

## CHAPTER 6

# SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES





## **6.0 Sustainable Communities**

### **6.1 Introduction**

#### **6.1.1 Population & Community Profile**

#### **6.1.2 Climate Action and Sustainable Communities**

#### **6.1.3 Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)**

#### **6.1.4 The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2022**

#### **6.1.5 Kerry Public Participation Network (PPN)**

### **6.2 Sustainable Living**

#### **6.2.1 Live Work Communities**

#### **6.2.2 Healthy Communities**

#### **6.2.3 Housing for Sustainable Communities**

#### **6.2.4 Universal Design**

#### **6.2.5 People with a Disability**

#### **6.2.6 Age Friendly Communities**

#### **6.2.7 Towards a more Diverse and Inclusive Kerry**

##### **6.2.7.1 Ethnic Minority Groups**

### **6.3 Community Infrastructure, Services and Facilities**

#### **6.3.1 Sporting, Leisure Facilities and Open Space**

#### **6.3.2 Libraries**

#### **6.3.3 Health Services**

#### **6.3.4 Education and Lifelong Learning**

#### **6.3.5 Children and Young People**

#### **6.3.6 Childcare**

#### **6.3.7 Places of Worship, Burial Grounds and Crematoria**

#### **6.3.8 Fire Stations**



## 6.0 Sustainable Communities

### 6.1 Introduction

The Council recognises that the proper provision of community and social infrastructure of a high standard, in the most appropriate locations and in tandem with housing and other development is important for all ages and abilities in society and is an essential component of building sustainable and properly planned communities. This chapter seeks to provide high quality social and community facilities that meet both current and future needs and are accessible to people of all ages and abilities that will improve people’s quality of life and create and support vibrant and sustainable urban and rural communities. Chapter 7, Housing for all, builds on the concepts of Sustainable Communities and should be read in conjunction with the broad policies listed hereunder.

This Section focuses on those elements that contribute to supporting healthy, sustainable, inclusive, and attractive communities in a manner that both enhances people’s quality of life and connection to place, while minimising their carbon footprint.

The Council, in the implementation of Planning Policy in this broad area, is supportive of the strong interagency and community framework that exists in the County, including the Local Community Development Committee and the Public Participation Network. The delivery of the policy outcomes in this section of the Plan are developed in the context of broad policy areas in relation to Healthy Ireland, the Age Friendly, Disability and Minority Group Programmes as well as the National Health & Educational policies.

The Institute of Sustainable Communities defines a sustainable community as one “that is economically, environmentally, and socially healthy and resilient”. Common elements of a sustainable community include healthy and safe surroundings in which the needs of everyone are met, a strong economy with employment opportunities and an environment that is appreciated.



**Figure 6.1: Elements of Sustainability and Quality of Life. Source: Adapted from Egan’s wheel on sustainability and quality of life (2004)**



The above figure reflects the factors involved in providing sustainable communities and which influence quality of life.

The spatial implementation of this plan in conjunction with the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) focuses on the creation of 'live work' communities by promoting economic development in tandem with an inclusive and diverse community structure. This will allow people not just to live in the County, but also to invest, work and learn in Kerry.

The creation of a sustainable community can be achieved through well designed buildings and spaces, which promote social interaction, ensure ease of access, and create an open and safe environment. An attractive and well-maintained environment also creates a sense of identity that promotes a sense of community in a local neighbourhood.

This Plan aims to promote the development of sustainable communities by supporting a suitable mix of housing units, services, employment, community facilities, and associated infrastructure in appropriate locations. It is desirable that, where practicable, community, recreational and open space facilities are clustered, in settlements at local centres or combined with school facilities, as appropriate. Community facilities should be located close to or within walking distance of housing, accessible to all sectors of the community and facilitate multi-use functions through their design and layout.

It is the policy of the council to ensure that housing, transport, services, and facilities including public realm are developed with a focus on meeting the needs and opportunities of an ageing population.

