobs and services, amenities and a wider range of housing.

1.1.4. The County Council has begun to implement CASP through the County Development Plan 2003 (including any subsequent variations). This came into effect in February 2003 and will be in force until 2009. It establishes a more detailed policy framework to guide the development of the county broadly in accordance with the strategic plan.

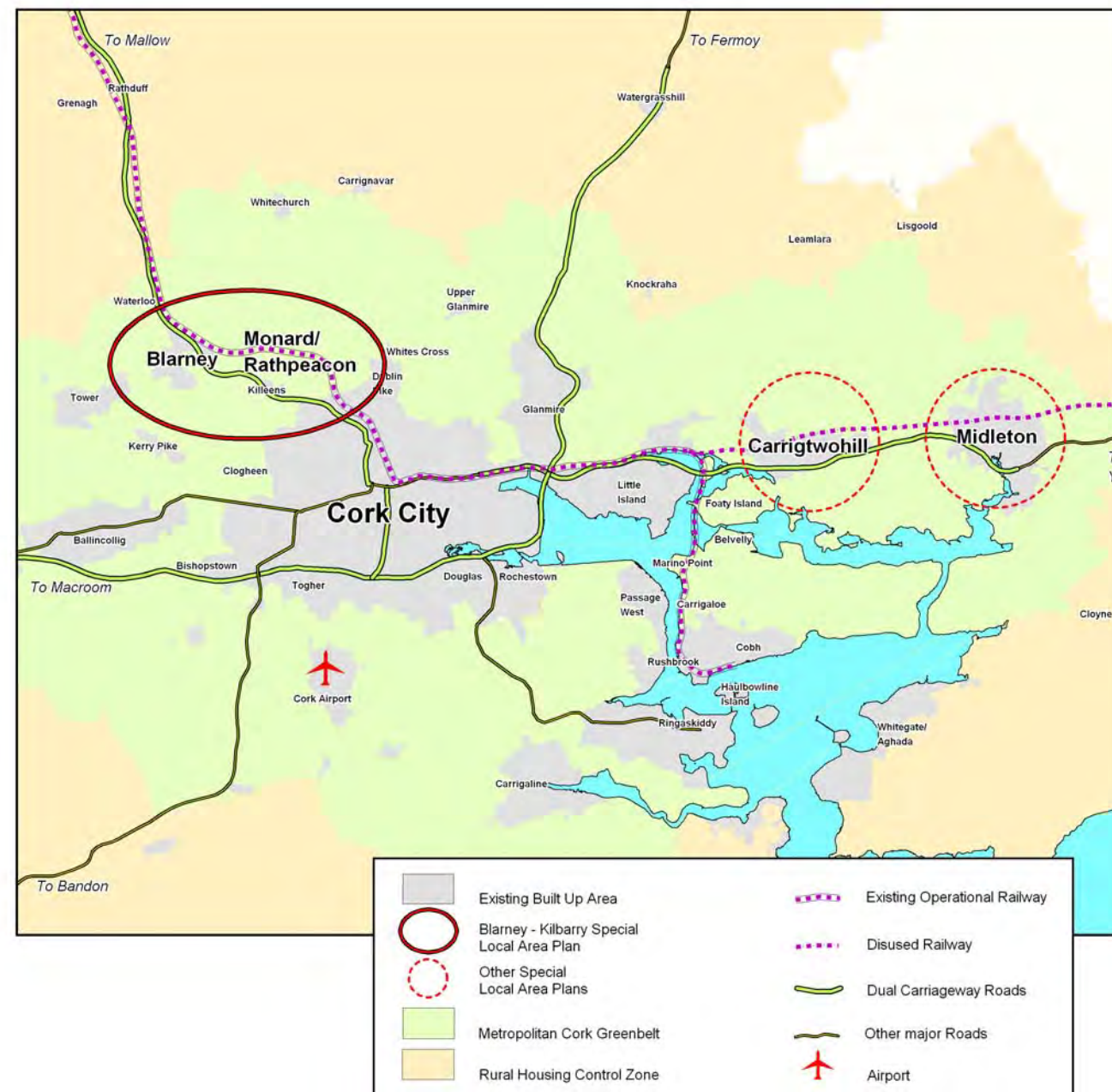


FIGURE 1.1: STRATEGIC CONTEXT

1.1.5. However, at the time the County Development Plan 2003 was prepared, the practical and economic feasibility of the Cork Suburban Rail Network concept had not been fully examined and tested and it was considered premature for the County Development Plan 2003 to include proposals for the full extent of development along the rail corridor. Instead, the County Development Plan 2003 gave a commitment to address these outstanding issues through the preparation of three special local area plans once the feasibility study was satisfactorily complete.

1.1.6. These three Special Local Area Plans will concentrate on future development near the railway stations in:

- Carrigtwohill;
- Midleton; and
- Along the rail corridor between the city boundary at Kilbarney and Blarney focussing on the new stations at Blarney and Monard.

1.1.7. The County Council have also prepared Local Area Plans for all 10 of the Electoral Areas that make up the county. These plans are intended to concentrate on the planning issues arising in the villages, smaller settlements and rural areas and will not address the urban area of Blarney and the proposed new settlement of Monard which are addressed in this plan.

Cork Suburban Rail Feasibility Study

1.1.8. The current proposals for the Cork Suburban Rail Network have been developed in consultation with the Department of Public Enterprise, the County and City Councils and Iarnród Éireann who have commissioned a feasibility study into the proposals. This study, undertaken by consultants Faber Maunsell, was published in April 2003, and made strong recommendations in favour of the project. The proposals are included in Iarnród Éireann's medium term rail investment programme.

1.1.9. The first phase of investment in the recommended option for the rail project is scheduled for completion by 2008 and will include:

- Cobh-Cork service intensified to a half-hourly service and extended to Mallow;
- The re-opening of the line to Midleton and a 30 minute interval service introduced to/from Cork;
- New stations at Blarney, Carrigtwohill, Dunkettle, Kilbarney and Midleton;
- A half hourly service pattern established across the network; and

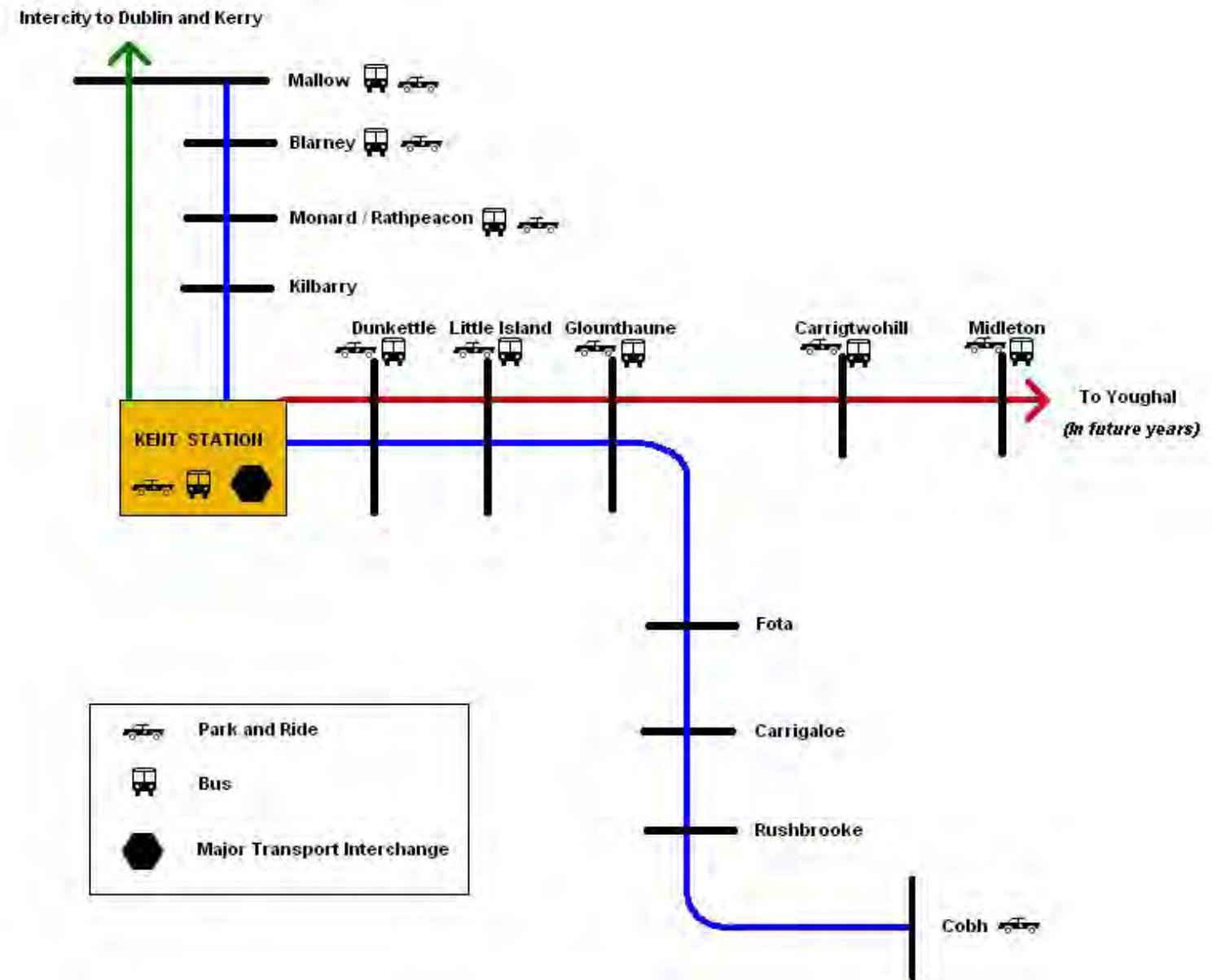


FIGURE 1.2: PROPOSED CORK SUBURBAN RAIL NETWORK

- A new concourse area at Kent station would be constructed on its' western side.

1.1.10. As demand grows, the study anticipates that a second tranche of investment will be required, probably sometime between 2013 and 2016. This will consist of the purchase of additional rolling stock to cater for increasing demand and the extension of

certain station car parks. In addition, the construction of a new station at Monard will be timed to coincide with the first phase of the major development in the area. The study indicated that the proposals to provide new stations at Ballynoe, Midleton West and Carrigtwohill West were not justified as part of the initial programme.

1.1.11. The feasibility study highlights the close linkage between the success of the Cork Area Strategic Plan land use strategy and the rail proposals and emphasises the importance of their being progressed

in tandem. The viability of the proposed investment in the rail network is contingent on the full implementation of the provisions of the Cork Area Strategic Plan in relation to land uses and that the development of station hinterlands needs to occur in anticipation of the commencement of the new rail services.

1.2 Main Planning Goals

1.2.1. So that the CASP vision for both 'Metropolitan Cork' and the Blarney-Kilbarry rail corridor can be attained, it is important to secure the achievement of the following main planning goals;

- *Facilitate the development of the Cork Suburban Rail Network broadly in line with the proposals set out in the feasibility study commissioned by Iarnród Éireann and published in April 2003;*
- *Facilitate new development broadly in line with the proposals set out in CASP;*
- *Create a sustainable development pattern that encourages increased use of the proposed rail network and quality bus corridors integrated with it and reduces dependence on the private car and road based commuting;*
- *Secure an enhanced quality of life for all, based on high quality residential, working and recreational environments and sustainable transportation patterns;*
- *Develop sustainable patterns of growth in urban and rural areas that are well balanced with the timely and efficient provision of social and physical infrastructure;*
- *Secure sustainable and balanced economic investment together with wise management of the environmental and cultural assets; and*
- *Achieve the responsible guardianship of the County so that it can be handed on to future generations in a healthy state.*

1.3 The Process that has been Followed

1.3.1. It has been the County Council's intention that the plan-making process be conducted in accordance with the Planning and Development Acts and in a spirit of openness and transparency so that there should be a broad consensus of support for the main objectives amongst the public, community groups, developers and others.

1.3.2. Cork County Council initiated the preparation of all three of the Special Local Area Plans that relate to the development of new station hinterlands in June 2003. On 21st May 2004 the Minister for Transport, Seamus Brennan TD, announced that the Government had approved

the plans for the new and regular commuter service between Cork and Midleton and for the enhanced services between Mallow and Cork, including the construction of a new station at Blarney. He stated that passenger services would commence in the year 2007.

What the public said

1.3.3. The Planning & Development Acts require planning authorities to "take whatever steps it considers necessary to consult the public" before preparing a local area plan. These steps may include consultations with local residents, public sector agencies, non-governmental agencies, local community groups and commercial and business interests within the area.

1.3.4. In this case it was decided to undertake an extensive period of consultation before preparing the first draft of the plan. As relatively large-scale development was likely to be proposed in the plan, it was considered important to take into account a wide spectrum of opinion from the public and all the stakeholder groups. The aim was to achieve a good measure of consensus before the draft proposals were published.

1.3.5. The main steps in this process were as follows:

- *An initial advertisement was placed in the press on 7th June 2003 announcing the Council's intention to prepare a discussion paper on the distribution of population growth along the rail corridor and inviting comments;*
- *The discussion paper setting out proposals for the distribution of growth along the rail corridor was published on 18th July 2003. A copy of which was sent to the key stakeholder bodies;*
- *Also on 18th July 2003, a second advertisement was placed announcing that the discussion paper on the distribution of population growth was available and again inviting comments; and*
- *On Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th November 2003 a public exhibition was held at the Blarney Park Hotel and the Commons Bar to explain the background to this Special Local Area Plan. All the exhibition material was made available for an extended period on the County Council's web site. Following the exhibitions, the County Council invited those interested to make their views known, if possible by 5th December 2003.*

1.3.6. A total of 108 informal submissions were received in relation to all three of the Special Local Area Plans relating to the Cork Suburban Rail Project.

1.3.7. On 10th of January 2005, the Council published the Draft Special Local Area Plan and gave formal notice of its intention to prepare the plan. The public were invited to make submissions and

observations up to the 21st of February 2005. A total of 84 submissions were received that were relevant to the draft plan.

1.3.8. After giving consideration to the County Managers Report on the submissions received the County Council resolved to amend the draft plan by proposing 34 material changes to it. These were published on 6th of June 2005 and the public were again invited to make submissions and observations.

1.3.9. A total of 13 submissions or observations were received and after considering the County Managers Report, the County Council resolved to amend the Draft Plan by incorporating (with modifications) the 34 changes proposed.

1.3.10. Subject to this amendment the plan was made and came into effect on the 6th of September, 2005.



FIGURE 1.3 PUBLIC EXHIBITION EVENTS

1.4 The Form and Content of the Plan

1.4.1. This plan consists of a single document that includes both a written statement and relevant illustrative material including maps and plans. Following this introductory section, there are seven main sections that follow. These are:

- **Overall Strategy:** This section assesses the overall development strategy for the Blarney-Midleton Rail Corridor that is put forward in CASP and from this establishes the scale and nature of growth that the plan must provide for;
- **Planning Context:** This section describes the main physical characteristics of the town and the planning objectives and policies that apply to them;
- **Strategic Planning Issues:** This section highlights the main strategic issues or questions facing Blarney and the proposed new settlement at Monard if they are to grow in line with the CASP strategy and make the best use of the new rail facilities planned;
- **Land Use Proposals – The New Settlement at Monard:** This section discusses the options for locating the proposed new settlement in the area near the proposed new railway station for Monard/Rathpeacon;
- **Land Use Proposals for the Blarney Area:** This section sets out the main land use proposals for Blarney;
- **Infrastructure –** This section sets out further information on the funding and implementation of the major infrastructure and community facilities projects identified in the plan;
- **Land-use Summary –**This section provides a summary of the land-use proposals set out in this plan.

Compliance with The County Development Plan 2003

1.4.2. As required by the Planning and Development Acts, the Special Local Area Plan is in compliance with the CDP 2003 (as varied).

Making the Plan

1.4.3. Once this special local area plan is made and in force the Planning and Development Acts place an **obligation** on both planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála to have regard to its provisions when

considering applications for planning permission. The plan may remain in force for **up to** six years following the date on which it is made after which it will be the subject of a formal review.

1.5 Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.5.1. The Planning and Development Acts require planning authorities to include in their plans information on 'the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan'. This requirement was in anticipation of the implementation of the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) that applies to all plans or programmes for which the first formal preparatory action is taken on or after 21st of July 2004.

1.5.2. The preparation of the local area plans and special local area plans had commenced before the 21st of July, 2004 and therefore the Directive and subsequent 'Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities' (2004) issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government do not apply.

Section 2 Overall Strategy

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1. This section assesses the overall development strategy for the Blarney – Midleton Rail Corridor that is put forward in Cork Area Strategic Plan and from this establishes the scale and nature of future development in the rail corridor from Blarney to the Cork City Council boundary at Kilbarry that the plan must provide for.

2.2 Population & Housing Growth in the Rail Corridor from Blarney to Midleton

General Strategy

2.2.1. It is an important aim of CASP to redress imbalances in the historic pattern of development around Cork. It proposes a spatial development pattern consolidating existing developed areas to the west and south of the city, whilst developing the potential of areas to the north and east. It sets out to achieve this by maximising the use of the rail corridor that is already in place, and using it as a catalyst for the development of a fully integrated public transport system.

2.2.2. For this strategy to be successful, the location of new development must be close to the rail system. New stations are proposed at Carrigtwohill, Midleton, Blarney and in later years, Monard/Rathpeacon. These areas will be the focus of a significant amount of this development.

Population Trends and Forecasts

2.2.3. CASP also sets out detailed forecasts for both population and household growth for the period 2000 – 2020. Not only is the population of the CASP study area projected to rise by some 95,000 people during the 20-year period, but also the average size of each household is projected to fall from 3.1 persons to 2.65 persons in the same period.

2.2.4. Preliminary results from the 2002 Census suggest that whilst actual population growth recorded in the first two years of the CASP period is a little below the level predicted, average household size has fallen more rapidly. The outcome is that the number of new households that have formed during the first two years of the CASP period is close to the number predicted and, therefore, the 2002

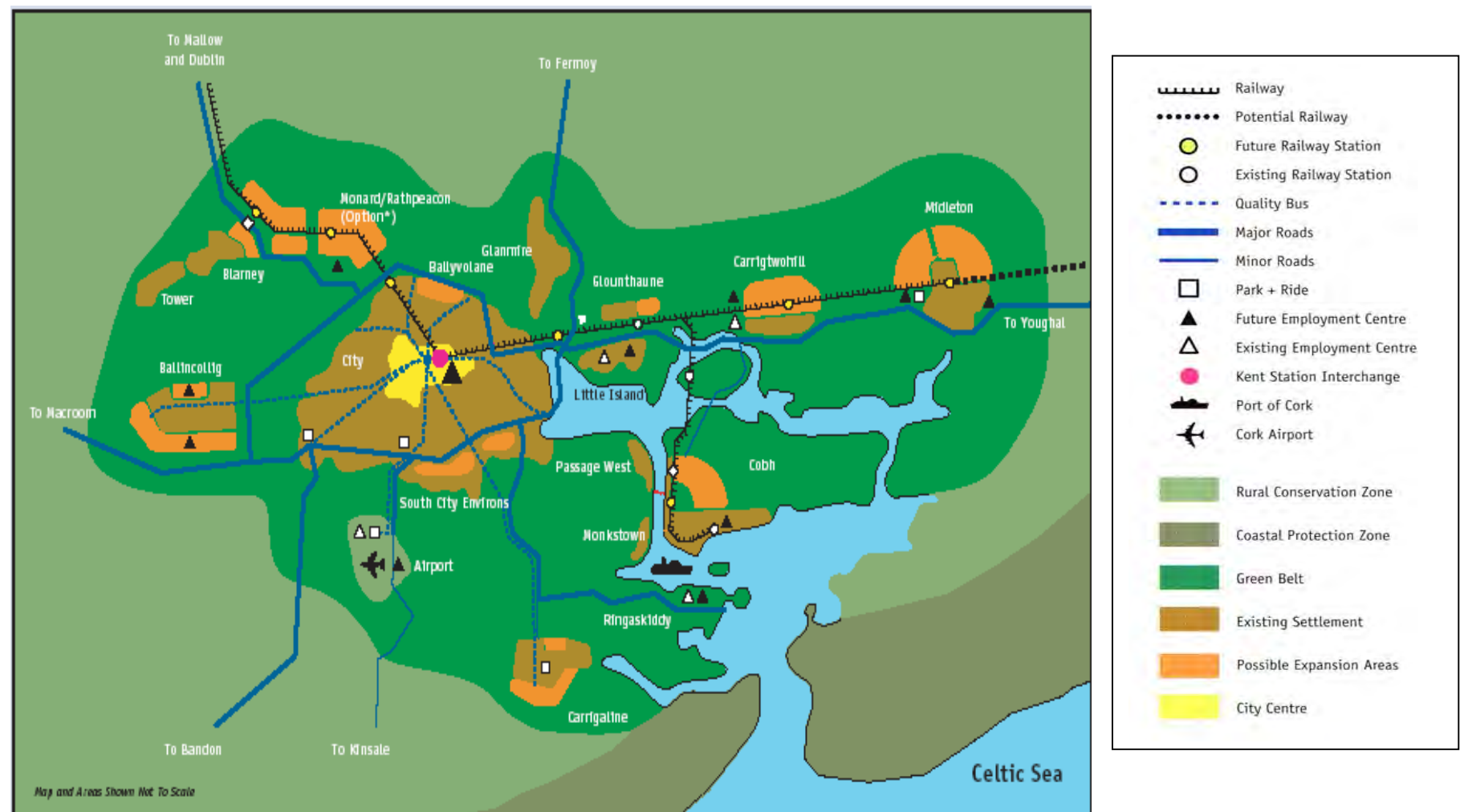


FIGURE 2.1: CASP STRATEGIC DIAGRAM
(SOURCE: CORK AREA STRATEGIC PLAN 2001 PP.32)

Census results are unlikely to challenge the forecasts for housing demand set out in CASP.

