

Adopted Amendment to the
**Skibbereen Electoral Area
Local Area Plan**

Amendment No 1: Darrara Rural Model Village

Adopted by members of Cork County Council at their meeting on 22 May 2006

Adopted Amendment to the Skibbereen Electoral Area Local Area Plan 2005

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The Darrara Rural Model Village project report for Cork County Council was prepared, as part of the Government's Affordable Housing Initiative, by Colin Buchanan in association with Mackel and Doherty Architects, Buro Happold and John Cronin Associates in November 2005. The project, which involved considerable public consultation was approved by the Western Committee in November 2005 and has resulted in an indicative land use plan (Master Plan – see Fig 2) that could be developed by Cork County Council. As it stands now, the Master Plan is in conflict with the Skibbereen Electoral Area Local Area Plan and will need to be inserted into the plan as an Amendment to the Local Area Plan.

The lands, which comprise 14 hectares, lie immediately to the east of Clonakilty town and adjacent to the Darrara Agricultural College, Sacred Heart Church and cemetery and within 2km from the scenic village of Ring on Clonakilty Bay. The Master Plan focuses on the provision of a range of affordable accommodation, social housing, sports and recreational, commercial activities, childcare and the necessary public infrastructure.

It is now agreed to incorporate the proposals of the land use plan into the Skibbereen Electoral Area Local Area Plan. This document sets out the amendment in full and should be read in conjunction with the Skibbereen Electoral Area Local Area Plan 2005 and the Environmental Report prepared in relation to the proposed amendment.

ADOPTED CHANGES TO THE SKIBBEREEN ELECTORAL AREA LOCAL AREA PLAN

1. It was agreed to insert additional text into paragraph 2.4.17 as follows:

“There are also a number of smaller settlements within the proposed greenbelt at Shannonvale, Ring and Inchydoney where individual housing would be encouraged. The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government has introduced a Sustainable Affordable Housing Initiative and the Department of Agriculture have made available 14 ha of agricultural land near Darrara Church approximately 5km east of Clonakilty and very near Ring”... **In order to incorporate the project proposals, it is necessary to make an adjustment to the Clonakilty Green Belt boundary on the south eastern side in the vicinity of Darrara RC church (see Fig 1 for mapping change) .**

2. It was agreed to insert a new paragraph at 3.5.10 as follows:

“3.5.10 In developing this network of settlements during the period of this plan and beyond, a number of challenges are likely to arise. Among these challenges will be how to provide a range of services required to sustain the appropriate levels of growth. For the smaller rural settlements it will also be important to develop ways of expanding and consolidating without undermining the fabric, character and vitality of the existing places. Strengthening links between settlements and providing appropriate forms of wastewater treatment and disposal are also important objectives. The Council, together with other partners and stakeholders intends to explore various ways of facing these challenges in appropriate circumstances. The Government’s Affordable Housing initiative has allowed the Council to bring forward one such pilot approach in the Darrara model rural village project. This will function as a real case study to examine a range of possible solutions for the development of the smaller rural settlements in the county.”