### Sustainable Communities

#### It is an objective of the Council to:

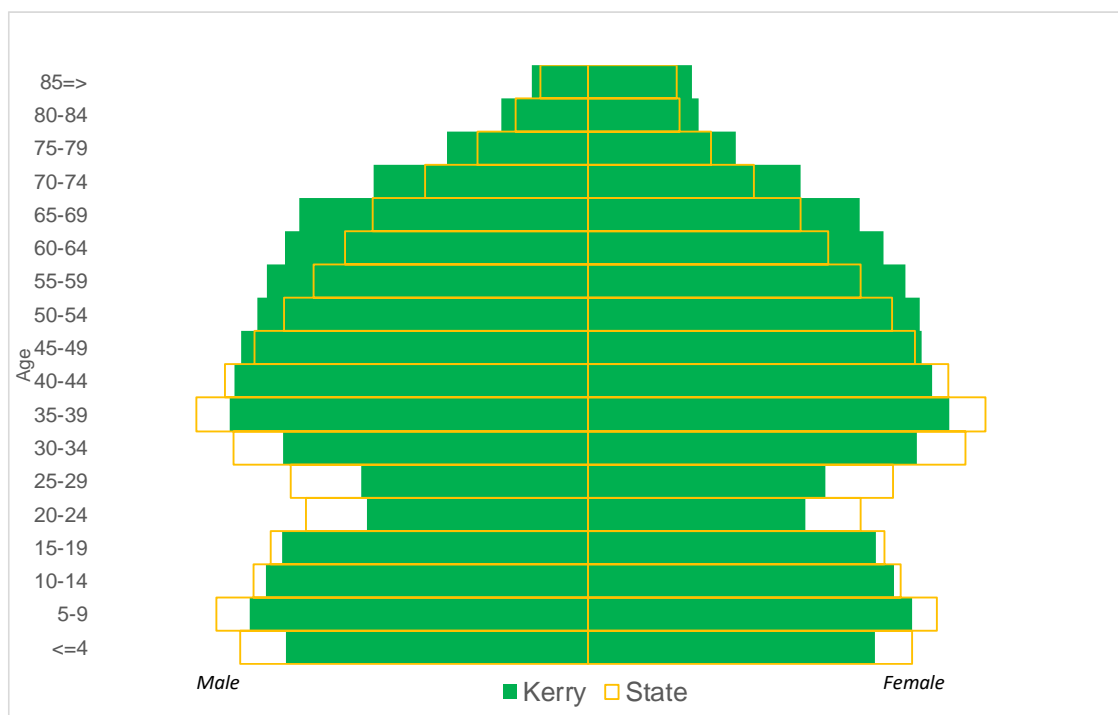
**KCDP 6-1** Develop and support vibrant sustainable communities in Kerry where people can live, work, and enjoy access to a wide range of community, health, educational facilities, and amenities, suitable to all ages and needs, in both urban and rural areas, thereby supporting an enhanced quality of life for all people.

#### 6.1.1 Population & Community Profile

Understanding the County's demographic structure is central to preparing a strategy which will address future community needs. Kerry's population is older than the state average. The average age in the County in 2016 was 40.2 years (second highest in the State), while 17% of the population was over the age of 65.

Kerry has a higher age dependency ratio<sup>1</sup> than the rest of the country: 27% versus 20%. Figure 6.2 indicates the age profile of the county in comparison to the Country.

<sup>1</sup> People over 65 as a % of the working population.



**Figure 6.2: Age Profile of Kerry/State (CSO)**

In line with national population trends the County's population is living longer which will require specific responses to ensure the delivery of age friendly communities into the future. This response will influence design and location of housing and community facilities including the delivery of transport.

A collaborative approach by all stakeholders i.e., state, local authority, voluntary and community groups and the private sector on the identification and provision of community facilities is required on an on-going basis to ensure that appropriate facilities are provided, when necessary. The Council plays an integral role in facilitating and supporting these identified needs.

### Population & Community Profile

#### It is an objective of the Council to:

**KCDP 6-2** Support the provision and distribution of a range of community infrastructure facilities in accordance with the Settlement and Core Strategies to meet the needs of the County's population structure in conjunction with other statutory, voluntary, private sector agencies and community groups.