2.2.5. CASP also emphasises the importance of phasing the implementation of new development. The plan itself includes an indicative framework for this rather than a rigid timetable. The suggested programme is divided into three broad development ‘tranches’ generally corresponding to the following target dates:

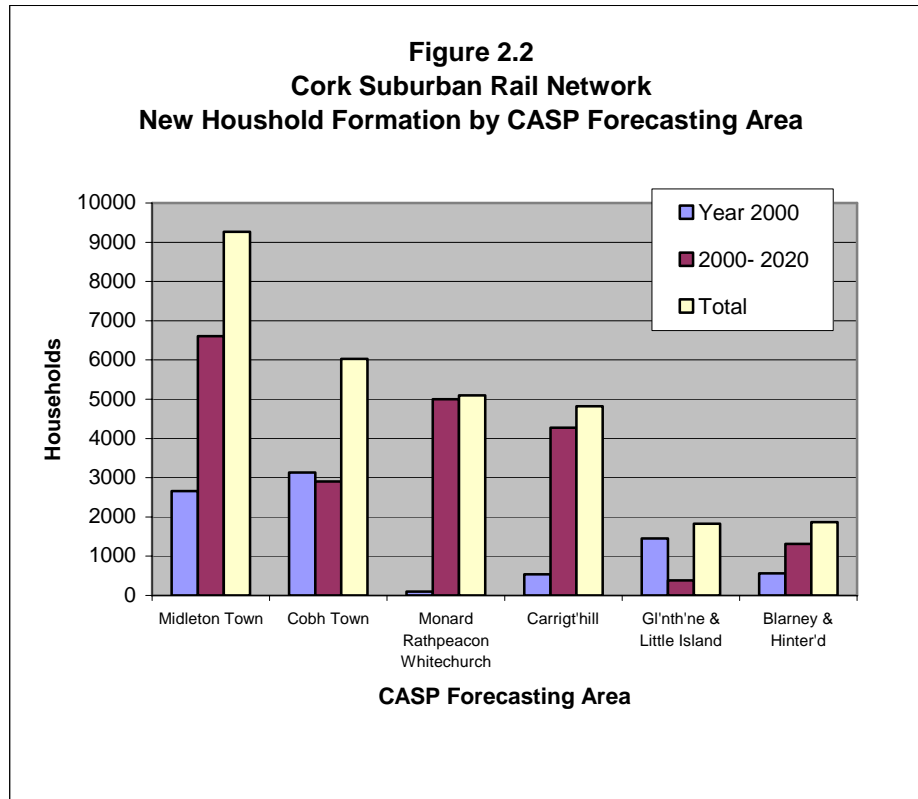
- **Tranche 1: 2001 – 2006;**
- **Tranche 2: 2007 – 2013;**
- **Tranche 3: 2014 – 2020.**

2.2.6. Also, CASP suggests that additional development may occur as a result of the possible redirection of certain high growth employment sectors to Cork arising from the implementation of the National Spatial Strategy. This additional growth is referred to as “Tranche 1 Plus” or “T1+”. Precisely when this additional potential growth will occur is not certain, but the strategic plan suggests that it may occur about the end of Tranche 1 (i.e. in the years 2006 or 2007).

New Housing

2.2.7. Based on these forecasts, CASP suggests that 32,870 additional houses are required in Metropolitan Cork. The graph below summarises the distribution proposed for new households focussing

on locations within the Blarney – Midleton/Cobh rail corridor. The information is expressed in terms of the statistical areas used in CASP for forecasting purposes and these are shown in figure 2.2 below. Of all the rail corridor locations, the Monard/Rathpeacon area is intended to grow during the CASP period to become the third largest centre of population outside Cork City on the Suburban rail Network.



2.2.8. Figure 2.3 shows the forecasting areas adopted by CASP for this part of the rail corridor. In addition to the towns of Blarney and the Monard/Rathpeacon area this also includes Kerry Pike, Tower, Whitechurch, and part of North Environs to Cork City.

2.2.9. In this plan, in order to forecast growth trends in the town of both Blarney and that for the Monard/Rathpeacon area, an assumption has been made regarding the quantum of growth that will occur in the other locations that were included in the CASP forecasting areas. Figure 2.6 shows the distribution of growth between these locations and the other settlements in the forecasting area that has been assumed in this plan.

2.2.10. Figures 2.4 & 2.5 show the breakdown of new housing required in the rail station hinterlands areas across the three phases of development proposed in CASP ("T1+" has been included in "T1").

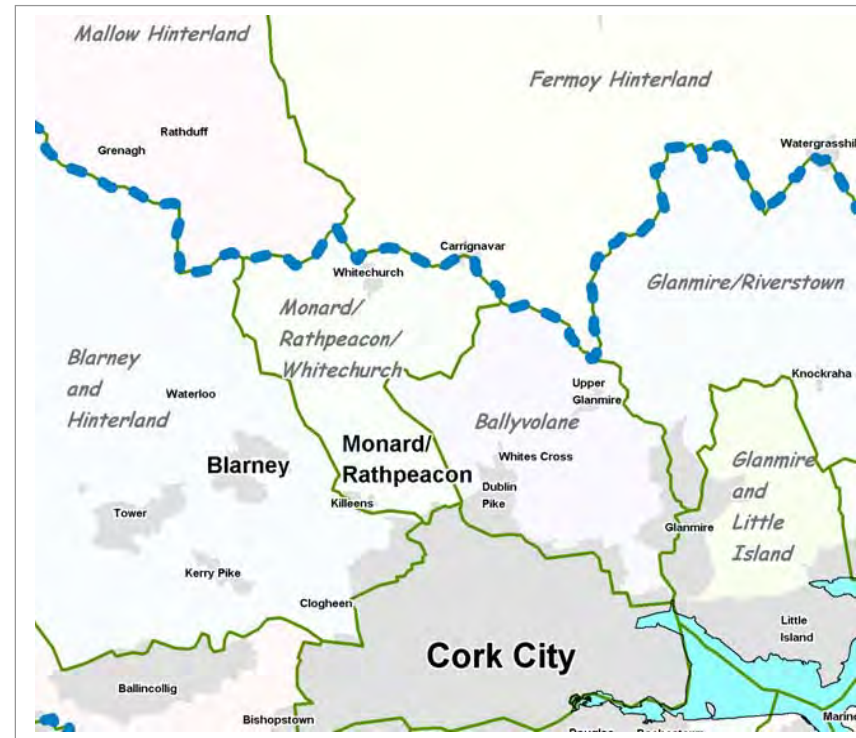
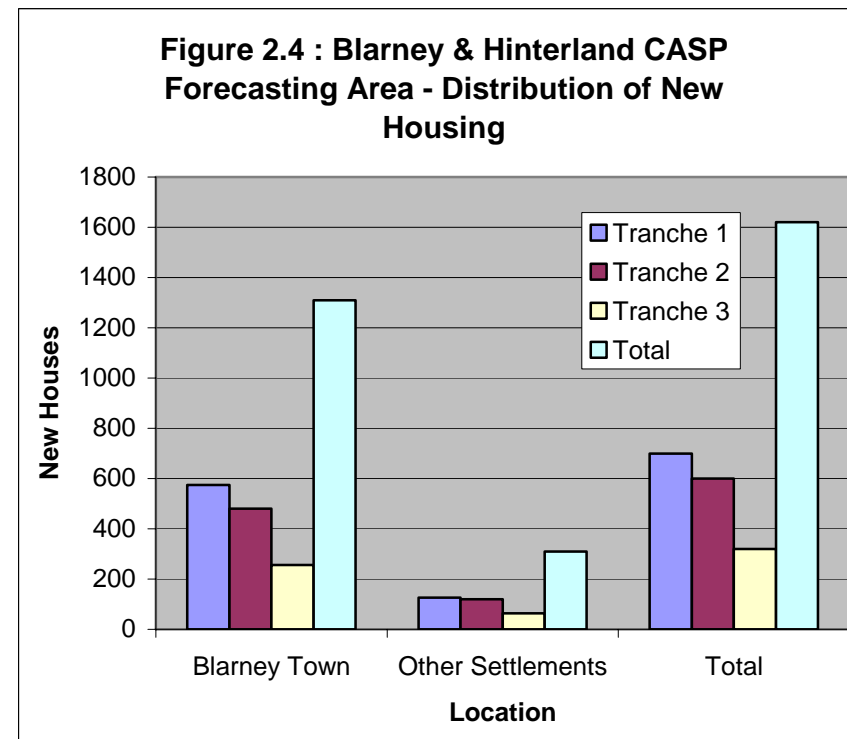
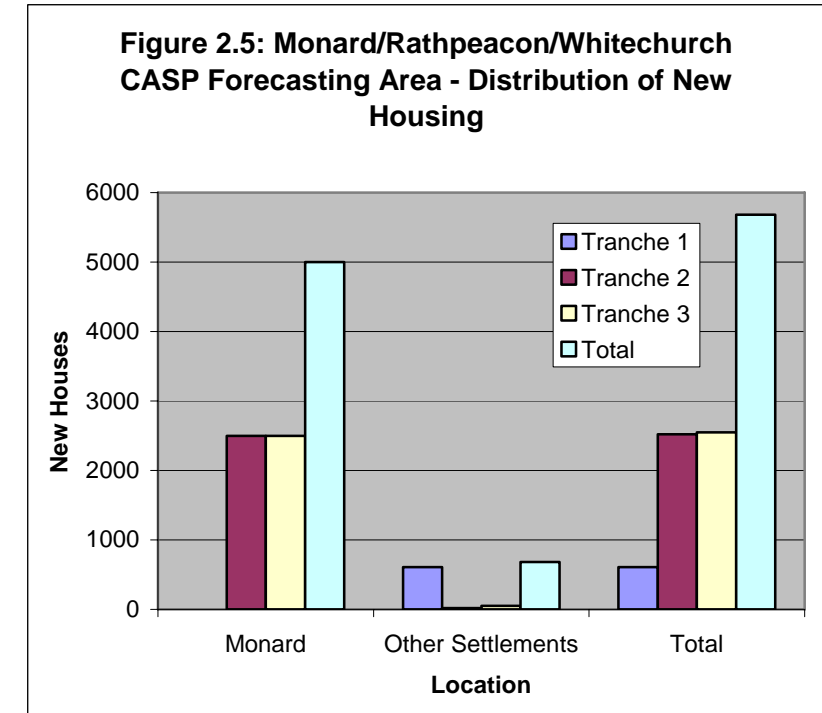


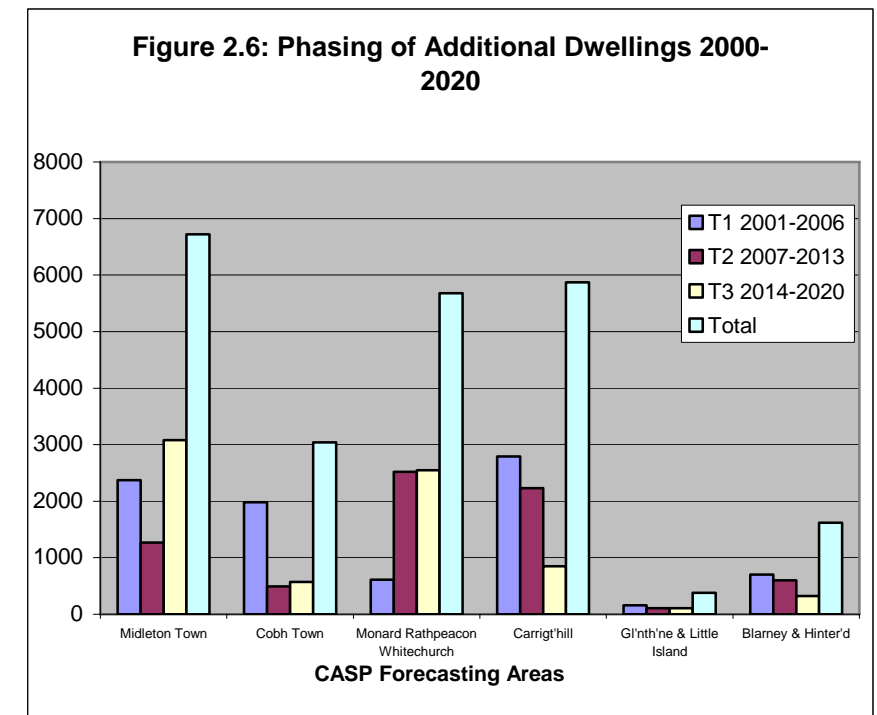
FIGURE 2.3 CASP FORECASTING AREAS (SOURCE: CORK AREA STRATEGIC PLAN 2001 PP.32)



N.B.: "T1+" is included within "T1". "Other Settlements" include: Berrings, Dripsey, Kerry Pike, Matehy, Tower) and the rural areas.



N.B.: "T1+" is included within "T1". "Other Settlements" include Killeens, Whitechurch and the rural areas.

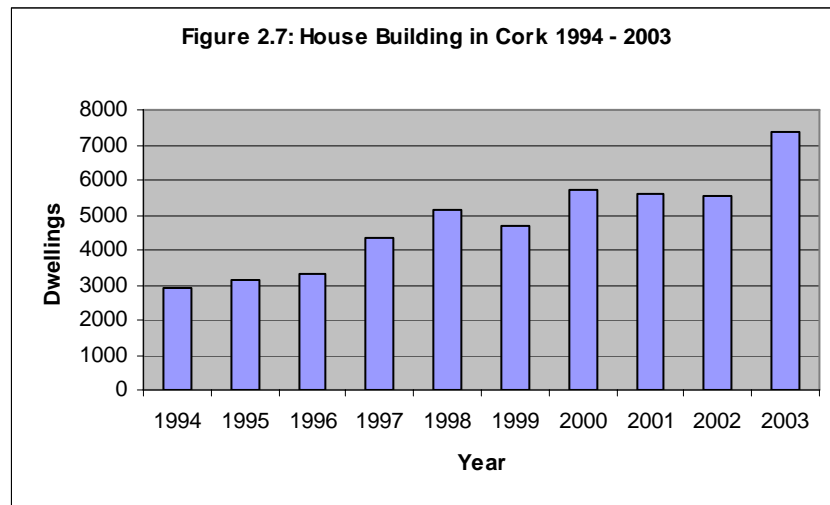


2.2.11. It should be noted that, occasionally, land has been zoned in the past in locations that are no longer considered consistent with the CASP strategy (e.g. in locations that are relatively remote from the proposed railway stations).

2.2.12. If the benefits of the Suburban Rail Network are to be realised, a critical mass of population needs to be developed in the catchment area of the proposed stations. To achieve this, development must be encouraged in the short term in the most appropriate locations to assist the implementation of the rail project. This may result in consideration being given to the designation of additional land for development that, when land brought forward from the previous plan is taken into account, results in the total land supply exceeding that necessary to maintain current building rates through the remainder of the period of the current development plan.

2.3 House Building Trends

2.3.1. In recent years the pace of house building in Cork has accelerated dramatically. The rise in annual completions from just less than 3,000 in 1994 to over 7,000 in 2003 is summarised in Figure 2.7.

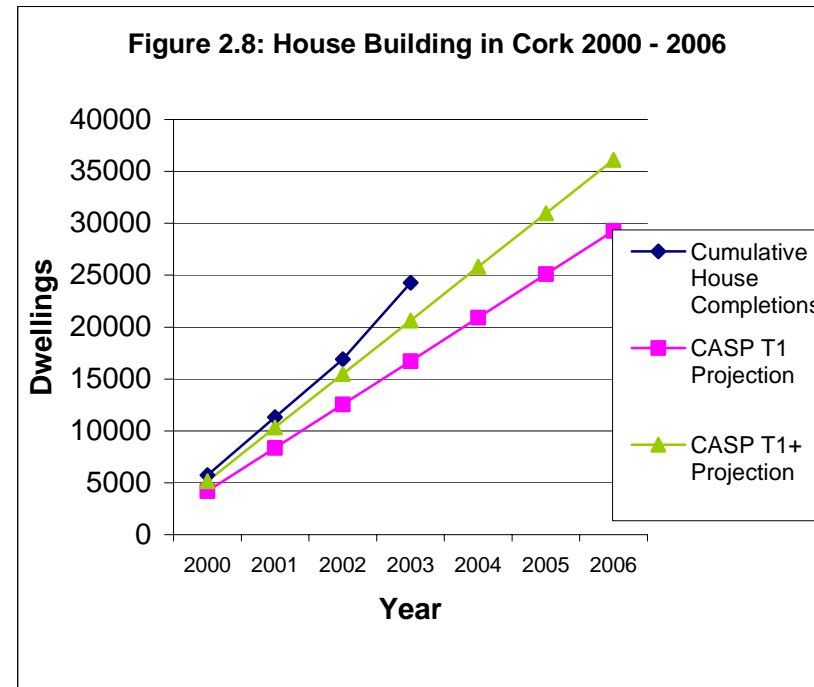


Source: Annual Housing Statistics Bulletin, Department of the Environment and Local Government. Includes Cork City and Town Council areas.

2.3.2. When these actual house completions are compared to the projected growth in new housing suggested in both CASP and the North & West Cork Strategic Plan, there is evidence to show that the quantum of new houses completed in the county as a whole since the year 2000 is significantly in excess of the growth projections on which those strategic plans were based. Indeed, although it is still relatively early in the CASP period as a whole, it would appear that the housing

growth being delivered by the industry locally is even exceeding the higher-level growth figures (referred to as "T1+" in CASP) that assumed a national redistribution of growth based on the National Spatial Strategy.

2.3.3. Figure 2.8 shows the cumulative total of new houses built in County Cork as a whole since the year 2000 compared with the combined projections of the two strategic plans.



Source: Annual Housing Statistics Bulletin, Department of the Environment and Local Government. Includes Cork City and Town Council areas. N.B.: Projections are based on mid-year estimates. Completions are based on year-end returns.

2.3.4. From the strategic point of view, this degree of divergence from the projections on which current development plans are based is not considered to be a major cause for concern. The cyclical nature of national and international economic trends, the similar characteristic in the domestic housing market and demographic factors may result in a moderation in the growth of new house completion rates in the coming years. In any event, CASP itself suggests that growth over the period up to the year 2020 will be more concentrated on the early years of that period than the latter.

2.3.5. If Metropolitan Cork is to be the engine driving the future economic growth of the region as a whole, it is important that at no stage should a shortage of housing land be permitted to restrain the regions' natural economic growth rate. However, this does not mean that it will be appropriate to relax the CASP strategy of consolidating (or restraining growth in) the existing settlements to the south and

west of the city. Rather, the pressure to increase the supply of land suitable for housing should be met by encouraging this development into the rail corridor between Blarney and Midleton

2.3.6. These special local area plans create the opportunity to direct this somewhat higher than anticipated level of housing growth towards appropriate locations along the rail corridor from Blarney to Midleton offering the opportunity for future residents to benefit from the transport choice that will be available there. Encouraging substantial growth along this corridor, taking account of the rate of actual housing completions in recent years and rather than slavishly following the CASP projections, will reinforce the CASP strategy to rebalance the city from the south and west to the north and east.

2.3.7. The special local area plans for Carrigtwohill and Midleton bring forward substantial areas of new land suitable for residential development. In the main, these areas have convenient access to the new railway stations proposed in those towns, and the land has been brought forward, in addition to the zonings made in earlier plans, in order to give opportunities for development to refocus itself on the areas with best access to the stations. The aim has been to ensure that all the land necessary to fully implement the CASP 20-year population projections for these towns is identified in the plans.

2.3.8. This special local area plan for the Blarney – Kilbarry rail corridor faces somewhat different challenges. It aims to establish a framework to enable the development of a new settlement of 5,000 dwellings at Monard. This project is intended to be the major engine for new housing development in the latter part of the CASP period. CASP itself envisaged that the new housing from this project might begin to be delivered in 2008. However, current indications are that a significantly longer time-scale will be necessary to adequately complete the complex planning and design process that is an essential precursor to the development. It is envisaged that new housing at Monard is unlikely to start being delivered until 2012 – 2014. As a result, a substantial element of the development may not be completed until after the end of the CASP period in 2020.

2.3.9. The complexities of the new settlement proposal at Monard and the protracted timescale necessary for its proper planning and implementation are a threat to the implementation of the CASP strategy in the rail corridor north of Cork. If the population growth projected for the area along the rail corridor north of Cork by CASP, particularly for the 2007 – 2013 period (i.e. the years prior to when the new settlement is now expected to come on-stream), cannot be delivered then the viability of the proposed suburban rail service along this leg may be questioned.

2.3.10. The development of land near Blarney railway station offers the opportunity for the completion of new housing development, with good links to the railway station, on a scale that will replace that lost

to this corridor as a result of the protracted time scale that has become associated with the Monard project. Development here will facilitate a welcome boost to the population of this part of the rail corridor in a relatively short time scale.

Section 3 Planning Context

3.1 The Blarney – Kilbarry Rail Corridor

3.1.1. On the rail route between Blarney & Midleton outside this corridor, the larger towns and villages, such as Carrigtwohill and Midleton are relatively obvious locations for planned growth. In this corridor, other than Blarney, there are no similar settlements along the rail route and therefore this plan examines the rail corridor north of Cork as a whole so that the appropriate scale and distribution of growth can be addressed.