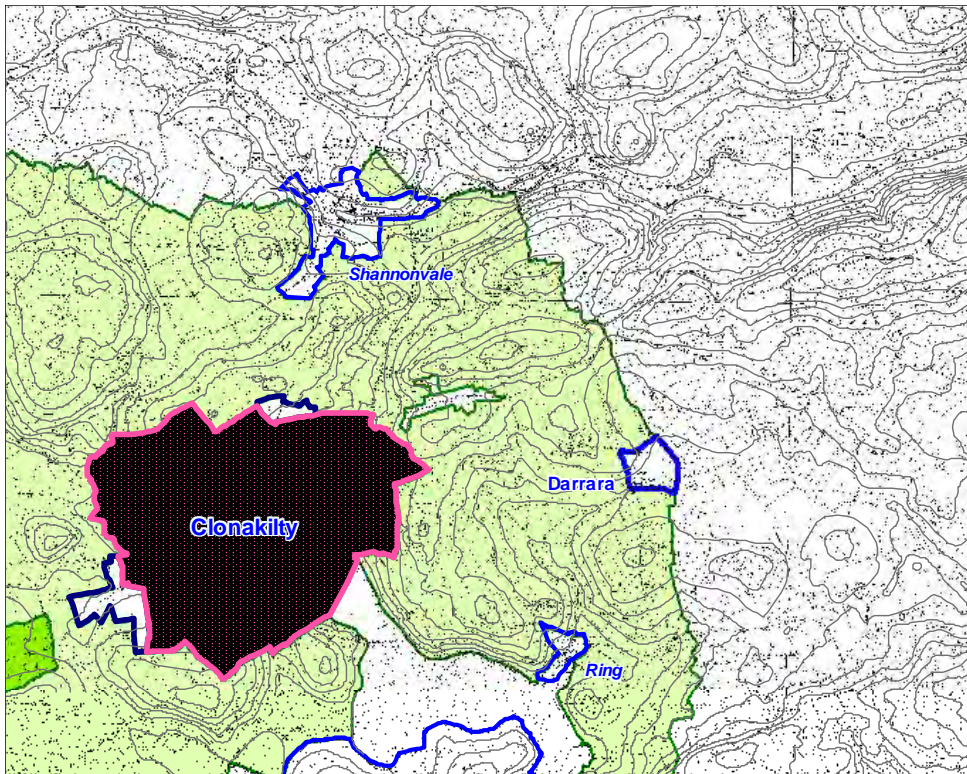


Fig 1: Proposed Exclusion of Darrara from Clonakilty Green Belt

3. It was agreed to insert “**Darrara Rural Model Village**” as an “Other Location” in the settlement network Table 3.5.8.
4. It was agreed to insert..... “**and the location of the Darrara model rural village project**” in the paragraph 3.5.8 after...the island communities of Sherkin and Cape Clear; the housing clusters from the 1996 development plan (Darkwood and Lisbealad).....
5. It was agreed to include the following text and map of the Darrara Rural Model Village into Section 8 of the Local Area Plan as follows:

BACKGROUND

Darrara Rural Model Village is a project initiated by the Government's Affordable Accommodation Initiative and is located on lands that have been gifted by the State near Darrara Agricultural College, approximately 5km west of Clonakilty. This land is now owned by the Cork County Council and the housing project will be implemented by the local authority. The development of a contemporary rural village here will attempt to achieve best practice in all aspects of sustainability, settlement planning, design, housing management, infrastructure provision and integrated planning. The main aim of the project is to deliver affordable rural accommodation that will be within the reach of those who find themselves priced out of the current housing market.

The planning area comprises 14 hectares of land adjacent to the Sacret Heart parish church and cemetery at Darrara crossroads and immediately south of the Lios na gCon ringfort, which receives over 6000 visitors annually. The agricultural college, staff accommodation and offices of Teagasc are located to the west of the site, while there is a national school 1.5km south of the site and a local co-operative shop to the west of the site. The nearest small settlement is Ring on the Clonakilty Bay, some 2km south of the site.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The site chosen for the Darrara Rural Model Village is located within the Clonakilty Green Belt in the Skibbereen Electoral Area Local Area Plan. The eastern boundary of the village site is on the eastern boundary of the green belt, which forms the edge of the visual envelope of Clonakilty and is at the end of the scenic landscape designation. The development of the model village will only take place if the green belt restriction is removed and a village development boundary put in place.

The Cork County Development Plan 2003 (as varied) identifies a network of settlements that, will not only be the focus of investment and construction outside of the main city of Cork, but will also sustain rural communities and provide focal points for development in the face of unrelenting pressure to grant one-off housing along ribbons of main roads and in the countryside.

The important planning consideration is to what extent this new village will undermine the viability of other surrounding villages and village nuclei. It is important to note that the establishment of Darrara Model village is a one off, deliberate intervention in the housing market to secure the development of affordable accommodation and should not be seen as anything else. However it is important to make sure that the model village does find a place within the network of settlement around Clonakilty.