### 6.1.2 Climate Action and Sustainable Communities

The spatial planning of our communities can play a significant role in climate action. In this regard, the planning authority will, inter alia:

- Ensure childcare, education, health care, specialist residential and community facilities are developed in settlements so as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by allowing people to travel to these facilities by sustainable transport modes where possible including public transport, walking, and cycling.
- Ensure new developments are Nearly Zero Energy Building Standard and ensure the design and layout of sites and buildings have regard to climate change impacts.
- Support community submissions for the upgrading and the retrofitting of all community facilities to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.
- Encourage the retention and expansion of green infrastructure in these developments.



- Through the Kerry Public Participation Network, raise awareness and assist our communities to become climate resilient.
- Support community-based initiatives that promote awareness of food production, the minimisation of food waste and allied initiatives that encourage climate resilience and mitigate climate change.

### Climate Action & Sustainable Communities

#### It is an objective of the Council to:

<b>KCDP 6-3</b>	Continue to support the creation of sustainable communities throughout the County by facilitating the creation of attractive neighbourhoods where there are strong links and connections to local services, community facilities and employment areas and where walking, cycling, and public transport is prioritised.
<b>KCDP 6-4</b>	Facilitate and support community-based initiatives that promote awareness of food production, the minimisation of food waste and allied initiatives that encourage climate resilience and mitigate climate change.
<b>KCDP 6-5</b>	Promote high levels of energy conservation, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources in existing buildings, including retro fitting of energy efficiency measures in the existing building stock and energy efficiency in traditional buildings.
<b>KCDP 6-6</b>	Require new buildings to achieve the Nearly Zero-Energy Buildings (NZEB) standard in line with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD).

#### 6.1.3 Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

The Local Government Act 2014 provides that each Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) will be established as a committee of the Local Authority. The Kerry LCDC was established in July 2014. The LCDC comprises of representatives who are members of the Local Authority, other state agencies, community and voluntary sector and social partners. The balance of representation between the sectors is intended to be balanced in favour of the non-statutory sector (private sector).

The collaborative relationship between the LCDC and LDCs (Local Development Companies) is central to ensure programme delivery. LDCs continue to remain at the forefront promoting community development through a bottom-up approach in the areas of social inclusion, inequality, and local development. Kerry has 3 local development companies which deliver a wide range of programmes, including but not limited to LEADER, Local Community Development Programme, Rural Social Scheme, Tus, Rural Recreation, Community Employment, Local Employment Services, and local training initiatives.

### Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

#### It is an objective of the Council to:

<b>KCDP 6-7</b>	Support the work of the Kerry Local Community Development Committee.
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#### 6.1.4 The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2022

The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2022 sits alongside the County Development Plan in providing a stronger and clearer role for local government in economic and community development. This framework underpins the vision set out in the Putting People First: Action Programme for Effective Local Government (DoECLG). The LECP significantly influences and outlines the role Kerry County Council in partnership with other community development stakeholders, has in promoting and supporting local and community development.



The three socio economic statements in the LECP reflect specific individual aims in terms of enhancing Kerry's economy, Kerry's quality of life offering and reducing inequality and social exclusion in the county (Table 6.1). These specific ideals target both economic and community development and are all interrelated in creating the overarching vision for Kerry. The socio-economic statements led to the development of a number of higher-level goals in relation to: Economic Development and Job Creation, Quality of Life and Community and Social Inclusion.

<b>1</b> <b>Economic Development and Job Creation</b>	To promote a robust and diverse economy, supported by a well-developed education and training model, enabling a sustainable population and vibrant communities throughout the county.
<b>2</b> <b>Quality of Life</b>	To promote a high quality of life, based around a clean natural environment, good quality local services, a strong sense of place and culture and meaningful participation in decision making.
<b>3</b> <b>Community and Social Inclusion</b>	To promote social and economic inclusion and reduction of social inequalities, particularly targeting areas and communities in Kerry experiencing social disadvantage, marginalised groups, or those at risk of exclusion.