The Rail Route

3.1.2. The railway line leaves the built up area of the city about 1.5km north west of the proposed location for Kilbarry railway station. The line climbs in a northerly direction along the western side of the River Bride valley towards the Glenamought Viaduct. Here, the river valley turns to follow an easterly course and the viaduct carries the line on to the northern side so that it can continue to climb, both on embankment and in steep-sided cuttings, towards Rathpeacon. The line follows a course roughly parallel and to the south of a county road that was formerly the N20 Cork – Mallow National Route. This area is known as Carhoo and, although largely rural in character, includes significant areas of sporadic housing and some commercial development.

3.1.3. At Rathpeacon both the railway line and the former N20 road pass through a narrow and relatively steep sided gap in a range of hills that form a visual break between the city, its immediate surroundings and the rolling countryside further to the Northwest. Rathpeacon itself is a loose knit settlement consisting of sporadic houses, a public house, a recently built primary school and a car repair workshop. As it passes through the gap, the line emerges from its rocky cutting, passing under a narrow and poorly aligned 19th Century bridge carrying the former N20. The alignment of the railway line here is straight and adjoining land is broadly level with the track. There are existing sidings to the south of the main line, often used for storing freight wagons. This area is the location proposed for the new Monard – Rathpeacon station.

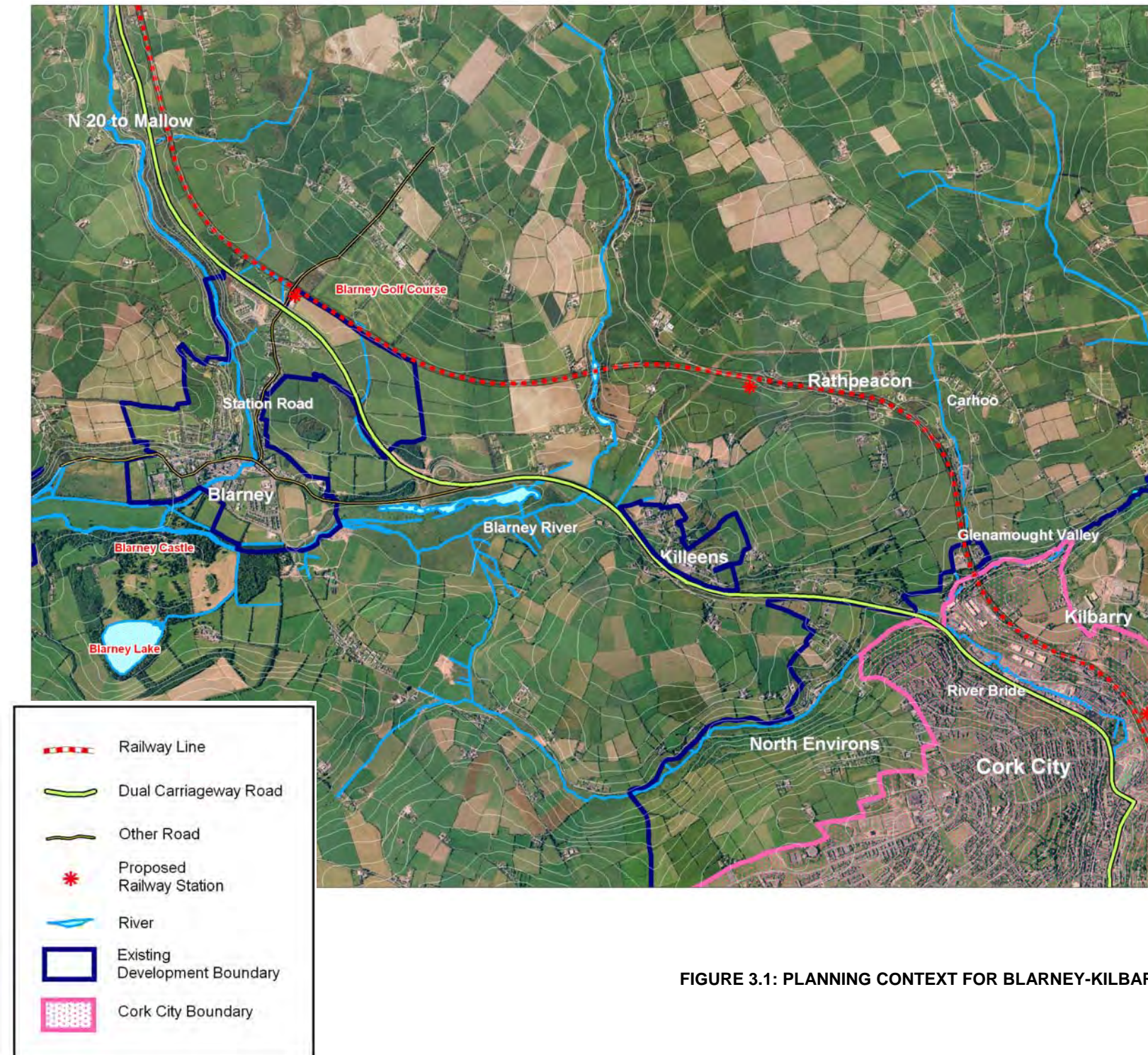


FIGURE 3.1: PLANNING CONTEXT FOR BLARNEY-KILBARRY

3.1.4. After Rathpeacon, the line curves to the west, and, on a series of embankments, cuttings and viaducts crosses the Blarney River before curving back to a north-westerly direction towards Blarney. As the line approaches the site of the disused Blarney railway station, its route, now along the northern side of the Blarney River valley, brings it close to the alignment of the present N20 that follows the same valley side at a lower level.

Blarney Station and its' Surroundings

3.1.5. At Blarney, the former railway goods yard is located on the southern side of the main line immediately southeast of the bridge carrying Station Road over the line. Dairygold Ltd. use this former goods yard area as an agricultural products depot.

3.1.6. The former passenger station at Blarney is located immediately opposite to the former goods yard to the northwest of the bridge over Station Road. Little remains of the platforms, particularly on the northern side of the line where a telecommunications mast has been developed. The original station building and some remains of the platform, are on the southern side of the line. The station building, and the access to it, is now a private house.

3.1.7. The Cork Suburban Rail Feasibility Study suggests that the proposed new railway station for Blarney should be located in the former goods yard area to the south east of Station Road as it crosses over the railway.

3.1.8. The centre of Blarney is about 1.5km south west of the former station. This area has successfully retained many popular traditional characteristics and is an important tourist destination. The principal attractions are the Castle and the Christies Hotel/Woolen Mills complex. A relief road has recently been completed allowing through traffic to avoid this central area

3.1.9. To the east of the central area is an area of mixed housing, education, retail and commercial uses. The retail and commercial uses are centred near the southern end of station road.

3.1.10. Progressive suburban housing estate development has extended from the original core of the town, along Station Road, and is now close to the station area on the immediate southern flank of the N20 that is in a deep cutting at this point.

3.1.11. This length of Station Road has been problematic for some time. Not only has there been substantial ribbon development, with individual vehicular accesses, along both sides of the road, but new residential estates served by a variety of access roads have also been developed in a relatively piecemeal fashion over the years. The lower part of station road has, at some point in the past, been

widened with footways provided on either side. Other sections of the route have not been improved and are narrow with either no footway or only a limited footway on one side. The result is a road that offers unsatisfactory or, at times even dangerous, conditions for both vehicular and pedestrian users.

3.1.12. Outside the present built up area of Blarney, Station Road is carried over the N20 on a relatively modern bridge. However, there is only a single footway on the southeast side of this bridge and the vehicular carriageway itself is very narrow.

3.1.13. On the northwest side of the N20, Station road climbs the approach to the 19th Century bridge that carries the road over the railway. There are no footways on this part of the route and the carriageway on the bridge itself is only 6.0m wide. The vertical alignment over the bridge offers drivers only limited forward visibility.

3.1.14. From this point Station Road continues as a typical country road, without footways, climbing northeast towards Curraghmalaght Cross Roads where there is a significant group of rural dwellings. To the southeast along this length of the route is the former Blarney Golf Course and to the northwest is open agricultural land. There are substantial hedgerows with mature trees in places on either side of the route.

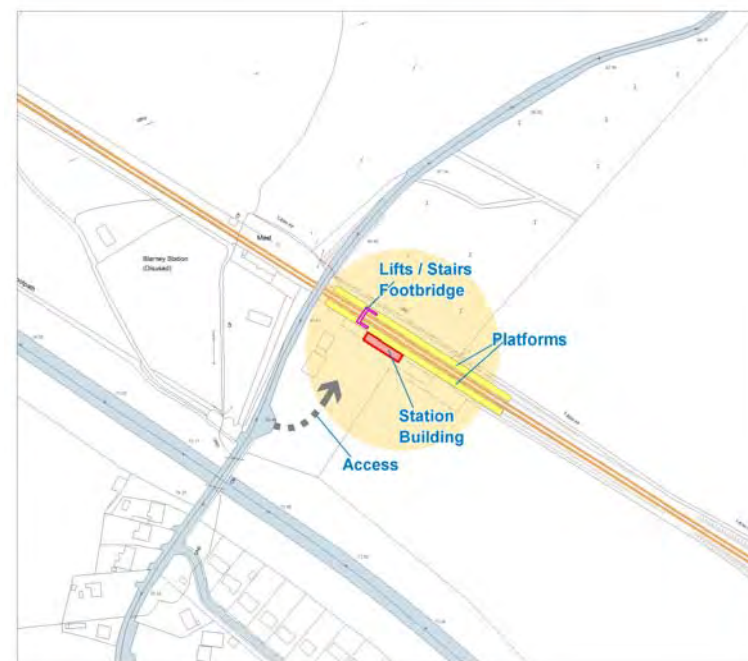


FIGURE 3.2: PROPOSED BLARNEY STATION

Monard Station and its' Surroundings

3.1.15. Although the Cork Suburban Rail Network Feasibility Study makes it clear that the existing population, and the preponderance of low-density sporadic housing in this area will not secure the viability of a station, it is proposed to locate a new station for Monard on the site of the Rathpeacon siding to the south of the former N20 road. The station is intended to serve a new settlement, comprising about 5,000 new homes and other development, proposed by CASP to be constructed between the years 2008 and 2020.

3.1.16. The Feasibility Study recognises that the generally hilly and elevated nature of the area makes it particularly difficult and problematic both for the development of what will become a new town and for the selection of a site for the railway station. The railway line is almost always either in a deep cutting, on an embankment or on a viaduct or other bridge. With only limited exceptions, the entire length of the route from the City Boundary to Blarney is subject to steep gradients and significant curvature.

3.1.17. It was also suggested by the study that there might be some flexibility regarding the actual location of the station so that development can be fitted around it but subsequent discussions with Iarnród Éireann have indicated that this is not the case. The Rathpeacon siding area is the only location in this rail corridor where the track is reasonably straight, level and free from significant gradients and, therefore, it is considered the only practical location for the construction of the new station.

3.1.18. The area around the proposed railway station site is thinly populated. There are about 92 dwellings within a 1km radius of the station site and it is estimated that the current population of this area falls within the range of 270 – 280 persons.

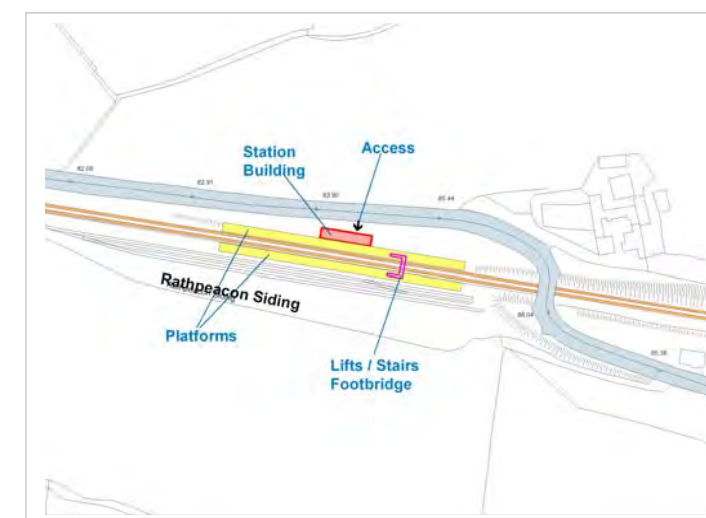


FIGURE 3.3: LOCATION OF PROPOSED STATION AT MONARD/RATHPEACON

3.2 Transportation

3.2.1. Although the N20 Cork – Limerick National Primary Route skirts the rail corridor to the south and east throughout most of its length, this route is constructed to grade separated two-lane dual carriageway standard. There are full intersections at Killeens and Blarney and a partial intersection has been constructed but not brought into use at Blarney Business Park. The route reduces to grade separated two-lane single carriageway standard north of the Blarney interchange.

3.2.2. For most of its length, the route followed by the N20 is a significant distance to the south of the route followed by the railway. For example, the N20 is about 1.4 km distant from the site of the proposed railway station at Monard and such connecting routes as exist between the road and the railway are of such a poor standard that they offer little, if any, practical possibility for interconnection between the two.

The Northern Ring Road Scheme

3.2.3. The National Roads Authority (NRA) published route options for the Northern Ring Road during the end of 2004. These options propose that a dual carriageway linking the new Ballincollig Bypass (N 22) to the west of the city to the Glanmire/Watergrasshill Bypass (N 8) to the northeast of the city be constructed. Both route options connect to the proposed new settlement at Monard with the route either directly (outer option) or via a link road (inner option).

3.2.4. The next stage of the process is the route selection study which will include detailed analysis of the proposed route corridor options including engineering analysis and traffic assessment, an assessment of environmental impacts and preparation of scheme budgets and cost estimates which will take about 18 months. The main objective of this phase is to select a preferred route corridor.

Blarney

3.2.5. However, at Blarney the road and rail routes are little more than 160m apart, although there is no direct physical connection between the two. The selection of the former goods yard site off station road as the preferred location for the new rail station serving the town creates the potential for such a link.

3.2.6. The principal difficulty to be overcome in order to create a direct link between the two routes is that of the severe difference in level between the road, sited in a deep cutting, and the railway.

3.2.7. The proposed railway station in Blarney is located about 1.3 km from the town centre and is served by Station Road. Station Road

was originally a country road about 6.0m in width without footways. Over many years, as the town of Blarney has grown, it has been subjected to local “improvements” on a piecemeal basis as housing development occurred on the various sections of the road. However, substantial lengths of the route are of an inadequate width and lack pedestrian footways on one or both sides of the road. Horizontal alignment is generally poor and many dwellings have individual accesses onto the road.

3.2.8. The result is that, in addition to functioning as an important route linking Blarney to its’ rural hinterland, Station Road now acts as a distributor and access road serving about 243 existing dwellings between the town and the N20. In addition, the development of around a further 198 dwellings on land off Station Road is anticipated as a result either of planning permission that has already been granted or on land designated for development in the County Development Plan 2003. Improvements to Station Road have not kept pace with this rate of development and, if significant new development is to be proposed in this area, careful consideration will need to be given to the most appropriate format for improvements and traffic management measures along this route.

3.2.9. Without further improvements and safety measures, it is likely that any additional development on Station Road, including the development of the railway station itself, is likely to result in congestion and road safety issues.

3.2.10. With regard to public transport, there are up to twenty bus services in each direction linking Blarney and Cork each weekday. There is no regular interval or “clock-face” pattern to the service resulting in gaps between departures of up to 1 hour 40 minutes at certain times of the day. Most services are not routed to follow the N20, instead following minor roads serving locations such as Killeens and Harrington’s Gate. A typical journey from Blarney town centre to Cork (about 9.5 km) is timetabled to take 30 minutes.

3.2.11. Most of the services to and from Cork either originate from or continue to other destinations including Cloghroe, Newcastle, Tower, Stuake, and Waterloo.

3.2.12. There is no bus station and no bus priority lanes in Blarney at present.

Monard/Rathpeacon

3.2.13. The road network serving the Monard/Rathpeacon area is generally poor. The principal route is the former N20, now designated only as a County Road. This follows a winding route through Rathpeacon, passing the site of the proposed railway station before following the upper part of the Blarney River valley. The road is poorly aligned, narrow in width and without footways.

3.2.14. Other roads in the area are generally only wide enough to accommodate one vehicle, or sometimes two vehicles can pass with care.

3.2.15. Public transport serving the area consists of a sporadic bus service linking Buttevant, Rathduff, Rathpeacon and Cork. There are only four services each weekday linking Rathpeacon with Cork.

3.3 Community Facilities

Blarney

3.3.1. There are three primary schools serving Blarney. The Gaelscoil is located in temporary accommodation at the Blarney United Soccer Club. Long term, it is envisaged that this school will require new accommodation.

School	Boys/ Girls/ Mixed	No of pupils	Class Entry
Scoil An Chroi Naofa	Boys	169	1
Scoil Losagáin	Girls	195	1
Gaelscoil Mhuscraí	Mixed	25	1

3.3.2. There is also a secondary school Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál.

School	Boys / Girls/ Mixed	No of pupils	Class Entry
Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál	Mixed	458	4

Rathpeacon

3.3.3. There is one modern primary school in Rathpeacon.

School	Boys / Girls/ Mixed	No of pupils	Class Entry
Rathpeacon National School	Mixed	185	1

Healthcare facilities

3.3.4. The Southern Health Board have a health centre in Blarney village. This centre is a facility from which the Health Board provides community based health and personal social services, including public health nursing, public health medicine and community welfare and community work.

Sports & Recreation

3.3.5. National policy for the provision of open space in urban areas is set out in "A Policy for the Provision and Maintenance of Parks, Open Spaces and Outdoor Areas by Local Authorities (Department of the Environment 1987)". This has recently been augmented by the National Children's Office publication: "Ready, Steady, Play! A National Play Policy".

3.3.6. These suggest that open space should be provided in urban areas in line with the following standard:

- *Local Park of minimum 2 hectares open space per 1,000 population;*
- *Neighbourhood Park of 16 hectares and two local parks per 10,000 population. The Neighbourhood Park should be capable of including:*
 - *Up to 6 football pitches;*
 - *Up to 10 tennis courts;*
 - *Up to 2 netball or basketball courts;*
 - *Up to two golf putting greens;*
 - *1 children's play lot;*
 - *1 athletic facility; and*
 - *Car parking.*

3.3.7. Chapter 6, Section 6.4 of Volume 1 to the County Development Plan 2003 sets out the policy framework for the provision of leisure facilities in the County and is applicable to the policies and objectives of this plan.

3.4 Employment

3.4.1. Employment and economic activity in Blarney is focussed on the retail and service sectors with an emphasis on tourism. Blarney

Castle and the "Woollen Mills" complex are together a significant tourist attraction not only during the summer but also during the winter months.

3.4.2. There is an area of industrial and commercial development adjoining the "Woollen Mills" complex.

3.4.3. To the north east of the town, a total of 35.9 ha of land was designated in the County Development Plan 2003 for development as a business park for office based industry. The development has commenced and roads and services have been constructed throughout the site. Access is from the southbound slip road that forms part of the grade separated interchange with the N20. In addition, slip roads have also been constructed from the southbound side of N20 into the site but these have not been brought into use. One building has been constructed and the remainder of the site is currently undeveloped.

3.5 Infrastructure**Waste Water Treatment and River Water Quality**

3.5.1. The wastewater treatment plant for Blarney and Tower is located about 2 km west of Blarney at the confluence of the Martin and Shournagh Rivers. The current design capacity of the plant is understood to be for a population equivalent (pe) of 6,500. The plant is presently treating waste arising from a population equivalent of about 8,000. Proposals are in hand to increase the capacity of the plant to a population equivalent of 13,000. These improvements will facilitate:

- *The present shortfall in pe capacity;*
- *The development of land already designated for new residential development in the County Development Plan 2003;*
- *Proposals to pump sewage from Kerry Pike to the Blarney treatment plant; and*
- *Proposals to pump sewage from Cloghroe to the Blarney treatment plant.*

3.5.2. In addition, there is a private treatment plant at Killeens discharging into a minor watercourse that feeds into the Blarney Bog and the Blarney River. There are proposals to replace this plant with a public treatment plant in the future.

3.5.3. Up-stream of the Blarney plant, both the biological quality of the river water and its' phosphate content fail to meet the standards

set under The Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977 and in subsequent regulations. There is a requirement that this be remedied by the end of the year 2007 at the latest.

3.5.4. This problem is compounded by the effluent from the existing Blarney waste-water treatment plant, although generally within its operational limits, causing a further fall in water quality downstream of its outfall. Although the load on the treatment plant is planned to increase, technological improvements likely to be included in the planned improvements to it may lead to a modest overall improvement in the quality of the effluent entering the river. However, significant new residential development, beyond that for which provision has already been made in the County Development Plan 2003 may require a further extension and other modifications to the plant and a more general review of the wider strategy towards waste water disposal in this area so that planned development can proceed and the appropriate river water quality standards can be achieved.

3.5.5. It is unlikely that the treated effluent arising from the large-scale development proposed for the Monard area could be accommodated in this river system.

Surface water

3.5.6. Surface water in the town is drained to a combined system and this is contributing to the overloading of the wastewater treatment plant. Some areas of the town have a history of flooding during periods of high rainfall.

3.5.7. If both the investment in the existing waste water treatment plant and that proposed for its extension is to be protected it is essential that a programme of works be implemented to effectively segregate surface water from the towns foul sewers.

3.5.8. Drinking water is supplied from the reservoir at Inniscarra.

3.6 Planning Policy Framework

3.6.1. The planning policy framework for Blarney – Kilbarry rail corridor is set out in the County Development Plan 2003.