Being located within the green belt, it will be important to ensure that the model village does not expand beyond its prescribed village development boundary. The eastern boundary needs protection against expansion and the other boundaries fall into the Clonakilty Green Belt and will be protected by these policies.

It will be important to ensure that the village has a high quality living environment, supported with a wide range of social and economic facilities in the form of childcare, sports and recreation, some social housing (in line with Part V of the Act) and adequate public infrastructure in the form of roads, sewers, water supplies.

The village should have a range of housing types to suit all types of families and consequentially provide for a mix of densities and tenure to suit this range.

OUTLINE PROPOSALS

Population Growth

Darrara Rural Model Village falls into the Templemanus DED for the population census and there was no population growth in the DED during the intercensal period (1996-2002). However there was an increase in the number of households formed (13.6%) over the same period. If the rural village was to be developed to its full planned potential, it would create an additional 100 houses giving an anticipated population of 300 additional persons in the area (based on an average of 3 persons per home).

Overall zoning approach

The zoning provisions of the plan should reflect a general intension to develop a rural model village in a sustainable way.

- The topographical constraint on the proposed village has shaped the development zones, in that the southern portions of land are the more suitable for housing development while the higher more exposed land can be preserved for all the non-housing uses such as open space, parkland and playing fields. It will be important to provide the necessary balance between the need for housing expansion and the need to preserve the natural beauty of the surrounding lands and rural landscape.



Fig 2: Indicative concept plan prepared by Colin Buchanan & Partners

- There is a need for the preservation of the ringfort Lois gCon as a local tourism feature. Equally, the development boundary needs to be drawn around the site so as

too define the limit to the expansion of the village. It is important to preserve the open character of the green belt around Clonkilty and ensure that development does not grow beyond its defined boundaries.

- The consultants evaluation of different types of settlement resulted in a need for a small village of about 100 houses. It was felt that this size of settlement would satisfy the planning, economy and landscape criteria of the area.

There is a strong challenge to make the village attractive to live for young people through the creation of a balanced community, a high quality living environment, including a range of facilities of affordable housing (including some social housing) and other relevant community facilities such as childcare, sports and recreation, transportation options (including public transport access) and roads/walkways.

SPECIFIC ZONING OBJECTIVES

Residential Areas

The specific residential zoning objectives for Darrara Rural Model Village are set out in the following table and as shown on Fig 3:-

Objective No	Specific Zoning Objective	Approximate Area (Ha)
X-01	<p>These lands are recognised as an opportunity site for the development of a well planned and designed rural model village. The major components of the model village will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The construction of a range of house types from rural low density to terrace medium density development, with an appropriate mix of tenure. • A network of roads that provide efficient movement of persons from the main roads to the houses (including the widening of the crossroads and improving the junction) • A local shop for the provision of convenience goods • A local pub providing the recreational services • A site for the development of a creche or small primary school <p>Development of the site shall be in accordance with an approved master plan of the rural model village.</p>	9.6
Subtotal		9.6

Open Space

The provision of adequate open space is required in the proposed rural model village.

Objective No	Specific Zoning Objective	Approximate Area (Ha)
O-01	Provision of adequate open space reservation for the protection of Lios na gCon and its immediate surrounds, the provision of the village park; and the provision of playing fields for the village.	5.5
Subtotal		5.5

Community Facilities

The existing cemetery and church will need an area for expansion.

Objective No	Specific Zoning Objective	Approximate Area (Ha)
E-01	Retention of the existing church and two cemeteries and a proposed extension to the cemetery, a new formal garden and protection of the views and setting of the church from the north and east.	1.8
Subtotal		1.8

Utilities and Infrastructure

A new wastewater treatment works needs to be constructed on a portion of Council owned land in the green belt, south west and downstream of the proposed village. This works will operate on a gravity fed reedbed process and will treat any effluent generated and ensure a better quality of effluent discharged into the bay. It should be self-contained, state of the art effluent treatment arrangements dedicated to serve the project using reed bed and other innovative technologies.