**Table 6.1: LECP Socio-Economic Statements**

#### Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

##### It is an objective of the Council to:

**KCDP 6-8** Support and facilitate the actions contained in the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2022, and any successor plan.

#### 6.1.5 Kerry Public Participation Network (PPN)

The Council recognises the essential contribution that voluntary groups, community groups and sporting groups make to the quality of life that residents in the county enjoy.

The Kerry Public Participation Network (PPN) which comprises community and voluntary groups from across the county, is one of the main links through which the local authority connects with the community, voluntary and environmental sectors. It provides the opportunity to create greater synergies between local government and community development, placing community development at the heart of local government. The PPN will assist the work of the Council regarding the needs of the community and the Council will actively engage with the Network when implementing the objectives of this Plan.

#### Kerry Public Participation Network (PPN)

##### It is an objective of the Council to:

**KCDP 6-9** Promote the delivery of social infrastructure and high-quality services, at appropriate locations, through collaboration with the Kerry Public Participation Network (PPN).



## 6.2 Sustainable Living

In recent decades Kerry's residents have become better educated, outward looking, technologically focused, productive and diverse. This adaptability and change have enabled us to become more prosperous, successful and resilient as a county.

Continued economic success will ensure sustained improvements in living standards and quality of life for all our citizens. It also provides the best possible platform from which to pursue key social and environmental goals, such as tackling disadvantage and responding to climate change.

As society changes, people's needs and preferences will change, particularly as more of us become older. Kerry now has an ageing population. How future development in Kerry is planned will continue to be a significant determinant of people's quality of life. Location and place have an important influence on the quality of life that people enjoy.

This is why place is intrinsic to achieving good quality of life - the quality of our immediate environment, our ability to access services and amenities, such as education and healthcare, shops and parks, the leisure, and social interactions available to us and the prospect of securing employment, all combine to make a real difference to people's lives.

In making choices about where to live, work and invest, the level of service provision is an essential consideration. It is therefore the policy of the Council to ensure that our towns are places where high level service provision is available across a range of sectors and where there is accessibility to these services. Equally, more local service provision is appropriately provided for at a small town or village settlement scale.

Kerry County Council acknowledges the need for new ways of engaging people, and empowering community and voluntary groups, to ensure that the various values of towns (cultural, heritage, innovation, service centres, incubators of enterprise) are encouraged and developed. Community led economic development strategies are needed for a coordinated and integrated approach towards the sustained development of the settlements.

### 6.2.1 Live Work Communities

The value and potential of our towns and villages is changing due to new patterns of work and lifestyles. In this context, community interaction and support and access to a range of services will be increasingly important. As part of this plan the Council promotes the creation of 'live-work' communities in our towns and villages. This is a more integrated approach to settlement growth which promotes the location of employment, including digital hubs, close to residential areas and services such as schools and shops.

There are a number of benefits to the implementation of this model, including:

- A reduced travel time to work which results in people having more time to participate in local activities, which improves the level of social interaction and the sense of community in settlements.
- Improved health and quality of life. People working near home, are more inclined to walk/cycle to work and participate in other physical activities.
- Fewer cars travelling long distances which leads to a reduction in congestion which benefits the environment and reduces the carbon footprint of the County.

By providing a mix of house types in these communities there is a greater capacity for people to buy a house that suits their needs and will allow people to live in the same neighbourhood through all stages of life if they so desire.





### Live Work Communities

#### It is an objective of the Council to:

**KCDP 6-10** Promote 'live work' communities to ensure that settlements throughout the County continue to act as important local service centres that maintain sustainable communities, help to ensure a good quality environment, provide public transport, and provide an enhanced quality of life for its citizens.

### 6.2.2 Healthy Communities

Sporting, leisure, and recreational facilities are essential to promoting good health, social cohesion, a sense of community and enhancing quality of life and wellbeing. Nationally there has been, in recent years, an increased focus on fitness, sports and recreation generally. Therefore, the provision of facilities for sports and recreation to serve our growing communities has become an increasingly important planning issue. Thus, the appropriate provision of these facilities is a key issue for Development Plans.