3.6.2. The Blarney – Kilbarry rail corridor as a whole is part of the Metropolitan Cork Green Belt where the objective is to preserve the character of the green belt and, generally, reserve land for agriculture, open space or recreation uses.

3.6.3. Three distinct types of green belt land are identified in the plan and specific objectives apply to each as follows:

- **A1 Green Belt;** requires the highest degree of protection because it is made up of the prominent open hilltops, valley sides and ridges that give Cork its distinctive character and the strategic, largely undeveloped gaps between the main Green Belt settlements.
- **A2 Green Belt;** also requires protection. These areas are the largely undeveloped open green belt lands that define the distinctive open agricultural setting for the towns and villages of Metropolitan Cork. It has relatively low levels of development at present.
- **A3 Green Belt;** represent pockets within the green belt (outside towns and villages) that over the years have become relatively built up, typically through incremental or sporadic one-off dwellings. Though unserved, they still require protection but they are not as sensitive as A1 and A2 areas.

3.6.4. The only areas excluded from this designation are those areas that are within settlement development boundaries (established in development plans) such as those for Blarney, Cork City North Environs and Killeens.

Blarney

3.6.5. In recent years most new development in this rail corridor has occurred in Blarney. Notwithstanding this in the latter part of the 1990's it is estimated that the population of the town remained broadly static. The new housing development that occurred during this period was mainly as a result of a general fall in average household size.

3.6.6. The 2002 census recorded a population in the town of 2,146 persons equivalent to about 650 households. In the period from mid 2000 to mid 2003 about 65 new houses have been completed and planning permission has been granted for a further 160 housing units.

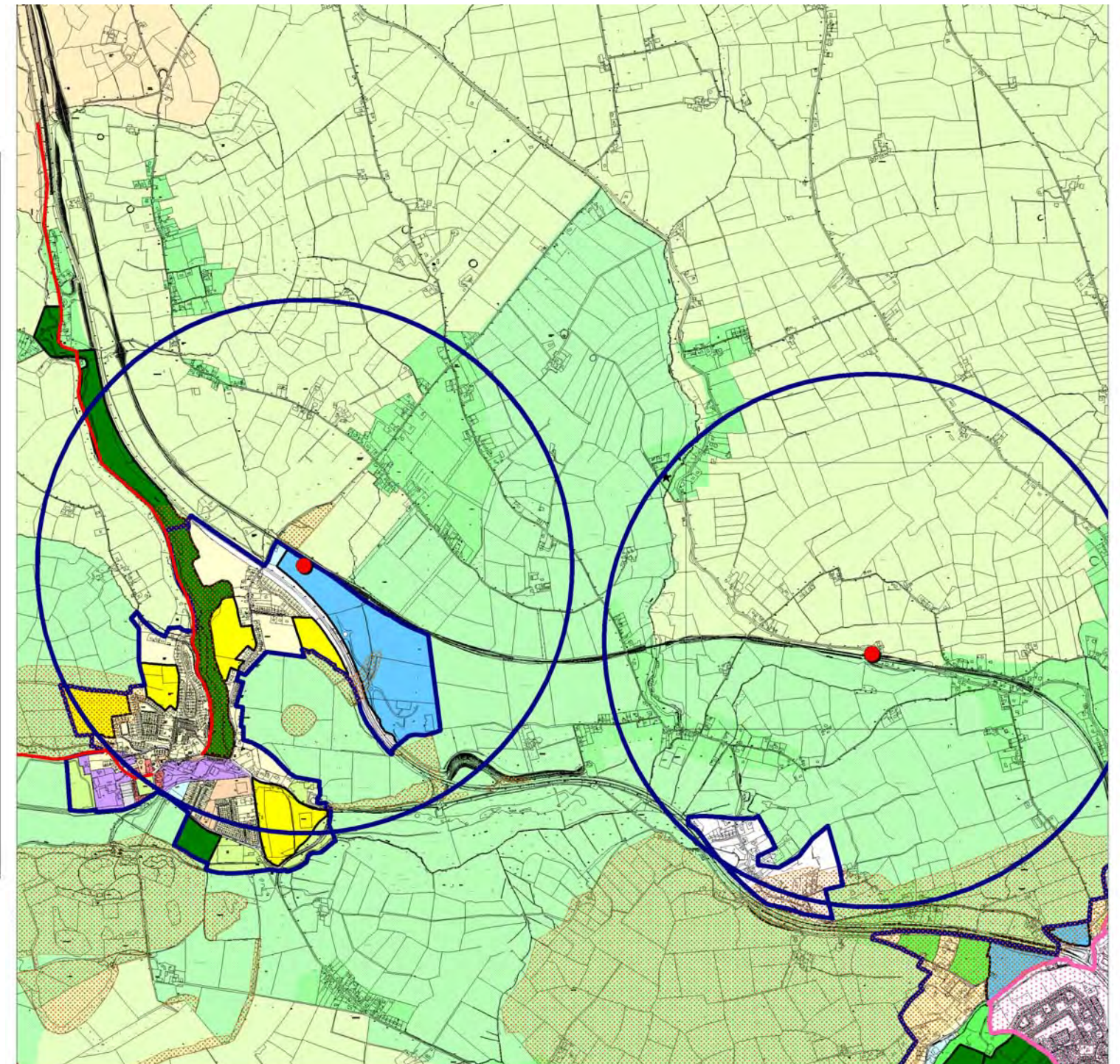


FIGURE 3.4: COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2003 SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES

Housing Land Supply

3.6.7. For the future the County Development Plan 2003 has designated land (27.1ha gross) for new residential development. Depending on the final density of development, this is considered capable of accommodating up to about 1001 new dwellings. Figure 3.5 summarises the position:

Figure 3.5: Blarney – New Residential Development		
Completions 2000 – 2003 & Future Land Supply		
Location	Status	Units
Site A	Completed (6.3ha)	30
Site B	Completed (2.7ha)	35
R - 01	Planning Permission Granted (6.9ha)	159
R - 02	CDP 2003 Designated (3.9ha)	39
R - 03	CDP 2003 Designated (4.4ha)	110
R - 04	CDP 2003 Designated (7.6ha)	133
R - 05	CDP 2003 Designated (11.2ha)	495
TOTAL		1001

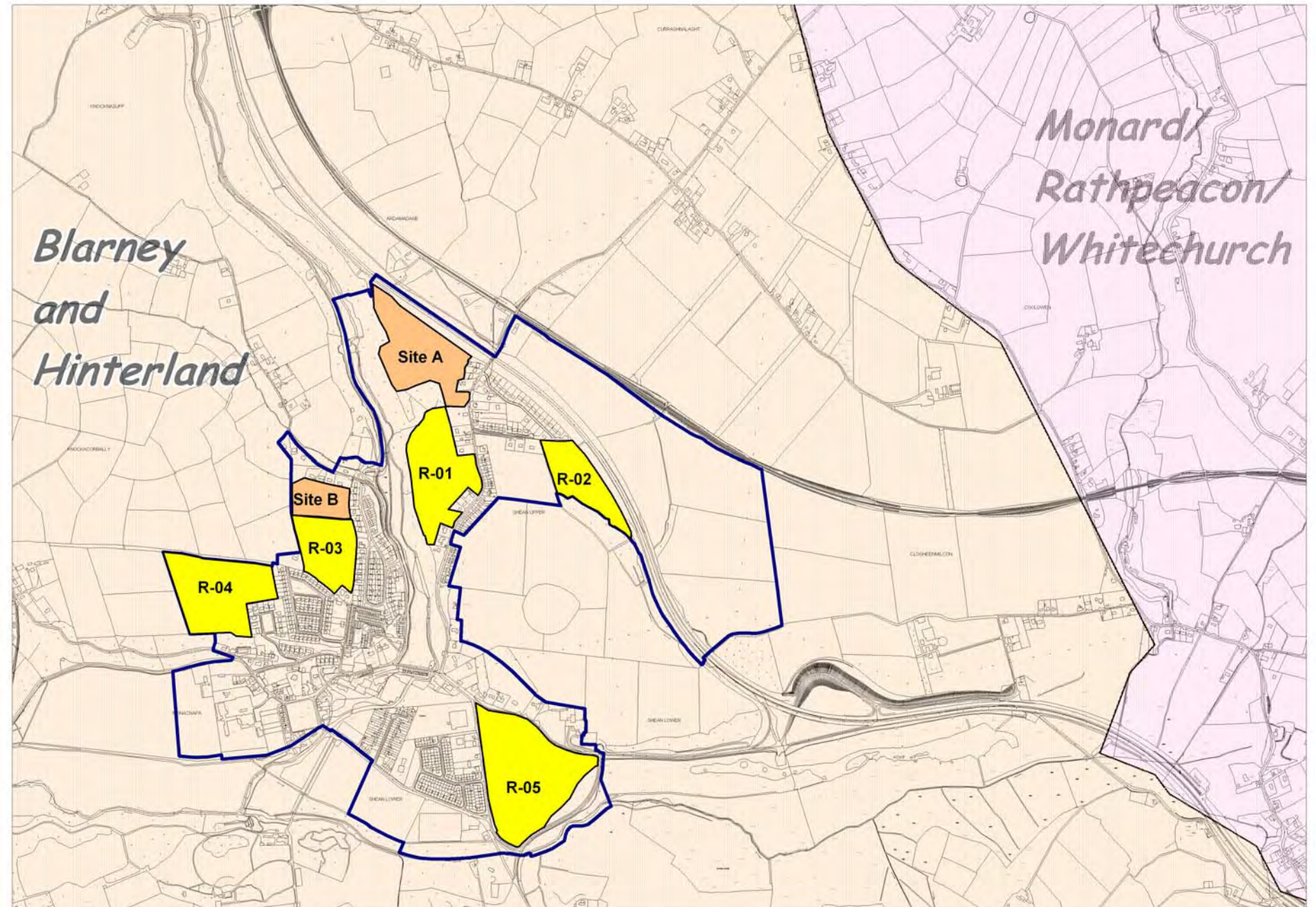


FIGURE 3.6: HOUSING LAND SUPPLY – BLARNEY
(SEE ALSO FIGURE 3.5)

Killeens

3.6.8. Outside the City and the satellite town of Blarney, the only smaller settlement in this area is Killeens. This village is about 1.5km distant from Rathpeacon siding, the location chosen for the proposed railway station in the area. It is served by a shop, hotel and primary school. There is a development boundary for the village that was established by the County Development Plan 1996 however; this settlement now forms part of the network of settlements identified in the Blarney Electoral Area Local Area Plan 2005 and the future planning policy for the settlement is identified in that plan. In the past, planning permissions have been granted for estate scale residential development, examples of which are currently under construction in the village.

3.6.9. Killeens is located within an important area of the Cork Metropolitan Green Belt to the north of the city. Here, it is an objective to help maintain the important gaps between settlements, so that each settlement can retain its separate identity. Because of the proximity of Killeens to the proposed location for the new rail station near Rathpeacon, care will need to be taken in the planning of development for the Monard/Rathpeacon area if the separate identity of the village is to be retained in the future.

3.6.10. The County Council are preparing a Local Area Plan for the Blarney Electoral Area that addresses the future planning strategy for Killeens. Those issues are not addressed in this plan.

Rathpeacon & Other Settled Areas

3.6.11. In addition to Blarney and Killeens, the other settled areas near the route of the rail line are, generally, without a defined settlement form and mainly consist of loose-knit concentrations of sporadic housing. In the main, these areas have been designated by the County Development Plan 2003 as 'Relatively Developed Green Belt Areas' (A3). The most significant of these is Rathpeacon where, in addition to sporadic housing, there is a public house and a newly constructed primary school.

Landscape & Visual Amenity

3.6.12. The Cork County Development Plan 2003 addresses the landscape of the county with reference to 16 defined landscape types that were derived from a study of the 76 smaller landscape character areas. The County Council has not yet completed more detailed work assessing the sensitivity of these areas to various forms of development but they are, nonetheless, of value in understanding the complexity of the landscape along this rail corridor.

3.6.13. The rail corridor that is the subject of this plan, from Blarney to the city boundary near Kilbarry, falls within two landscape type areas and the narrow gap at Rathpeacon serves as the division between these.

3.6.14. To the south and east of the gap at Rathpeacon is defined in the County Development Plan 2003 as part of the city, Harbour and Estuary Landscape Character Area. Throughout, this part of the rail corridor, from Rathpeacon, through Carhoo, to the city boundary on the southern side of the Glenamought Viaduct. The views and prospects, as the land falls steeply towards the alluvial flood plain of the River Lee, are dominated by the urban mass of the city itself.

3.6.15. In contrast, the area to the north and west of the gap at Rathpeacon does not form part of the same visual envelope as the city. Almost without exception, the intervening ridge of hills running northeast – southwest through Rathpeacon prevents views into or out of this area to or from the city. For this reason, the County Development Plan 2003 excludes the area from the City, Harbour and Estuary Landscape Character Area, defining it, instead, as part of a large area of Fissured, Fertile Middleground.

3.6.16. This landscape type runs from near Macroom in the west to Youghal and the county boundary in the east. As a 'middleground', it has characteristics of both the flatter fertile farmland landscape type (Fertile Plain with Moorland Ridge) and the higher marginal hilly or rugged landscape type (Rolling Marginal and Forested Middleground) to which it commonly adjoins. It comprises an area rising above the adjacent plain of the River Lee and is of moderate to low relief with elongated interlocking hills forming sinuous river valleys. The farmland is reasonably fertile comprising a mosaic of small to medium sized fields and hedgerows are typically broadleaf but with intermittent conifer shelterbelts.

Scenic Landscape & Scenic Routes

3.6.17. The County Development Plan 2003 designates the River Bride valley (in the area near Glenamought Viaduct immediately north of the city boundary) as Scenic Landscape, here it is an objective of the County Development Plan 2003 to "preserve the visual and scenic amenities of those areas of natural beauty identified as 'scenic landscape'".

3.6.18. The road following the river valley north of Blarney to Grenagh is designated in the County Development Plan 2003 as a Scenic Route (A41). It is an objective of the County Development Plan 2003 (ENV 3-5) "to preserve the character of those views and prospects obtainable from scenic routes identified in this plan".

3.7 Heritage

Protected Structures

3.7.1. The Monard and Coolowen Ironworks and Spade Mills are included in the Record of Protected Structures for the county although the extent of this protection has not yet been defined. They are located in a steep sided narrow ravine that forms part of the Blarney River valley to the south of the viaduct carrying the railway line towards Blarney west of Rathpeacon siding. The ironworks and spade mills were operated by hydraulic power derived mainly by water wheels powered from a large millpond created by a dam across the river valley. The area is home to a number of former workers cottages, many of which are still occupied and ruins of several industrial structures. The area is secluded and well wooded with some luxuriant vegetation around the millpond.



FIGURE 3.7: BLARNEY WOOLEN MILLS

3.7.2. In addition, in the Blarney area there are 8 protected structures as follows:

- Church of the Immaculate Conception;
- Blarney Bridge (off the village green);
- The Ornamental Tower (within Blarney Castle grounds);
- Blarney Castle and Country House;

- *Blarney Tower House & Bawn;*
- *Blarney Woollen Mills;*
- *The Church Of Ireland; and*
- *The Icehouse (within Blarney Castle grounds).*

Proposed Natural Heritage Areas

3.7.3. There are two proposed Natural Heritage Areas within the Blarney – Kilbarry rail corridor Blarney Bog and Ardamadame Wood. Blarney Bog is an area of low-lying peaty wetland located in the lower part of the Blarney River valley located about 1km southwest of Rathpeacon siding. The area is of scientific importance because of the lowland wet grassland, freshwater marsh and fen habitats that it supports. Development upstream in the Blarney River valley, the use of the site for recreation, alterations to grazing patterns and disturbance to bird species could interfere with the hydrology of the bog and threaten these habitats.

would threaten the value of this area. See Appendix A for a more detailed site synopsis.

3.7.5. It is an objective of the County Development Plan 2003 (ENV 2-5) “to maintain the conservation value of all Natural Heritage Areas proposed for designation”.

3.7.6. The Blarney Electoral Area Local Area Plan 2005 addresses the landscape character issues in this area.

Archaeological Heritage

3.7.7. There are a significant number of recorded monuments in the Blarney and Monard areas.



FIGURE 3.8: BLARNEY LAKE

3.7.4. Ardamadame Wood is an elongated area of broadleaf woodland located in the River Martin valley to the north of the town and is about 1km from the site of the proposed Blarney railway station. The area is of scientific importance because of the river, dry broad-leaved semi-natural woodland and freshwater marsh habitats that it supports. The removal of broad-leaved trees, their replacement with conifers, the intensification of agricultural practices or the interference with riparian or river habitats or changes to water quality

Section 4 Strategic Planning Issues

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1. This section highlights the main strategic issues or questions to be addressed if the rail corridor is to grow in line with the CASP strategy and make the best use of the new rail facilities planned. Some of these issues have been raised in the submissions that have been received from the public and other interested parties.

4.2 The Need for a New Settlement

Monard's Role in the Network of Settlements

4.2.1. The proposals for the development of a new settlement at Monard are an important element of the overall CASP strategy for Metropolitan Cork that encompasses both the city proper, and the settlements of Ballincollig, Blarney, Carrigaline, Douglas, Glanmire, Glounthaune, Carrigtwohill, Midleton and Cobh. Metropolitan Cork is envisaged as a unified entity having a single job and property market, an integrated transport system, and the social, cultural and educational facilities of a modern European city.

4.2.2. The CASP strategy seeks to move towards a more sustainable form of development for the Cork area. It aims to provide greater accessibility in terms of education, employment, health, culture, leisure and service opportunities for all the people of Cork by rebalancing the pattern of development around the city, encouraging new development in the north and east while restraining development pressure in the south and west, and improving the choice and quality of transport services. The rebalancing of the city and the improved access and accessibility are amongst the keys to improving the overall quality of life in the Cork area.

4.2.3. The County Council are implementing the CASP strategy through its' development plan and a series of local area plans. To the east of the city it has proved possible to plan for the scale of growth envisaged by CASP by adding incrementally to existing settlements such as Carrigtwohill, Cobh and Midleton and the County Council are satisfied that there is adequate capacity for new development in these locations for planned growth throughout the remainder of the CASP period.

4.2.4. However, the position to the north of Cork City is different. Simply allowing the built up area of the city to expand would not create the opportunities for improved accessibility and public transport that are available in the expanded satellite towns east of the city. The satellite town of Blarney is the sole existing settlement served by the railway route north of the city within Metropolitan Cork and, alone, cannot accommodate the scale of growth necessary if tangible steps are to be taken towards rebalancing the city.

4.2.5. So that there can be a greater choice in the locations available for new housing in the rail corridor north of Cork City, within Metropolitan Cork, it is proposed to develop a new settlement in the area near the proposed railway station at Monard. It is envisaged that this settlement will grow to become a new satellite town for the northern part of the Metropolitan Cork area.

The Background to New Settlements

4.2.6. Throughout history, civilisations that have experienced major demographic, economic or social change have created new settlements as an important means of helping meet the need for new development, particularly housing. The social and economic changes of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries in Europe and Ireland brought about the development of many new settlements, both large and small. Notable examples include Portlaw (County Waterford), Tallaght, Shannon, Milton Keynes (UK), Marne la Vallee (France) and Cambourne (UK).

4.2.7. Recent experience suggests new settlements need not be associated with large scale public sector housing schemes and the once commonly held perception that they are unattractive places to live is no longer justified. New settlements can be attractive and a sustainable development option where:

- *There would otherwise be a shortfall in the provision of housing;*
- *They are large enough to support a range of local services including schools, shops and employment;*
- *If possible, they can make use of previously developed land;*
- *They are carefully planned to offer an improved quality of life to all social groups;*
- *They exploit or improve existing or proposed public transport by locating around a major node along a good quality public transport corridor;*
- *Use of public transport is encouraged through the design and layout of the settlement; and*
- *There is no other, more sustainable alternative.*

4.3 The Option to Disperse Growth to Other Locations

4.3.1. CASP recognises that it could be possible to achieve its' core aims and objectives by dispersing the growth planned for Monard within the catchment area of the rail corridor from Blarney to Midleton. The following paragraphs examine the practicality of this possibility by considering the potential of existing development centres and other locations to accommodate further growth.

4.3.2. One of the locations referred to, Grenagh, is located outside the Blarney to Midleton rail corridor referred to in CASP but has been included in this section because the question of its suitability for future growth has been raised in the submissions received in relation to this plan.

Blarney

4.3.3. With regard to Blarney, the Cork Suburban Rail Feasibility Study made the following observations:

"The location of the old station would appear to be the best option for serving the town. The old station building, to the north of the connecting road, was sold off for residential use a number of years ago. The council today proposes the purchase of the Dairygold site to the east of the old station and to locate the new station there. Currently there are significant industrial zoned lands to the east of the station as well as some residential zoned land. There are also some zoned residential lands to the west of the proposed station. This station could have significant park and ride potential."

4.3.4. The former goods yard at Station Road is a logical location for a new station to serve the town. It is the closest point on the rail network to the existing town of Blarney (about 1.8 km). There are about 389 existing dwellings within a 1 km radius of the proposed station site and planning permission has been granted for a further 198 units.

4.3.5. However, the development of the new station here raises a number of important planning issues:

- **Access to the Station Site:** *The vertical alignment of Station Road, as it approaches the existing bridge carrying it over the railway, restricts the visibility available to drivers entering and leaving the site. The vertical curvature on the railway bridge also offers inadequate forward visibility to drivers approaching from the northeast.*
- **Station Road:** *Significant improvements are already required to bring the lower part of Station Road up to the appropriate standard for its present function as a distributor road and a through route serving a wider rural catchment. Once the railway station is operational, significant additional traffic will be attracted to the route not only from Blarney but also from other locations in north*

Cork because of the attractiveness of the Blarney location for park & ride. This additional traffic will only serve to increase the urgency of appropriate improvements to Station Road.