A new network of local roads and walkways needs to be provided in the village, in order to provide safe and easy accessibility to all activities.

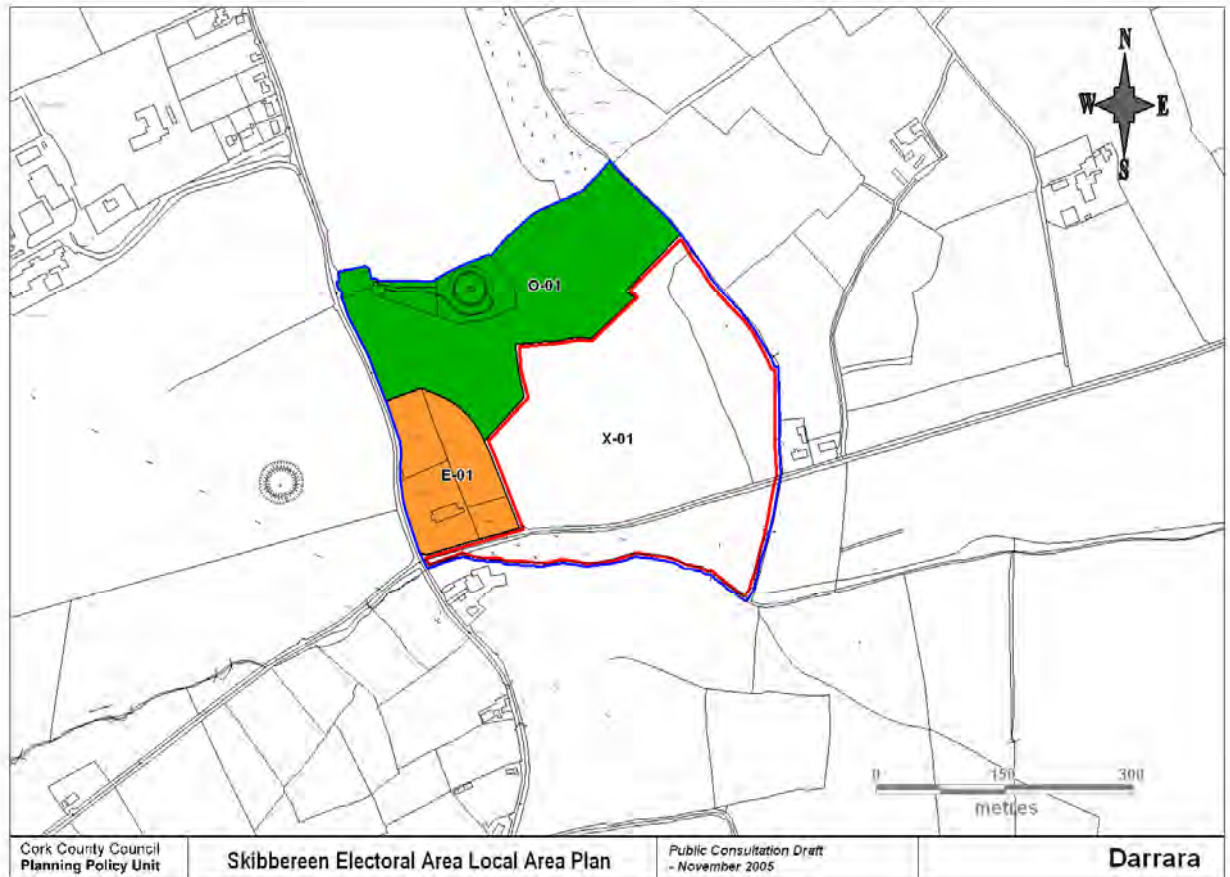


Fig 3 Proposed Zoning Plan for Darrara Rural Model Village