- **Links to the N20 National Primary Route:** The proximity of the proposed Blarney station to the N20 establishes potential for it to function as a park and ride location. Without a direct connection with the N20 this will result in significant additional traffic approaching that station site either through the town itself and along Station Road or by using the narrow and winding rural road network.



FIGURE 4.1: PROPOSED STATION LOCATION

4.3.6. CASP proposes relatively modest scale development at Blarney, recognising the scale of the existing settlement and its important role as a centre for tourism but this is based on the premise that 2,500 new houses would be completed at Monard in the 2007 – 2013 period. As a location in the rail corridor north of the city it shares strategic characteristics with Monard in that development here would:

- Positively assist the CASP strategy to re-balance Cork City; and
- Help maintain the balance of population envisaged by both CASP and the Cork Suburban Rail Feasibility Study between the rail corridor east of the city and that to the north.

4.3.7. Submissions have been received from developers and land owners suggesting substantial new housing development on land, currently designated as part of the Metropolitan Cork Green Belt, and including an existing golf course, located to the north of the railway line. These submissions include proposals for:

- 2,700 new houses on approximately 113 ha largely within 750m of the new railway station;

- A new railway station, with park and ride facilities close to the former goods yard site;
- Road access via a new grade separated interchange with the N20 and the replacement of the existing bridge carrying Station Road over the railway;
- Major retail development comprising the development of a new District Centre;
- The reduction in size of the existing area set aside for the business park to facilitate retail warehousing and office development; and
- The upgrading of the Blarney sewage treatment plant.

4.3.8. Although there are concerns with this submission on a number of issues, the County Council recognises that, notwithstanding these, it demonstrates the potential of the area near Blarney railway station to make a significant contribution to the provision of new housing within Metropolitan Cork in the rail corridor north of the city. Development at Blarney railway station offers the opportunity to allow the town of Blarney to expand significantly without adversely affecting the traditional town centre and its' attractiveness to tourists. The development of a new interchange with the N20 will facilitate the development of the railway station as a park-and-ride location serving the rural area to the north and west of the town.

4.3.9. A number of issues remain to be resolved before the format of development here can be finalised. These include:

- The need to address pedestrian, cycle and road links between the station and the existing town of Blarney either by appropriate improvements to Station Road or, possibly, by the construction of new routes; and
- The need to address housing density and urban design issues so that, at the outset, the new development is an attractive place to live for people of all walks of life; and
- The need to ensure that waste and surface water can be safely and properly disposed of.

Carrigtwohill

4.3.10. Carrigtwohill is located about 12 km east of Cork City, and is the location of a proposed new station on the railway route to Midleton. The N25 dual carriageway provides good road links. It has its own waste water treatment plant that will soon be improved.

4.3.11. Substantial proposals for the expansion of Carrigtwohill are set out in CASP indicating that about 4,343 new dwellings will be necessary during the years 2000 – 2020. A special local area plan is being prepared and, in addition to those for which planning permission

has already been granted, this will make provision for over 2,000 further new dwellings.

4.3.12. However, despite these advantages, Carrigtwohill is not a favoured location for further large-scale growth. The growth already planned for the town in CASP, and the special local area plan, involves a fivefold increase in the number of dwellings and it is considered that growth on this scale should be assimilated into the economic and social fabric of the town before consideration is given to any additional proposal. Carrigtwohill is located to the east of Cork City rather than the north and development here will not act as a catalyst for the rebalancing of the city in the manner envisaged by CASP.



FIGURE 4.2: CARRIGTWOHILL TOWN CENTRE

Glounthaune

4.3.13. Glounthaune is located about 5 km east of Cork City, close to the strategic industrial area at Little Island and is presently served by the existing Cork-Cobh suburban rail service. Additional trains on the Midleton route will also serve Glounthaune once the line is reopened. The N25 dual carriageway provides good road links. The sewage treatment plant at Carrigrennan is nearby and there is also a large diameter water main serving the area.

4.3.14. However, despite these advantages, Glounthaune is not a favoured location for large-scale growth. It is located to the east of

Cork City rather than the north and development here will not act as a catalyst for the rebalancing of the city in the manner envisaged by CASP.

4.3.15. Much of the undeveloped land within or near the settlement is steeply sloping and, because of its visual importance to the setting of the upper harbour area, is designated as an important part of the Metropolitan Green Belt (A1). Lower lying land to the east of the settlement, currently designated as part of the Metropolitan Cork Green Belt, has some potential for development but large-scale development risks the coalescence of Glounthaune with the adjoining settlement of Carrigtwohill.



FIGURE 4.3: GLOUNTHAUNE

Grenagh

4.3.16. Some of the submissions received in relation to these special local area plans have suggested that Grenagh, to the north of Blarney, is an appropriate location for at least some of the growth proposed for the rail corridor north of Cork. Whilst it can be argued that Grenagh, to a degree, shares strategic characteristics with Blarney, its greater distance from Cork and its location outside Metropolitan Cork diminishes its capacity to act as a major focus for new growth in the manner proposed at Monard.



FIGURE 4.4: GRENAGH

Marino Point

4.3.17. Since the adoption of both CASP and the County Development Plan 2003, the Irish Fertilizer Industries manufacturing plant at Marino Point on Great Island has ceased production and the company has gone into liquidation, although a smaller resin production facility under separate control remains in operation. This latter facility is a hazardous industrial installation to which the Seveso II Directive applies and a 1 km consultation zone is in effect with regard to certain categories of new development. The total land area of the combined industrial undertakings comprises about 46 ha.

4.3.18. The plant adjoins the existing rail route from Cobh to Cork and, in the past, has been served by a freight facility. There is also a deep-water wharf that was designed to serve the fertilizer plant. The site is close to the City Main Drainage Waste Water Treatment Plant at Carrigrennan and is served by high capacity water, gas and electricity supplies. The road network serving the site is generally poor requiring significant improvements in both the direction of Carrigtwohill and Cobh.

4.3.19. CASP gave consideration to the possibility that industrial activities on this site might cease during the lifetime of the plan stating that:

“Major medium to high density mixed use redevelopment, (perhaps including high quality work places, apartments and cultural projects) could be pursued.”

4.3.20. Whilst it is recognised that Marino Point may well have future development potential along the lines suggested in CASP and could even provide the basis for a ‘flagship’ mixed-use rail-based ‘brownfield’ redevelopment project, in an attractive waterfront setting without

resulting in the loss of any ‘greenfield’ land from the Metropolitan Cork Green Belt, possibly accommodating up to about 1,200 dwellings, the continued existence of the hazardous (Seveso) resin production facility effectively precludes the consideration of these concepts.

4.3.21. Marino Point is located to the east of Cork City rather than the north and, although in the long term there may be significant benefits resulting from development here as suggested by CASP, such development here will not act as a catalyst for the rebalancing of the city, in the manner envisaged for Monard.



FIGURE 4.5: MARINO POINT

Midleton

4.3.22. Midleton is located about 17 km east of Cork City, and is the location of a proposed new station on the railway route. The N25 dual carriageway provides good road links. The town’s sewage treatment plant is to a modern design and capable of extension to facilitate new development. There is some available water supply capacity, but it will be necessary to construct a new large diameter water main to serve the area in future.

4.3.23. Substantial proposals for the expansion of Midleton are set out in CASP indicating that about 6,605 new dwellings will be necessary during the years 2000 – 2020. A special local area plan is being prepared and, in addition to those for which planning permission has been granted or other commitment has already been given, this will make provision for over 3,200 further new dwellings.

4.3.24. However, despite these advantages, Midleton is not a favoured location for further large-scale growth. The growth already planned for the town in CASP, and the special local area plan, involves a threefold increase in the number of dwellings and it is considered that

growth on this scale should be assimilated into the economic and social fabric of the town before consideration is given to any additional proposal. Middleton is located to the east of Cork City rather than the north and development here will not act as a catalyst for the rebalancing of the city in the manner envisaged by CASP.



FIGURE 4.6: MIDDLETON TOWN CENTRE



FIGURE 4.7: THE OPTION TO DISPERSE GROWTH TO OTHER LOCATIONS

4.4 Development Strategy

Achieving the CASP Strategy

4.4.1. Perhaps the single most significant element of the CASP strategy is the proposal to consolidate or limit future growth to the south and west of the city and, instead, to establish a major growth corridor between Blarney and Midleton in the northern and eastern parts of Metropolitan Cork.

4.4.2. In the rail corridor north of Cork City, the existing settlement pattern does not afford opportunities to plan for major new development by the incremental expansion of existing towns and villages to an extent that is comparable with the rail corridor east of the city. Although there is some capacity for new development in the area near the proposed Blarney railway station, this location alone cannot sustain the quantity of development necessary to secure the rebalancing the city in line with the CASP strategy.

4.4.3. The new settlement proposed for Monard will provide an important new focus for development that will act positively to help achieve the rebalancing of the city. To be successful the new settlement must:

- *Be sufficiently large to enable development to include the timely provision of all the necessary physical, social and economic infrastructure;*
- *Offer a high quality life-style to all social groups;*
- *Respect the natural and built heritage of the Monard area; and*
- *Be designed to make best use of the suburban rail network that will serve the area.*

A 'Flagship' Project

4.4.4. An important element in the CASP strategy is the on-going development of projects that enhance the city-region's added value and that, at the same time, are of national/international significance, highly visible, a source of pride to local communities and generate enormous pulling power. The strategy highlights the need for Cork to:

'...move the threshold of its ambition and commit to attracting/developing projects, (investments attractions amenities) which are of truly international stature and act as a catalyst for further development.'

4.4.5. CASP suggests that the following projects are amongst those that have the potential to attract international investment interest in this way:

- *Cork Harbour - an outstanding asset that has the potential to become Europe's most exciting waterfront, the focus for a 'mosaic' of different opportunities. Baltimore, USA has demonstrated the enormous potential of waterfront development; so too have projects in Gothenburg, Trieste and Cardiff Bay;*
- *Cork Docklands redevelopment - including the Kent Station redevelopment project;*
- *The Monard new settlement development;*
- *The Green Routes Network; and*
- *The award-winning Urban Pilot project in Cork City 1994-98.*

4.4.6. CASP suggests that the Monard new settlement development has a role to play in achieving a more even spread of these projects across the city-region but in a way which is sympathetic to the local environment, consistent with the themes of innovation and creativity, and of an international standard.

Implementation Time-scale

4.4.7. CASP's suggestion that the new settlement proposed for Monard might begin delivering new housing in about 2008 seems to have been over-optimistic. Although the principle of the new settlement was embodied in CASP from its adoption in 2001, since then, the main area of progress has concerned the establishment of a commitment from the Government to the investment in the suburban rail service that will ultimately underpin the Monard development.

4.4.8. Now that the Government has given its commitment to the provision of suburban rail services on this route, this special local area plan aims to take the next steps in the process of planning the new settlement. This involves the establishment of an agreed framework for the new settlement so that, once the special local area plan is adopted, it can be used to guide the preparation of a detailed masterplan. It is not until this later stage that land uses will be assigned to individual land parcels and details provided of the physical infrastructure that will be necessary for the development.

4.4.9. The County Council envisages that the detailed masterplan will guide private sector developers in the construction of the new settlement. It may be necessary for public sector agencies to take a leading role (including the exercise of their compulsory purchase powers) in the provision of key infrastructure but it is intended that the construction phase should be clearly led by the private sector who will be expected to address the question of land assembly in order to implement the masterplan.

4.4.10. All of this will take time. Recent experience, with a project of a similar scale at Cambourne in the UK, suggests that it could take up to

10 years to progress from the site selection stage to the point where new houses are becoming ready for occupation. At Monard, the options for site selection appear to be less complex than at Cambourne and may be capable of resolution more quickly. However, this is the first time a project of this scale has been contemplated in Cork and both the public sector agencies and the regions' construction industry will need to promote radical responses to the complexities of the project.

4.4.11. For these reasons it is considered unlikely that significant volumes of new housing will be completed at Monard before the year 2013. CASP, however, envisaged that about 2,500 new houses would have been completed at Monard by that date and, in addition to establishing a framework for this development, this special local area plan must therefore address making up that shortfall. Whilst it may appear that this will delay the provision of new housing in the rail corridor north of the city, the potential to accommodate large scale development near Blarney railway station may offer an opportunity to maintain the impetus necessary to implement the CASP strategy.

Section 5

Proposals for the New Settlement at Monard

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1. This section discusses the options for locating the proposed new settlement in the area near the proposed new railway station for Monard/Rathpeacon. The suitability for development of a number of locations near the proposed station is discussed and proposals for the siting of the new settlement are made.

5.2 Overall Concept

A 'Master Plan' for Monard

5.2.1. These proposals for the development of a new settlement at Monard are an important element of the CASP strategy for Metropolitan Cork. Although CASP originally suggested that the new settlement should commence construction in about 2008 and be largely complete by 2020, realistic estimates of the timescale appropriate to a project of this nature suggest that the first new housing is unlikely to be completed before the year 2012. The rate at which the development is completed will depend upon the market demand for new housing in this area. Based on an optimistic assumption that about 400 new houses could be sold each year, completion of the development may take about 12 years.

5.2.2. To be successful, the new settlement at Monard needs to be planned as a single entity from the start. Without a detailed 'master plan' that can form an agreed basis for the development, attempts to accommodate this scale of development within the sporadic pattern of existing green belt development will result in sprawling characterless suburbs with few services, poor infrastructure, and little sense of community. A detailed 'master plan' for the new development could form the basis of a 'contract' between the County Council as the planning authority, the public and community groups and developers.

5.2.3. It is not intended that this special local area plan should form the 'master plan' for the new settlement. If Monard is to become a 'flag ship' project for the Cork area, then the preparation of its 'master plan' will require special skills and expertise.

5.2.4. However, it is intended that this special local area plan should provide a 'project brief' that will inform the subsequent preparation of

the 'master plan'. As such, this plan will need to provide clear guidance to the 'master plan' on the following topics:

- *The location & scale of the new development;*
- *Housing & Community Facilities;*
- *Transportation;*
- *Infrastructure;*
- *Education and Community Facilities*
- *Employment and Economic Activity; and*
- *Environment.*

5.3 Planning the New Settlement

Site Selection



FIGURE 5.1: PROPOSED LOCATION FOR THE MONARD STATION

5.3.1. Because of the engineering constraints along the railway route north of the city, the Cork Suburban Rail Feasibility Study identified only one main option for the provision of a new railway station in the Monard/Rathpeacon area that is known as Rathpeacon siding.

5.3.2. If the proposed new settlement at Monard is to take full advantage of the opportunities for rail travel arising from the

development of the establishment of the Cork Suburban Rail Network and the new station at Monard, then the majority of the new housing development planned for the area needs to be within 2km of the station site.

5.3.3. However, the complex and undulating topography of the area surrounding the preferred station site raises difficulties for the planning and design of the new settlement. These physical constraints affecting the choice of site for the new settlement are outlined in the site selection map.

5.3.4. To the south and west, the station site overlooks the Blarney River valley and development here would be prominent in longer distance views from the west. To the south, the land falls away steeply towards the N20 Cork – Limerick National Primary Route. Building on these slopes would be difficult, visually intrusive and would impinge on the setting of a significant number of individual rural houses that have been developed in this area.

5.3.5. The existing settlement of Killeens is also located about 1.5km south of the station site and, in order that it should retain its own identity and setting rather than be subsumed within the new settlement, the area between the station and this village should be protected from development and retain its green belt status.

5.3.6. To the west of the station area is the steeply sloping upper part of the Blarney River valley and to the east is a further area of steep slopes near Rathpeacon where the potential for future development is limited. However, the natural and built heritage of this part of the valley is such that it could form the basis of an attractive 'heritage' or 'country' park.

5.3.7. The main area with potential for development on the scale required at Monard is the area to the north of the proposed station. Here, although the land is sloping, gradients are less steep and there is an extensive area of largely open agricultural land where the density of existing sporadic rural dwellings is less than in other nearby localities. However, the area rises to an elevation of about 138 m.

5.3.8. Also, the uppermost parts of this area are located on the main ridge of elevated ground that forms the visual backdrop to Cork City and is the boundary of the City and Harbour Landscape Character Area defined in the County Development Plan 2003. Care will need to be taken so that any new development in this sensitive area does not impinge on the setting of the city itself.

5.3.9. For these reasons, it is considered that the following are of particular importance to the question of site selection:

- *Avoiding development on the steeply sloping and more prominent land to the south of the proposed railway station;*

- Avoiding development where it will impinge on the setting of Cork City and views out of its' built up area to the countryside beyond;
- Avoiding development where it will have an adverse effect on both the natural and built heritage of the area;
- Respecting the existing settlement pattern and give a measure of protection to the separate identity and setting of both Killeens and Rathpeacon;
- Where possible, respecting the existence and setting of individual rural dwellings; and
- Identifying land suitable for development within a convenient distance of the proposed railway station.

Objective No.	<u>Proposed New Settlement at Monard</u>
MON 5-1	It is the Council's objective to indicate the preferred location for a new settlement at Monard.



FIGURE 5.2: VIADUCT AT MONARD



FIGURE 5.3: RATHPEACON SIDING

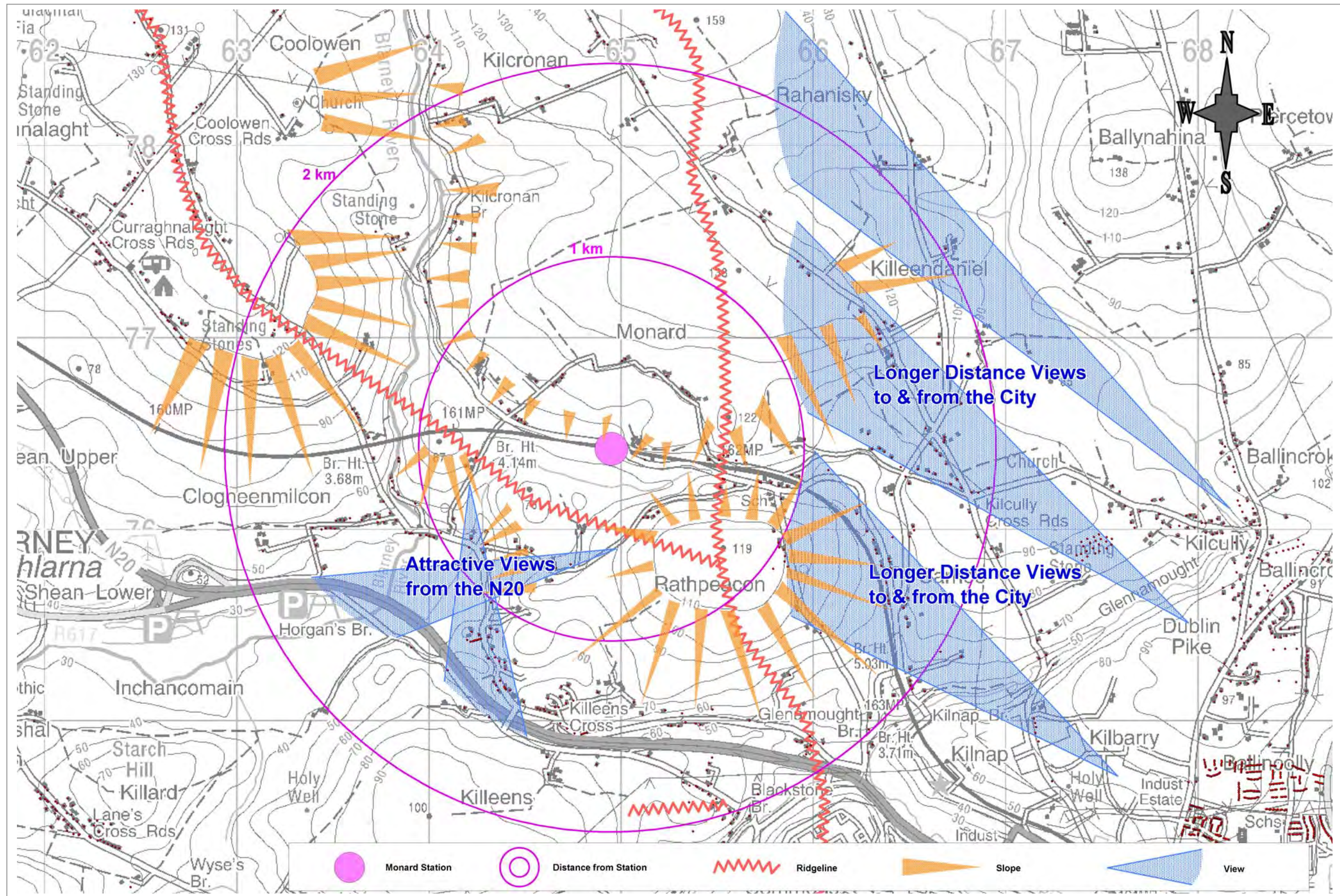


FIGURE 5.4: MONARD NEW SETTLEMENT SITE SELECTION

5.4 Design Principles

General Approach

5.4.1. Issues relating to the detailed design of the proposed new settlement will be dealt with through the preparation of a masterplan following the adoption of this plan. However, in order to help test the suitability of the selected site and to inform the proposed masterplan, some consideration should be given at this stage to the broad design principles that could be suitable on this site.

5.4.2. In attempting to define these broad principles that can inform the process of detailed design, consideration needs to be given to the establishment of a form and structure to the new settlement that will:

- Reflect the existing settlement pattern of the area;
- Make best use of the attractive features of the site;
- Provide scope for the existing rural dwellings in the area to retain their character;
- Provide for the development of a sense of place amongst the future inhabitants;
- Provide for the establishment of an attractive setting for the new settlement by the development of a landscape structure; and
- Provide opportunities for an enhanced quality of life for all the occupants.

5.4.3. One option that could help the proposed new settlement to achieve these objectives would be for it to take the form of a small group of interlinked villages rather than a new town. The indicative proposal shown in the framework diagram suggests that three mainly residential villages could be constructed generally within a 2km radius of the proposed station site. These would vary in size according to site-specific considerations but the aim would be for each village to be largely self-contained in terms of the services and facilities that most people need on a day-to-day basis.

5.4.4. The framework diagram also shows a fourth area for development near the railway station. The presence of the station suggests that this area could form a mixed-use town centre area, serving the entire Monard development, including a supermarket, some comparison-shopping, a cinema, civic buildings and a medical centre. About 500 new homes, at relatively high densities, could also be included.

5.4.5. Alternatively, this area near the station could be developed as a compact, high density village adjoining the station with mainly residential uses but including local shops and a community building.

The town centre could then be included in the largest of the proposed new villages where the secondary school for the new settlement is also proposed. The final decision regarding the disposition of the components of the new settlement development should be taken when the masterplan is prepared.



FIGURE 5.5: MONARD DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Employment

5.4.6. CASP suggests that Monard would be a suitable location for high quality industrial production facilities and it is anticipated that the proposed Masterplan will make provision for this together with other localised areas of employment development and significant office development within the proposed town centre. Reliance will be placed on the development of land outside Monard such as the IDA proposals for Kilbarry and the Blarney Business Park.

Shopping

5.4.7. Clearly, a properly planned new settlement should make provision for shopping development on an appropriate scale. The first requirement is to ensure that all residential areas include provision for small scale local shopping (up to 500 sq m) so that day-to-day convenience goods requirements can be purchased within about a 10-minute walk of all new houses. Other convenience uses such as public houses and small restaurants or take-away food outlets could be appropriate in these local centres.

5.4.8. Provision should also be made within the new settlement development so that weekly shopping for convenience and some comparison goods can be done without the need to travel to another town or shopping centre. This development will take the form of a mixed-use town centre area for the new settlement consisting of a supermarket, other convenience and comparison shops, cinemas, restaurants, banks and other retail financial or other services.

5.4.9. This area could either be located near the proposed railway station, or alternatively at a more central location within the network of villages proposed.

Residential Development

5.4.10. The 5,000 new houses to be provided at Monard will support a population of up to about 13,000 persons by the year 2020. If the development is planned as a group of interlinked villages, as suggested, it should be possible to complete one village before the development of the next commences.

Each village should:

- Be largely self-contained so that as many frequently used facilities, such as primary schools, child care facilities and local convenience shops, are within walking distance of peoples homes;
- Contain a good mix of house styles and tenures to attract people from all walks of life;
- Include different densities so that different character areas can be created. The aim should be to encourage the highest standards of urban design and architecture;
- Be integrated with the attractive countryside around them by designing opportunities for it to extend into the settlement and by creating access and views at the edge of the built up area; and
- Be set in its' own open space framework and there should be easy pedestrian access to this.

Primary Schools

5.4.11. It will be necessary to provide the equivalent of a total of five single-stream primary schools to serve the development. If appropriate, some of these could be provided as two-stream schools and provision should be made for a variety of educational traditions. The role to be played by the existing Rathpeacon National School will need to be resolved through further discussions with the education institutions.

5.4.12. To reduce the need for car journeys and to promote a healthy lifestyle, the aim will be to encourage the location of primary schools so

that the greatest number of children will have the opportunity to safely walk or cycle to and from school. To achieve this, the master plan will provide for the location of primary schools so that all the main residential areas are within about 500 m walking distance of the schools. Walking and cycling routes, designed with public safety in mind and segregated from roads carrying vehicular traffic will need to be provided linking all neighbourhoods with their local primary school.

5.4.13. The timely provision of primary schools is considered to be one of the most important building blocks of a new community. The development should be phased so that the primary schools are provided progressively, in parallel with the development of new housing. Developers will be required to construct the school buildings as part of the development of adjoining or nearby land (as indicated in the master plan) and to make these buildings available to the appropriate education provider on terms that mirror the approach taken with regard to social and affordable housing.

Secondary Schools

5.4.14. It will also be necessary to provide a single five-stream secondary school to serve the development and it is only when this is provided that the new settlement at Monard will begin to function as a freestanding satellite town.

5.4.15. To reduce the need for car journeys and to promote a healthy lifestyle, the aim will be to encourage the location of the secondary schools so that the greatest number of children will have the opportunity to either walk or cycle safely to and from school. To achieve this, the master plan will provide for it to be centrally located so that all the main residential areas have good access to it. Walking and cycling routes, designed with public safety in mind and segregated from roads carrying vehicular traffic will need to be provided linking all neighbourhoods with the secondary school.

5.4.16. The timely provision of the secondary school is considered to be an important building block for the establishment of the new community. At the outset of the new settlement development, it will be necessary for secondary school age children to travel to existing secondary schools (either in Blarney or Cork). However, if the construction of the secondary school is phased, it will be possible to provide secondary education with the new settlement during the early phases of its development.

5.4.17. Developers will be required to construct the school buildings as part of the development of adjoining or nearby land (as indicated in the master plan) and to make these buildings available to the appropriate education provider on terms that mirror the approach taken with regard to social and affordable housing.

Community Facilities

5.4.18. Experience in other new settlement projects has shown that the provision of a community building at the outset of the development not only benefits the community but also benefits developers and the planning authority. This is because, from the commencement of the development through to its completion, there will be a need for the growing community to meet the developers, planning authority officials and local political representatives to discuss the practical aspects of the various phases of the development itself. The lack of a building in which to conduct such meetings, in other new settlement projects, has been an unnecessary source of conflict between the parties.

5.4.19. Over the life of the development, provision should be made so that the range and quality of community facilities can be enhanced in line with the growth of the settlements' population.

Sports & Recreation

5.4.20. If the new settlement at Monard is to succeed, it will need to offer those who chose to live there the opportunity to achieve a quality of life that exceeds that more commonly available in the other satellite towns in Metropolitan Cork. A key element will be ensuring that the development proposals guarantee the provision of an exceptional range and quality of sports and recreation facilities that can underpin the lifestyle expectations of residents.

5.4.21. With this aim in mind, the national and local standards for the provision of open space and sports facilities set out in Chapter 3 of this plan must be regarded as an absolute minimum for the design and planning of the proposed new settlement.

5.4.22. Formal sports facilities are an important part of this strategy. The new settlement at Monard should be planned so that a comprehensive range of sports facilities can be provided at specified stages in the development programme. Developers will be required to provide for sports activities likely to include the following:

- *Outdoor and all-weather pitches for major team sports including GAA, Soccer, Rugby;*
- *Golf facilities including pay-and-play facilities and a driving range*
- *A multi-purpose sports centre with indoor and outdoor facilities for Tennis, Squash, Swimming, Basketball, Five-a-Side and fitness activities.*

5.4.23. The recreation formats that enjoy the highest levels of participation are those that are informal in their nature such as walking, cycling and children's informal play. The detailed design and planning of the new settlement should ensure that equipped children's play

Section 5: Land Use Proposals –The New Settlement at Monard

spaces are provided so that all new dwellings are within a short and safe walking distance.

5.4.24. Larger areas of open space, including areas suitable for ball games, should be provided within a convenient walking or cycling distance of all new dwellings.

5.4.25. The opportunity should also be taken to provide a major country park facility that could provide:

- *Unparalleled opportunities for countryside recreation close to peoples homes;*
- *A means of linking major sporting facilities with informal open spaces;*
- *An attractive landscape setting for the new settlement;*
- *Opportunities for the enhancement of wildlife habitat, nature conservation and built heritage interests; and*
- *A means of protecting the existing setting of many existing dwellings near the new settlement.*

5.5 Transportation

5.5.1. The private car is presently the principal means of personal transportation in most settlements in Metropolitan Cork. The CASP strategy, through the re-opening of the railway route and its proposals to locate new development in convenient locations to encourage travel by train, seeks to promote a significant shift away from the private car as the pre-eminent means of transportation.

5.5.2. If the benefits of encouraging the development of a new settlement and establishing a suburban rail network are to be maximised, then it is important to set out clear guidance on the development of the settlement's transportation system so that it can be better integrated with the new railway service to help reduce:

- *Traffic congestion; and*
- *The need for car parking near the station complex*

5.5.3. Special emphasis should be given to encouraging measures that contribute positively to the concept of 'total journey quality' for those whose journeys involve a rail element.

Walking

5.5.4. Almost all journeys begin and end with an element of walking even if it is only from the car parking space to the home or workplace.

The capacity of the private car to readily make door-to-door journeys has, in recent years, reduced the walking element in many everyday journeys undertaken by all age groups. In turn, this has contributed to an increasingly unfriendly environment for pedestrians both in towns and rural areas. The planning and design of major developments in recent years has resulted in the benefits and enjoyment incurred through walking being lost to many.

5.5.5. However, it is now widely recognised that there is a need to restore walking to the top of a sustainable transport hierarchy and that this can only be achieved if positive measures are taken to redress the balance in favour of the pedestrian. Restoring walking as an important means of moving around our towns and rural areas helps revitalise communities facilitating increased social interaction between individuals, increasing opportunities for children to play safely and contributing to the health and well being of individuals.

5.5.6. Walking should be a readily available option for most adults on journeys up to about 2km particularly for access to town centres and public transport. These journeys should be capable of being achieved without conflict with other modes of transport including cars, public transport and cyclists. Consideration should also be given to the need to provide a degree of protection from the elements on particularly busy sections of a route.

Cycling

5.5.7. The causes of the decline of cycling in recent years have much in common with the causes of the decline in walking as a primary means of transportation. Taking positive steps to help restore cycling to its place in a sustainable transport hierarchy, can bring many of the benefits to communities and individuals that are advanced in the justification for the similar restoration of walking.

5.5.8. The topography in the Monard area does not naturally lend itself to cycling but, with careful design, a series of routes can be developed to making cycling a safe and attractive option. In the context of the proposed new settlement, the master planning process will ensure that such routes are segregated from vehicular traffic from the outset.

Busses

5.5.9. The proposed new settlement will need to make provision for bus services both within the development itself, particularly linking the main residential areas with the railway station, and with adjoining settlements.

Road Proposals

5.5.10. The existing road network serving the Monard area will require major reconstruction if it is to serve the new settlement. The emerging proposal for the Cork Northern Ring Route will provide links with:

- Cork City;
- The N20 northbound/Mallow;
- Blarney/Tower;

Other new or improved routes likely to be required include:

- Whitechurch; and
- Killeens.

5.5.11. The master plan will indicate the appropriate standard for each route and the phasing of each key road proposal so that it is provided at the appropriate point in the overall scheme for the development of the new settlement.

5.5.12. Within the new settlement itself, a new road network will be provided in accordance with the County Council's standards for new residential areas.

5.6 Infrastructure

Drinking Water Supply

5.6.1. A new drinking water supply network will need to be constructed to serve the new settlement. This will consist of the following main elements:

- *The construction of a new trunk main from the reservoir at Inniscarra;*
- *The extension of drinking water treatment facilities at Inniscarra;*
- *The construction of a new service reservoir to serve the new settlement; and*
- *The construction of a service network to serve the areas identified for new development.*

Waste Water Disposal

5.6.2. A new system for the disposal of waste water will need to be constructed to serve the new settlement. This will consist of the following main elements:

- *The construction of a service network to serve the areas identified for new development;*
- *The construction of a new trunk main to link the new settlement with an existing waste water treatment plant that either has or can be extended to provide adequate treatment capacity for the wastewater likely to be generated by the development (the most likely such plant is the City Main Drainage Treatment Plant at Carrigrennan, Little Island); and*
- *If appropriate, the extension of waste water treatment facilities at the designated waste water treatment plant.*

Surface Water Disposal

5.6.3. A new system for the disposal of surface water will need to be constructed to serve the new settlement. This will consist of the following main elements:

- *The construction of a fully segregated service network to serve the areas identified for new development;*
- *The construction, on site, of appropriate attenuation measures so that the rate at which run-off enters local water courses does not exceed the corresponding rate prior to the commencement of the new development (year storm events of up to 1-in-100 year frequency); and*
- *Pollution prevention measures to protect sensitive areas down stream of the site.*

Metropolitan Cork Green Belt

5.6.4. In preparing this plan Cork County Council have given consideration to the impact of the proposed new settlement at Monard on the Metropolitan Cork Green Belt. For the development to proceed, it will be necessary for the Council to withdraw the green belt designation that presently applies to the land on which it is proposed to carry out the development.

5.6.5. However, whilst the Council are minded to proceed with the development of the new settlement, it is considered that it would be premature to withdraw the Metropolitan Green Belt designation until such time as the proposed master plan has been completed. This approach will facilitate detailed consultation with all the interested parties and will enable the retention of the Metropolitan Green Belt

designation on those parts of the site not ultimately required for built development.

5.7 Implementation

General Approach

5.7.1. An effective and realistic plan for the implementation of this project is essential. The starting place will be the completion and adoption of this special local area plan so that it can form the basis of a broad agreement between the County Council as the planning authority, the public and community groups and the development industry to ensure that:

- The proposals set out in this plan are the most appropriate means by which the CASP strategy for Metropolitan Cork can be implemented in the rail corridor north of the city;
- The County Council should establish a Project Steering Group and a Project Design Team along the lines suggested in this plan;
- Once a Masterplan has been prepared, it should be subjected either to the SDZ procedures or made the subject of an application for outline planning permission;
- A special contribution scheme will be established to fund the cost of strategic infrastructure; and
- The aim will be to create conditions where a partnership between private sector house building industry, community groups and the planning authority play the leading role in the detailed design and construction of the project broadly in line with the Masterplan.

5.7.2. Cork County Council, committing itself to the development of a new settlement at Monard, will seek funding from Government towards the provision of infrastructure for the new settlement at Monard, allowing for a successful economic, social and environmental unit to be developed.

Project Steering Group

5.7.3. The main responsibilities of the Project Steering Group will involve giving overall or strategic guidance throughout the design and implementation phases of the project. The Group will oversee the work of the Project Design Team. They will decide on issues that may include the appropriate timing and format of public consultation during the project. If this group is to be effective its membership will need to be broadly based representing all the key stakeholder groups concerned with the Monard new settlement project including representatives from the planning authority (including the elected members), the house building and construction industry, community

groups, sports clubs, education providers, crime prevention agencies, environment and heritage agencies and traffic and transport agencies. There will also need to be a clearly defined role for community groups.

Project Design Team

5.7.4. This multi-disciplinary group will be responsible for the preparation of the Masterplan and the design of key strategic infrastructure required to support the new settlement. It may be chaired by a senior public official and will include senior figures from many professional disciplines likely to include:

- Urban Design/Architecture/Masterplanning;
- Civil and Utilities Engineering;
- Town & Country Planning;
- Ecology;
- Landscape Architecture;
- Conservation; and
- Surveying and Land Acquisition.

5.7.5. A key position in the team will be that of Urban Designer /Architect /Master planner and it could be appropriate to make this appointment by way of competition in order to attract a leading national or international figure to the role. The team will report to the Project Steering Group.

Project Timetable

5.7.6. The following table outlines the possible timescale for the planning and implementation of the project:

<u>Monard New Settlement - Outline Project Timetable</u>	
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise and adopt Special Local Area Plan • Approve variation to County Development Plan 2003 • Set up Project Steering Group • Consider Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) designation • Commence selection process for appointment of Project Design Team
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm key appointments to project team

<u>Monard New Settlement - Outline Project Timetable</u>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commence Masterplan preparation • Commission strategic sanitary infrastructure design studies • Commission strategic roads design studies • Commission Heritage and Ecology audit
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct public consultation on Draft Masterplan (including strategic sanitary infrastructure and roads proposals) • Amend and refine Masterplan following public consultation
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise and adopt Masterplan • If appropriate, commence SDZ planning procedures or seek outline planning permission (OPP) based on Masterplan • Identify key land acquisition requirements for strategic infrastructure
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete SDZ/OPP planning procedures • Establish a Special Contribution Scheme to Fund the cost of strategic infrastructure • Complete land acquisition for strategic infrastructure • Prepare contract documents for strategic infrastructure
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commence strategic infrastructure construction • Detailed planning application for 1st phase
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commence construction of 1st phase • Commence construction of new railway station • Commission strategic infrastructure
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New houses released for sale • New railway station opens

Objective No.	<u>Proposed New Settlement at Monard</u>
MON 5-2	It is an objective of this plan to facilitate the development of a new settlement on land to the north of the proposed railway station for Monard.
MON 5-3	<p>The new settlement at Monard will comprise the following main elements;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>About 5,000 new homes</i> • <i>A new secondary school</i> • <i>New Primary Schools</i> • <i>Major new Country Park</i> • <i>New Railway Station</i> • <i>Some Comparison and Convenience Retail</i> • <i>Recreation and Open Space</i>
MON 5-4	<p>It is the County Council's objective to prepare a Master Plan for the proposed new settlement. The Master Plan will take into account;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The views of local people and community groups</i> • <i>The environmental objectives and other objectives of this plan</i> • <i>Detail assessments of the natural and built heritage of the area</i> • <i>Any other matters considered relevant to the proper planning of the new settlement.</i>

Section 6 Land Use Proposals for the Blarney Area

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1. This section contains the main land use proposals for Blarney. The suitability for development of locations near the proposed station are discussed.

6.2 The Role of Blarney in the Network of Settlements to the North of Cork City

6.2.1. Blarney and Tower have together been designated as a satellite town since the emergence of the Cork Land Use and Transportation Plans (LUTS) of the 1970's and 1990's. Recent County Development Plans in both 1996 and 2003 have tended to place the major emphasis for growth on Tower rather than Blarney so as to protect the latter locations environmental qualities on which one of the regions main tourist attractions is based.

6.2.2. The establishment of the Cork Suburban Rail Network with a station at Blarney invites significant changes to that strategy, in future placing the development emphasis on the area near Blarney railway station, if the best use is to be made of the planned investment in rail infrastructure. The area near the station has the potential to develop as a new residential neighbourhood with community facilities and a neighbourhood shopping centre that would serve not only the new development but could provide new facilities for Blarney as a whole.

6.2.3. A key advantage of the Blarney railway station location is that, unlike the larger scale development proposed at Monard that will require a major investment in new infrastructure at the outset, it can make use of the existing road and sanitary infrastructure serving the town, providing this can be improved. This will enable development to happen much more quickly at Blarney than at Monard, ensuring that the CASP projections for housing and population growth for 2007 – 2013 in the rail corridor north of the city have a reasonable prospect of being achieved.

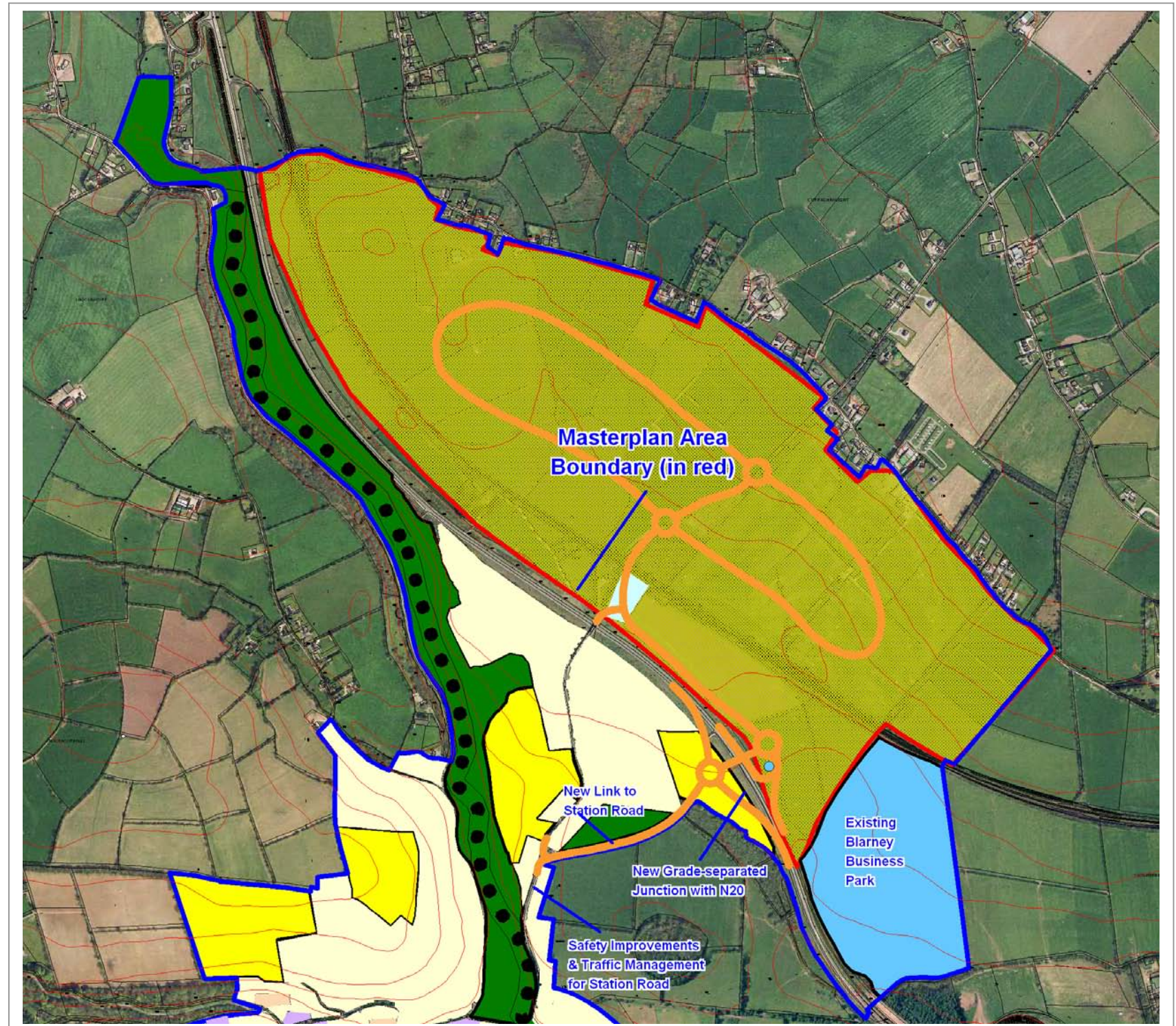


FIGURE 6.1: BOUNDARY OF MASTERPLAN AREA

6.3 The Scale of New Development at Blarney

6.3.1. For the reasons outlined in the preceding paragraphs, the County Council are suggesting that it is appropriate to provide for the development of a new neighbourhood near Blarney railway station that, together with other development, will result in the construction of about 2,500 new dwellings in the 2007 – 2013 period.

6.3.2. New development on this scale, together with land already identified for new housing development in the County Development Plan 2003 will result in the number of households in the town of Blarney increasing from about 560 in the year 2000 to about 2760 in the years 2011. The population of the town will be about 7,300 persons in the year 2020.

Objective No.	Housing & Community Facilities - The Requirement for New Housing
HOU 6-1	It is an objective of this plan to secure the development of about 2,500 new dwellings on land near Blarney railway station by the year 2011 in order to facilitate the growth of the town's population to about 7,300 persons over the same period.

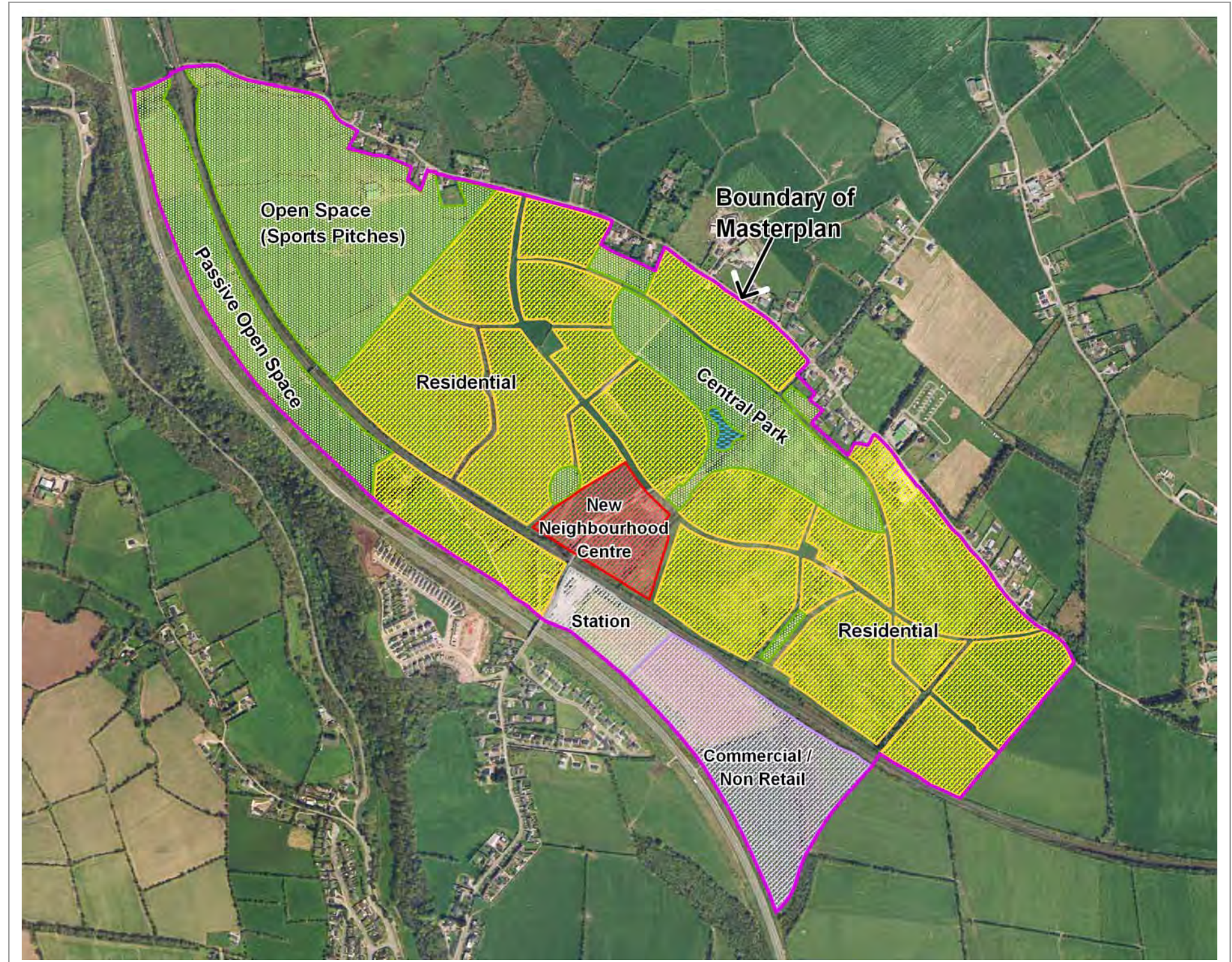


FIGURE 6.2: INDICATIVE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR BLARNEY

6.4 Co-ordinating Housing Growth

6.4.1. Although these proposals involve the relatively rapid expansion of the town of Blarney in line with the introduction of the suburban rail service, the scale of new housing growth, in overall terms is less than in other locations on the rail corridor. Nevertheless the proposals raise important questions regarding the co-ordination of that growth in particular with the plans to re-open the railway service to the town but also with regard to the provision of the physical and social infrastructure necessary to support the new population. The County Council considers that the co-ordination of the new development proposed in this way is particularly important if many of the presently attractive characteristics of the town are not to be lost.

6.4.2. The important strategic role to be played by the town of Blarney as the major centre for population growth in the 2007-2011 period in the rail corridor north of the city, will be a major driving force in the implementation of the CASP Strategy until new housing becomes available at the Monard new settlement towards the end of that period.

Objective No.	Housing & Community Facilities – Co-ordinating New Housing Growth
HOU 6-2	It is an objective of this plan to co-ordinate new housing development in the town giving priority to locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Offering convenient access to the new railway station; and</i> • <i>The opportunity to secure the timely completion of specific physical and social infrastructure projects.</i>

6.5 Site-Specific Proposals: Blarney Railway Station

General Considerations

6.5.1. The Blarney Railway Station area is considered to offer significant potential for the expansion of Blarney to meet the need for new housing forecast for the rail corridor north of Cork in the CASP strategy. The area comprises Blarney Golf Course to the east, an area of agricultural land to the north, the Blarney Business Park to the south east and a narrow area of agricultural land including some housing to the north-west.

6.5.2. Overall, an area of about 100 ha north of the railway line could be considered for development in addition to the 35 ha business-park to the south. Most of this land is within 1 km of the proposed railway

station site and so offers an important opportunity to locate new housing close to one of the new railway stations proposed.

6.5.3. The golf course area to the east of the station is the most steeply sloping and visually prominent area. The land to the north is relatively flat and, to a degree, better concealed from longer distance views by the topography of the locality. With the exception of the business park, all the land currently forms part of the Metropolitan Cork Green Belt where the objectives of the County Development Plan 2003 reserve land uses generally for agriculture.

6.5.4. The golf course that forms part of this proposal is subject to objective HOU 4-1 of the County Development Plan 2003 that seeks to protect leisure facilities from development as follows:

“Replacement of Leisure Facilities: It is an objective to prevent the loss of existing leisure facilities, including sports clubs, grounds, built leisure facilities and areas of public and private open space through redevelopment to other uses unless an alternative open space or leisure facilities can be provided to serve the same area.”

6.5.5. Because of the strategic importance that the area has acquired following the Government’s announcement that it will support Iarnród Éireann in the reopening of Blarney railway station, it is considered appropriate to include proposals to develop this land in the plan. Overall, it is considered that the development of the area, including the golf course, in conjunction with the new railway station, can make a significant contribution to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

6.5.6. However, so that the plan shall remain consistent with the County Development Plan 2003, it is necessary to ensure that there is appropriate provision for replacement or alternative open space or leisure facilities as required by objective HOU 4-1. The golf course that will be lost to development as a result of the plan’s proposals, itself comprises about 35ha. The intending developer’s submission to the draft plan proposed to restrict the built area of the development onto a significantly smaller overall site area than that shown in the draft plan, reducing the open space provided to about 22 ha even though additional land is understood to remain under their control. So that this plan should not conflict with objective HOU 4-1 of the County Development Plan 2003, the area devoted to open space, in addition to that normally required within new housing development, should remain broadly equal to the area lost as a result of the development of the golf course.

Land Uses & Urban Design

6.5.7. The public consultation draft of this plan invited landowners and intending developers to set out details of their proposals so that, if appropriate, the plan could be amended to facilitate them and, in response, a number of submissions were received.

6.5.8. It is considered that one of the key principles for the development of this area is to secure comprehensive proposals at the outset so that the development as a whole can be planned as a single entity together with its’ physical and social infrastructure. Therefore, whilst this plan facilitates many of the proposals put forward in submissions, the plan’s objectives for the site seek the provision of a master plan before individual proposals can commence. It is envisaged that developers and landowners will play a key role in the preparation of the masterplan and they will be expected to consult with the public before it is submitted to the Council for approval.

6.5.9. The objective for the site provides for a hospital to be included within the overall development. The masterplan for the development must also include clear and unambiguous proposals for the phasing of the development and the timing of provision for all its supporting physical and social infrastructure.

Employment and Economic Activity

6.5.10. A number of submissions regarding the draft plan raised issues concerning employment development including retailing. It was suggested that it would be beneficial to the overall development if a broader range of uses were to be provided on the Blarney Business Park including mixed commercial uses and a retail centre.

6.5.11. The Blarney Business Park is an important location for employment development in the rail corridor north of Cork City especially because of its location close to the proposed rail station and also because of uncertainties concerning the provision of employment development at the new settlement proposed at Monard. In the light of the new development now proposed at Station Road, parts of the area closest to the new interchange proposed with the N20 are considered to be capable of accommodating a somewhat broader range of uses than the office based industry proposed in the County Development Plan 2003.

6.5.12. However, retail uses, outside the proposed neighbourhood centre, are not considered appropriate, as major retailing here would conflict with the County Development Plan 2003 (as varied) and with the Cork Strategic Retail Study which suggests that the new settlement proposed at Monard would be a more appropriate location for district level retail development.

6.5.13. Suggestions that the proposed neighbourhood development should be located closer to the housing development that it will primarily serve, on the north eastern side of the railway line rather than to the south of the line as proposed in the draft plan are considered appropriate and would facilitate a more cohesive form of development here.

6.5.14. In addition to the open space normally required in new housing development, a major open space development, totalling a minimum of 35 hectares is required, to provide for recreation and new sports facilities.

Objective No.	Housing and Community Facilities - Proposed Development at Blarney Railway Station
HOU 6-3	<p>The County Council consider that the area to which this objective relates near Blarney Railway Station is an appropriate location for a major expansion of the town that is required in order to achieve the scale of growth suggested in the Cork Area Strategic Plan.</p> <p>It is the Councils' objective to secure the development of up to 2,500 new dwellings on this site through a phased programme of development that will secure the timely provision of the necessary physical, social and economic infrastructure. So that the development of this land can be properly co-ordinated, it will only be in accordance with a master plan for the area to which this objective relates that has been approved by the County Council. The master plan may be prepared by a single developer or landowner or by a group of developers or landowners acting jointly. Whilst the responsibility for preparing the master plan ultimately rests with developers and landowners, in order to assist the process of consultation in preparing the master plan it is the County Council's intention to establish a Partnership Committee the membership of which will include representatives from the community groups, developers, landowners, elected members and officials from the planning authority.</p> <p>The master plan will pay particular attention to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The steps taken by the developers and landowners preparing the Masterplan to consult with other landowners and residents in the area generally; The provision of a clear and unambiguous proposal for the timing and construction of all the elements of the development in a number of

Objective No.	Housing and Community Facilities - Proposed Development at Blarney Railway Station
HOU 6-3 Contd.	<p>sequential phases;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of new housing within a clearly defined network of 'character areas' so that each area can develop its own identity and sense of community; Proposals for the provision of the new railway station, including park-and-ride facilities, and the timing of its construction; To the south of the railway, in the area close to the proposed new interchange with the N20, the proposed master plan may make provision, within the area to which this objective applies, for non-retail commercial development; The timing and provision of appropriate drinking water and waste water disposal services for the development including, where necessary, the upgrading of off-site infrastructure; Proposals for the construction of a distributor road network capable of accommodating public transport and a segregated footway and cycle way system linking all parts of the site to the neighbourhood centre, railway station and town centre; Proposals for the provision and construction of national or primary schools to meet the educational requirements of those likely to live in the development including the timing of their construction; The setting aside of land for the construction of a new secondary school; The construction and timing of a neighbourhood centre consisting mainly of convenience shops, offices, a new church, a community hall and sports, leisure and recreation facilities; Provision may also be made for a hospital development; The construction and timing of a new grade separated interchange with the N20 national primary route to be provided prior to the

Objective No.	Housing and Community Facilities - Proposed Development at Blarney Railway Station
HOU 6-3 Contd.	<p>occupation of any dwellings on the land;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The construction and timing of new and improved road links between the station area and the existing town of Blarney; In addition to the open space normally required within new housing developments, the provision of a minimum of 35ha to provide for recreation, sports and leisure facilities; A visual impact assessment of the development and proposals for structural landscaping within the site itself and to the site boundaries to protect its setting and to provide a long term edge to the built up area of the town; Proposals for the future management and maintenance (including funding or sub-contracting arrangements) of the open-space areas included within the development; and The implementation of the phasing proposals embodied in this plan to secure the overall co-ordination of the development.

6.5.15. The vision for this new residential neighbourhood adjacent to the railway station is centred around a local town/village centre at its core. The new hub will create a social focus and a visual identity for the overall development. An urban format for this hub is proposed. It will consist of streets and squares, edged by fine-grained buildings. Spaces will be designed so as to create a human-scale intimate village atmosphere.

6.5.16. The village will provide a mix of uses that will serve local weekly needs. These will include convenience and some comparison / DIY shopping to serve this new population, public houses, restaurants, and local services, hairdressers, beauty salons, crèches and a medical centre. Residential accommodation should be encouraged so as to ensure a vibrant street life and feeling of security. Small office units at upper floors of street buildings may also be provided for daytime activity.

6.5.17. The hub will be located north of the railway adjacent to the station where it can directly serve the housing east and west. It also

has a direct relationship with the central park space adjacent to the north and takes advantage of the proposed station location.

6.5.18. In attempting to define the broad principles that can inform the process of detailed design, consideration needs to be given to the establishment of a form and structure to the new development that will embody the following elements:

- *A reflection of the existing development pattern in the area;*
- *Make best use of the attractive features of the site;*
- *Provide scope for the existing rural dwellings in the area to retain their character;*
- *The easy development of a sense of place amongst its' inhabitants;*
- *The establishment of an attractive setting for the new development by the establishment of a landscape structure; and*
- *Opportunities for an enhanced quality of life for all the occupants.*

6.5.19. The following table sets out an indicative land-use budget for the development of this area:

Figure 6.3: Development at Blarney Railway Station Suggested Land Use Budget		
New Housing	<i>Total Residential units Proposed</i>	2500 units
Housing Land Required	<i>Total Housing Land Required</i>	75 ha

that are associated with it, the development of two major new residential neighbourhoods in the vicinity of the railway station brings with it the opportunity to allow the development of more modern convenience shopping formats. When the residential development proposed near the railway station is complete, a greater proportion of the population will live closer to the station than to the existing town centre, so allowing neighbourhood centre uses to develop in the station area will be more convenient to many people and reduce the need for journeys to the traditional town centre.

6.6.3. The creation of a new grade separated junction on to the N20 near the railway station will allow delivery vehicles convenient access to shops here without having to pass through either the traditional town centre or residential areas.

6.6.4. The GAA grounds to the south of the Castle Close Road have been the subject of proposals for redevelopment. The GAA authorities intend their facilities to be relocated west of the town on part of the Blarney Castle Estate within the Metropolitan Cork Green Belt where uses of this nature are generally considered appropriate.

6.6.5. However, the County Council is of the view that the existing grounds, if the GAA is successful in its proposed relocation, could be an appropriate location for either tourism related or other forms of development (including residential) because of their relationship to the Castle Estate. The site lies within the development boundary of Blarney and the designation applied to these lands in this plan reflects their established use. With this in mind, the council may exercise its discretion to grant planning permission during the lifetime of this plan if an appropriate proposal is put forward and the GAA facility has been successfully relocated.

6.6 Town Centre Development

6.6.1. The existing town centre in Blarney functions both as a neighbourhood centre offering mainly convenience shopping and as a significant tourist destination based on Blarney Castle and the Blarney Woollen Mills development. It has proved difficult to adapt the town centre to modern convenience shopping formats because to do so could harm the heritage value of the area that has proved so successful in attracting tourists. The designation of the Blarney Park site as a special opportunity site reflects the Council's commitment to the strategy for the older part of the town.

6.6.2. Whilst the County Council are keen to see convenience shopping retained in this area, in particular the liveliness and bustle

Section 7 Infrastructure

7.1 Funding and Implementation

Background

7.1.1. The Planning and Development Act 2000 provides for the payment of contributions by developers towards the cost of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the planning authority that either is provided or will be provided by or on behalf of a local authority. The infrastructure and facilities to which these payments contribute are water, sewerage (including storm water drainage), roads and facilities for recreation and amenity.

7.1.2. Three types of contribution are provided for under the Act:

- **A General Contribution:** Calculated in accordance with an approved scheme, non refundable and not subject to a general right of appeal;
- **A Supplementary Contribution:** Calculated in accordance with an approved scheme, refundable, not subject to a general right of appeal; and
- **A Special Contribution:** Payable in respect of particular development where specific exceptional costs exist, refundable, can be appealed to An Bord Pleanála.

7.1.3. On 23rd February 2004 Cork County Council adopted schemes for the calculation of both general contributions and a scheme for the calculation of supplementary contributions towards the cost of developing the Cork Suburban Rail Network payable in respect of development taking place within 1 km of the Blarney – Cobh/Midleton rail route.

Funding Infrastructure in this Plan

7.1.4. The fund resulting from the payment of contributions under the general scheme is intended to fund infrastructure and facilities benefiting development generally in the area of the planning authority. The works and facilities funded in this way should be of broad benefit to an area as a whole, including both new and existing development.

7.1.5. In this plan the large scale development proposed will, in many instances, require large scale infrastructure projects to be completed either before or at a given point in the development programme for a

particular site or area. It is not the purpose of either the general or supplementary contribution fund to finance these largely site specific infrastructure projects.

7.1.6. These costs should be met, following the “polluter pays” principle, by the developer either through direct works or the payment of a special contribution. Other infrastructure is required to facilitate the operation of the new railway and it is envisaged that this will be provided in the first instance as part of the railway development programme. As supplementary contributions are collected they may be used to offset these initial costs.

7.1.7. For the avoidance of doubt, the following table lists the major infrastructure projects referred to in this plan for Blarney indicating the contribution source for the major element of their funding:

BLARNEY - KILBARRÝ SPECIAL LOCAL AREA PLAN KEY INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS – BLARNEY AREA			
Project	Comment	Contribution Fund	SLAP Ref.
Construction of grade separated interchange with and consequent improvements to N20	Part of U-02	Developer / Special Contribution	X-02
Construction of the distributor road network linking the N20 to the new station and new development	Including new vehicular and pedestrian bridge over railway line. Part of U-02	Developer / Special Contribution	U-02 X-02
Construction of on-line improvements to Station Road	Including traffic signals at southern end, relief route to the southeast and improvements to existing bridge over N20. Part of U-02	General Fund / Special Contribution	U-02 X-02
Upgrading of the Waste Water Treatment Plant		General Fund	
Upgrading of the Drinking Water Supply		General Fund	

7.1.8. With regard to the major infrastructure required to service the proposed new settlement at Monard, it is anticipated that proposals for

development contributions will be made during the master plan preparation process.

Schools

7.1.9. In the past, although it has been common practice to reserve land for new or extended schools through the planning process, school buildings themselves have generally been provided by the Department of Education and Science or by another education provider. Often, despite the best of intentions, this has resulted sometimes in long delays in the provision of schools in new residential areas with existing schools in adjoining built up areas accommodating the excess demand.

7.1.10. The scale of new development proposed in this plan requires a different approach. The new neighbourhoods of 2,000 or more dwellings that are proposed in this plan will place an impossible burden on existing nearby schools if new schools within the new neighbourhoods cannot be provided in a timely and effective manner. The timely provision of schools is also an essential building block in establishing a sense of identity and community in these new neighbourhoods.

7.1.11. In this plan land for new schools has been reserved in the normal way. However, where a development is likely to give rise to a school age population that will require its own new school (usually a primary school) the objectives of this plan require that the school should be constructed and made available to the appropriate education provider on terms that mirror the approach taken with regard to social and affordable housing by the developer as an integral part of the development so that appropriate education facilities are provided for the new population of the area when they are needed.

7.1.12. Close co-operation will be required between the County Council, the Department of Education and Science and developers.

Section 8 Landuse Proposals: Summary

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1. The purpose of this section is to summarise the overall landuse objectives for Blarney and Monard, and these should be read in conjunction with the zoning map. Each landuse is outlined with specific reference to the objectives included in this plan where relevant.

8.2 Special Zoning Objectives (major new residential neighbourhood)

8.2.1. The specific special zoning (major new residential neighbourhood) objectives for Blarney-Monard are set out in the following table.

BLARNEY-MONARD: SPECIAL ZONING (MAJOR NEW RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOOD)		
Objective No.	Specific Objective	Approx Area (Ha)
X-01	Proposed New Settlement. To be developed in accordance with objectives MON 5-2, 5-3 and 5-4 in this plan.	N/A
X-02	New Residential Neighbourhood. To be developed in accordance with objective HOU 6-3 in this plan.	153

8.3 Special Zoning Objectives

8.3.1. The specific special zoning objectives for Blarney is set out in the following table.

BLARNEY: SPECIAL ZONING OBJECTIVE		
Objective No.	Specific Objective	Approx Area (Ha)
X-03	Mixed Use Development: To include a range of town centre uses including a hotel, a leisure centre, offices, residential and appropriate convenience, comparison and tourism related retail uses.	3.8

8.4 Residential Development

8.4.1. The specific residential zoning objectives for Blarney are set out in the following table.

BLARNEY: RESIDENTIAL		
Objective No.	Specific Objective	Approx Area (Ha)
R-01	Medium density residential development with provision for a nursing home, where development must take account of the need to protect the NHA on the western boundary of the site.	6.9
R-02	Low density residential development, with common access.	3.9
R-03	Medium density residential development.	4.4
R-04	Medium density residential development limited to the lower portion of the site. The upper part of the site, closer to the ridge, is generally unsuitable for development and should be retained as open land uses with long term strategic planting as part of the overall scheme.	7.6
R-05	High density residential development, to include an extension of the amenity walk network, retention of trees along northern site boundary, and provision of a playing pitch. A retail component for the village centre to be provided.	11.2

8.5 Industry and Enterprise

8.5.1. The specific industry and enterprise zoning objectives for Blarney are set out in the following table.

BLARNEY: INDUSTRY AND ENTERPRISE		
Objective No.	Specific Objective	Approx Area (Ha)
I-01	Business park - office based industry type uses.	20.8

8.6 Open Space, Sports, Recreation and Amenity

8.6.1. The specific open space, sports, recreation and amenity zoning objectives for Blarney are set out in the following table.

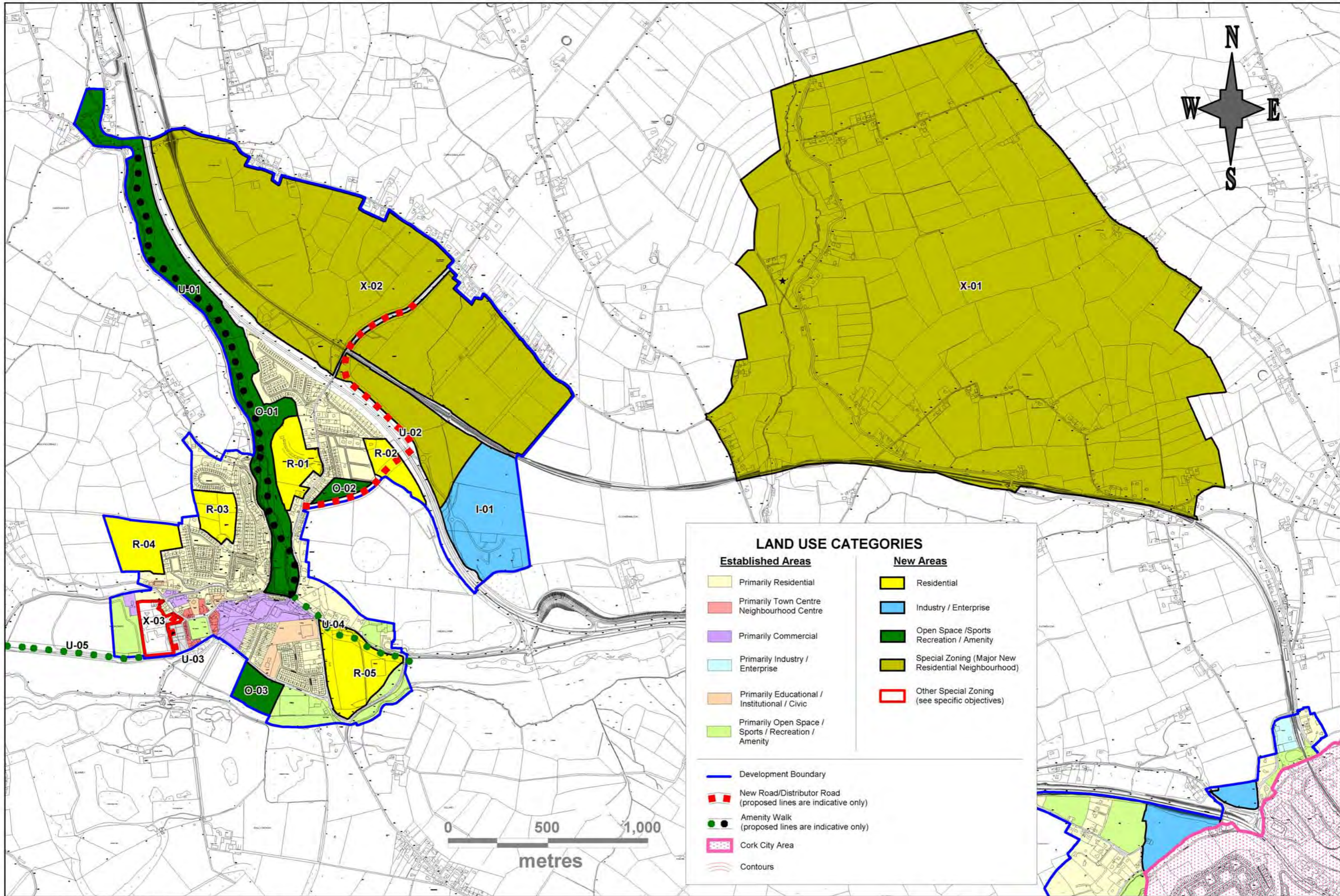
BLARNEY: OPEN SPACE, SPORTS, RECREATION AND AMENITY		
Objective No.	Specific Objective	Approx Area (Ha)
O-01	Active open space for informal public recreation including the provision of an amenity walk and sculpture park.	33.8
O-02	Active open space for informal public recreation	1.8
O-03	Active open space for informal public recreation including the provision of playing pitches.	3.8

8.7 Utilities and Infrastructure

8.7.1. The specific utilities and infrastructure objectives for Blarney are set out in the following table.

BLARNEY: UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE		
Objective No.	Specific Objective	Approx Area
U-01	Develop pedestrian walk from town centre to Waterloo bridge.	N/A

BLARNEY: UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE		
<i>Objective No.</i>	Specific Objective	<i>Approx Area</i>
U-02	New or Improved road links between the station area and the existing town of Blarney. To be developed in accordance with objective HOU 6-3 in this plan.	N/A
U-03	Local access road.	N/A
U-04	Extend amenity walk through residential site to meet existing walk to the east.	N/A
U-05	Develop pedestrian walk along Blarney river to Tower.	N/A



Appendix A – Nature Conservation Sites¹

Site Synopsis : Blarney Bog, Co. Cork

Site Code: 001857

Blarney Bog is a small area of Reed grass (Phalans anendinnacea) fen, situated in the flat valley floor of the River Blarney. It is located a half km west of Blarney Town and 4.5 km north west of Cork City. It is bounded on the north side by a new road development and to the south of the river by the fences of the agricultural land abutting the wetland site. This wet area was formed through ponding of the Blarney river by a natural blockage at Gothic bridge to the west of the site (probably a fault in the underlying bedrock). Sediments brought downstream from the Blarney river and its tributaries have accumulated and the soil is a fine silt with some peat. There was greater peat accumulation on the south side of the river (Inchancomain townland) but this has been cut away in the past, the only evidence of this activity remaining at the field edges. The vegetation on the south side is also of a more acidic nature. The area is damp throughout the year and is flooded in the winter particularly at the western side of the site.

The main habitats of the area are lowland wet grassland, both grazed and ungrazed and freshwater marsh/fen. The dominant species of the wet grassland are Reed grass (Phalan's anundinacea), Soft Rush (Juncus effusus) and grasses such as Creeping Bent (Agrostis stolonifera), Tufted Hair-grass (Deschampsia caespitosa) and Yorkshore Fog (Holcus lanatus). Land to the west is generally wetter with herbs such as Greater Tussock-Sedge (Carex paniculata), Greater pond-sedge (Carex riparia) and Bladder-sedge (C. vesicaria); commonly occurring herbs are Meadowsweet (Filipondula almaria) and Common Valenian (Valeniana efficalis), locally distributed in the sward are Yellow Loosestrife (Lysimachia vulgaris) and Purple Loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria). The land nearer the Blarney road is drier with a mixture of grasses and sedges; the ungrazed areas are more tussocky with herbs such as Common Sand (Rumex acetosa) and Tormentil (Potentilla erecta). There is a new road development occurring in the north of the site and soil/subsoil has been bulldozed onto some of this grassland, there is considerable disturbance to the area.

South of the river the land is wetter with scattered Willow Trees (Salix species), Purple moor-grass (Molinia caerulea), Tufted Hair-grass (Deschampsia caespitosa) and Soft rush (Juncus effusus) dominate the vegetation, the wetter areas supporting the growth of March cinquefoil (Potentilla palustris), Bog bean (Menyanthes trifoliata), Devil's bil scabious (Succisa pratensis) and Common yellow-sedge (Carex demissa). Towards Horgan's bridge in the east of the site, is an area dominated by tussocks of Greater tussock-sedge (Carex

paniculata). The water course flora is not particularly rich but contains Common duckweed (Lemna minor), Floating sweet-grass (Glyceria fluitans) and Fool's Watercress (Apium nodiflorum), less frequently found are Branched and Unbranched bur-reed (Sparganium erectum and S. emersum) and Pondweeds (Potamogeton species).

The area as whole is used by a variety of bird species, birds noted to be breeding in the site include: the Sedge and Grasshopper Warblers, Reed Bunting, Stonechab, Meadow Pipet, Snipe and Mallard. In the water Snipe and Mallard are seen feeding in the area and also Teal. Hen Harriers, a species listed in Annex 1 of the EU Bird's Directive and also a Red Data Book species whose status is threatened in Ireland, are regularly seen in this area, hunting over the wetter ground and sometimes nesting in the reed beds.

The area is threatened by the road developments to the north of the site, this has disturbed and destroyed some of the grassland and the closer proximity of the traffic may disturb the birds which breed in the area. It may also alter the hydrology of the site.

Site Synopsis : Ardamadane Wood

Site Code: 001799

Ardamadane Wood is located north of Blarney village, 6km north-west of Cork City. It is situated along the banks of the River Martin. The site is bounded in parts by the river, the old Blarney-Mallow road and on the eastern side by an embankment and the new Cork road. This site comprises mainly dry deciduous woodland of Oak (Quercus petraea) and Birch (Betula pubescens) with some scrub woodland and improved agricultural grassland. Threats to this particular site include eutrophication of the river from fertilizer run off and litter/domestic rubbish dumping in the woodland adjacent to roads.

The following description is compiled from the An Foras Forbatha (1972) report for 3 sites around Blarney - Ardamadane Woods (1799) north of the village and 2 sites to the south - Blarney Castle Woods (1039) and Blarney Lake (1798). Together they encompass some 53 ha.

The woodland at Blarney has a rich soil due to the influence of the nearby limestone and is able to support a wide variety of plants and animals. Blarney Castle Woods comprises an old estate woodland with Oak, Ash (Fraxinus excelsior), Sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus) and Beech (Fagus sylvatica). Ardamadane Woods consists of a patch of scrub with Hazel (Corylus avellana) and Ash and a linear Oak and Birch Wood stretching northwards along the R. Martin towards Waterloo (the river is also included in this site). The Blarney lake site includes the artificial lake near the Castle.

The base-rich woodland of Blarney Castle Wood is probably the most interesting site botanically, with a species-rich groundflora. Species include Pignut (Conopodium majus), Sanicle (Sanicula europaea), Garlic mustard (Alliana petiolata), Goldilocks buttercup (Ranunculus auricomus) and the Violets - Common dog-violet (Viola tviniana) and Early dog-violet (V. reichenbachiana). The two parasitic species - Ivy broomrape (Orabanche hederata) and Toothwort (Lathraea squamaria) are found occasionally, usually in places with deeper soils, while the

rocky areas support the growth of wood melic (Melica uniflora) and Bearded Couch (Elymus caninus).

The flora of Ardamadane Wood is not as species-rich and includes species of more acid conditions such as Great Wood-rush (Luzula sylvatica). The three sites are of some importance to birds with Woodcock using the area in winter and a variety of species breeding in the area.

Near the river and lake the aquatic communities include beds of sedges (e.g. Greater pond-sedge (Carex riparia), Bladder-sedge (C. vesicaria), Smooth-stalked sedge (C. laevigata) and Great Fen-sedge (Cladium mariscus) and stands of tall herbs such as Meadowsweet (Filipendula ulmaria), Great willow herb (Epilobium hirsutum) and Hemp-agrimony (Eupatorium cannabinum). At the rivers edge are found Nodding bur-marigold (Bidens annua), Blue water-speedwell (Veronica anagallis-aquatica) and Mints (Mentha species).

Threats to the survival of these sites are - coniferous afforestation of the woodland communities and the encroachment of agricultural activity e.g. grazing pressures, clear felling and agricultural improvement. Where possible, management agreements should be made with the landowners.

As a whole, the three sites compose a very varied area including interesting aquatic and terrestrial habitats. The base-rich woodland (Blarney Castle Woods) is an example of a type not widely found in Cork County, where acid upland woods are more common. The sites are all easily accessible and close to Cork city, and they could therefore form a useful environmental education resource within the area.

Site Synopsis : Blarney Lake

Site Code: 001798

This site is situated 1km south west of Blarney, close to Blarney Castle. This site is one of three sites occurring in close proximity to one another and includes. Blarney Castle Woods (1039) and Ardamadane Wood (1799). The area is underlain by limestone which produces a rich soil able to support a wide variety of plants and animals.

Blarney Lake is an artificial lake surrounded by a narrow band of woodland predominantly Oak (Quercus sp.), Beech (Fagus sylvatica) and Silver Fir (Abies sp.). The outflow of the lake is also included within the site.

In 1986 An Foras Forbatha provided the following description of the wetlands near Blarney Castle. Aquatic communities near the river and lake include beds of Sedges (Carex riparia, C. vesicaria, C. laevigata and Cladium mariscus), tall herb stands of Meadow Sweet (Filipendula ulmaria), Great Willowherb (Epilobium hirsutum) and Hemp Agrimony (Eupatorium cannabinum) and river edge groups of Bur Marigold (Bidens cernua), Water Speedwell (Veronica anagallis-aquatica) and Mints (Mentha sp.). Rigid Hornwort (Ceratophyllum demersum) grows in Blarney lake.

¹ Ruth Gilbert and Helen Leach are the authors of these site synopsis reports. Other sources include: 1. Report on lands at Blarney Bog, for Cork County Council by CAAS (Environmental Services) Ltd. R. Goodwillie Sept. 1990
2. Ranger site returns 1993.

A recent survey of the lake noted a good deal of waterfowl on the lake including Tufted duck, Teal and Mallard.

The main landuses within the site are boating, fishing and shooting. This site contains an interesting wetland community, which is one of three closely situated rich and varied sites.

Site Synopsis : Blarney Castle Woods

Site Code: 001039

This site is situated 1km southwest of Blarney in the grounds of Blarney Castle. The wood is bounded to the north by the Blarney River and to the south by the parklands surrounding the castle. The wood is situated on limestone which is exposed in several places. Within this rich area of limestone two other Natural Heritage Areas occur, Blarney lake (1798) and Ardamadare Wood (1799).

In 1986 An Foras Forbartha provided the following description of the woodland.

The influence of the nearby limestone gives the woodland at Blarney a rich soil able to support a wide variety of plants and animals. The site is an old estate woodland with Oak (*Quercus* sp.), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). The ground flora in this base - rich woodland contains many species including Pignut (*Conopodium majus*), Wood Sanicle (*Sanicula europaea*), Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), Goldilocks Buttercup (*Ranunculus auricomus*) and the violets - Common Dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*) and Early Dog-Violet (*V. reichenbachiana*). In rocky areas of shallow soils Wood Meliek (*Melica uniflora*) and Wood Scutch (*Agropyron caninum*) grow. Two parasitic plants occur within the wood Toothwort (*Lathraea squamaria*) and Ivy Broomrape (*Orobanche hederaceae*) in areas of deeper soils.

Ivy Broomrape (*Orobanche hederaceae*) is listed in the Irish Red Data Book and is associated with areas where Ivy, and its accompanying woodland have persisted for long periods of time.

The woodland is of interest for its birdlife. Woodcock occur within the woodlands during winter.

The main landuses within this site are fishing, shooting, grazing by sheep and cattle and amenity use.

This site is very scenic and seen by many tourists who visit Blarney Castle. Its position close to Cork city and nearby roads make it of considerable educational value. The base-rich woodland is an example of a habitat not widely found in Cork where acid uplands predominate.

Site Synopsis : Shournagh Valley

Site Code: 000103

This site includes two lower sections of the Shournagh/river c. 8km west of Cork City; this river flows south-east to join the River Lee which flows through the City. The Shournagh River has its source in the foothills of the Boggeragh Mountains and is a fairly turbulent river, whose energy, in former times, was used to power the Mills, which are now derelict along its banks.

The section furthest north-west from Cork, comprises areas of wet woodland, scrub and an old estate mixed woodland - Cloghphilip Wood. Wet woodland areas are mainly of Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Oak (*Quercus* species) with some Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*); the ground-flora species include Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), Rhytidadelphus triquetrus, wood sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) and soft shield-fern (*Polystichum setiferum*). In some places, Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) has been planted. The areas of scrub are dominated by Willow (*Salix cinerea*) and are developing into Willow woodland with some Birch (*Betula pubescens*), Hazel and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*). They are grazed by cattle and the groundflora is composed of Common Water-Starwort (*Callitriche stagnalis*), Blinks (*Montia fontana*), Bulbous Rush (*Juncus bulbosus*), Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) and the sedges - Glaucous sedge (*Carex flacca*) and Common Yellow-Sedge (*C. demissa*). The sloping fields adjacent to this part of the river have been abandoned for agriculture and are being colonized by the aforementioned scrub and by Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), whereas the more level fields next to the site boundary are often endangered, with improved agricultural grassland grazed by sheep or cattle.

Within this section of the site is an old planted wood (Cloghphilips) co-dominated by Beech and Oak with Hazel in the clearings. The ground-flora species include Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), Soft Shield-fern, Lesser Celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*) and Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*); wetter areas support the growth of Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*). The introduced species winter Heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*), Greater periwinkle (*Vinca major*) and Columbine (*Aquilegia vulgaris*) are present in parts of the wood. The spread of Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) is also noted in this wood. On the opposite side of the river (North bank) to Cloghphilips Wood a young woodland of Hazel, Willow and Hawthorn is developing with a ground-flora of Brambles, Hemlock water-dropwort (*Oenanthe crocata*) and Meadowsweet.

Further downstream in Codatanavally townland a golf course has been built and the grass is mown right up to the riverbank and some areas of scrub woodland have also been bulldozed. The remaining woodland here is of an open structure, Beech and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) being the dominant species, with a groundflora of Bracken, Bluebell and Greater Stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*). Both Holly and Spindle (*Eunonymus europaeus*) are spreading through this woodland. Wetter areas are dominated by Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Willow, Ash and some tall Oak. Oak is also regenerating in Bracken dominated areas and like the Cloghphilips Wood Sycamore is also spreading.

The Coolymurraghre estate woodland comprises a broadleaved woodland mostly of full grown, widely spread Oak trees with a diverse under storey growth of Holly with Scaly Male-fern (*Dryopteris affinis*), but the northern end of the wood consists of Beech with Pine (*Pinus* species) and Larch (*Larix* species). Much of the ground is steeply sloping (c. 50 degrees) and the ground flora is sparse, possibly limited by dryness and the shading from the abundance of Holly. At the southern end of this wood is an area of old Oak and Sycamore coppice, also with Holly and much Ivy (*Hedera helix*) and Navelwort (*Umbilicus rupestris*). An extensive badger sett is found here. This

area grades northwards into young Oak woodland with Hazel and Holly, with a groundflora of Great-Wood-Rush (*Luzula sylvatica*), Mniun hornum, Bilberry and carpets of Bluebell.

Dippers and Grey Wagtail are noted to feed along and around the river channel, with Willow Warbler and Redpoll Finches on the higher reaches of the river.

Wood Improvement Scheme grants are being sought (1993) for both Cloghphilip and Coolymurraghne woods. Both of these woods contain large fully-grown Oak trees, within the surrounding area. They form the most important part of the Valley's woodland. Replanting with conifers or non-native broadleaves is a major threat and the spread of non-native species such as Sycamore, may also be detrimental.

The woods along the Shournagh Valley included in this site (103) are recommended for conservation and are noted to be of regional importance and deserving of NHA status.