"Healthy Ireland" is a Government initiative which seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of the citizens of Ireland. The World Health Organisation's priorities for a healthier world are set out in Health 2020. NPO 26 of the NPF seeks to support the objectives of public health policy including Healthy Ireland and the National Physical Activity Plan, through integrating such policies, where appropriate and at the applicable scale, with planning policy.

Healthy Ireland, A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025, published by the Department of Health, is the national framework for Government and society action to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in Ireland. Through its National Physical Activity Plan and its Healthy Workplaces initiative it recognises and promotes the role of active travel. The National Physical Activity Plan notes that 'being physically active is one of the most important steps that people of all ages can take to improve their health and wellbeing'.

The Healthy Kerry Programme aims to increase participation in sports and physical activity throughout the County and to provide more quality sports and physical activity opportunities, participation, and resources available to and to be enjoyed by all citizens.

The Healthy Kerry Framework 2021 is currently being prepared. The vision of this strategy is for a Healthy County where everyone can enjoy a good standard of physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility. The Plan has two key objectives:

- To create the appropriate environmental conditions to enable citizens to make healthier lifestyle choices.
- To inform, support and encourage citizens to take responsibility for their own health by making healthier lifestyle choices.

Our health and our environment are inextricably linked. Specific health risks that can be influenced by spatial planning include heart disease, respiratory disease, mental health, obesity, and injuries. By taking a whole system approach to addressing the many factors that impact on health and wellbeing and which contribute to health inequalities, and by empowering and enabling individuals and communities to make healthier choices, it will be possible to improve health outcomes, particularly for the next generation of citizens.

The changing nature of society has resulted in greater car dependence and reduced levels of physical activity being undertaken by people over time. Physical design affects people’s behaviour at every scale - buildings, communities, villages, towns, and regions. The places in which we live, work, and play can affect both our physical and mental well-being.



**Figure 6.3: Ten indicators of a Healthy Street**

Communities that are designed in a way that supports physical activity, e.g., generously sized footpaths, safe cycle lanes, safe attractive stairways, and accessible recreation areas, all encourage residents to make healthy choices and live healthier lives. Countries with extensive cycle infrastructure report higher levels of cycling and lower rates of obesity. It is an objective of this plan to create places and communities close to existing facilities and services on infill and brownfield sites in order to reduce car dependency and to prioritise walking and cycling as everyday means of transport.

The Healthy Streets Approach is a human-centred framework for embedding public health in transport, public realm, and planning.

The Healthy Streets approach aims to improve air quality and congestion, reduce car dependency, and make active travel more attractive and to create a streetscape fit for community interaction.

Within the Government’s “Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19” there is a commitment to deliver:

- A local campaign to promote awareness of and participation in local programmes, initiatives, and amenities.
- A citizen empowerment programme supported by Sláintecare through the Healthy Ireland fund, will be delivered by KCC with local partners, including activities supporting healthy living, physical activity, community food, creativity, managing chronic diseases and positive ageing, including for those living in long-term residential care.



It is the policy of Kerry County Council to support the creation of healthy and sustainable communities that encourages and facilitates walking and cycling and general physical activity through the implementation of best practices in urban design that promotes permeability and interconnecting spaces.

Healthy Communities	
It is an objective of the Council to:	
<b>KCDP 6-11</b>	Support the objectives of public health policy including Healthy Ireland/Kerry and the National Physical Activity Plan.
<b>KCDP 6-12</b>	Implement the recommendations of the Healthy Kerry Framework in conjunction with all relevant agencies.
<b>KCDP 6-13</b>	Support the provision of a range of community infrastructure within clusters located in easily accessible areas.
<b>KCDP 6-14</b>	Support the Government's Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19.

### 6.2.3 Housing for Sustainable Communities

A core strategic aim of the plan is to develop and support vibrant sustainable communities where people can live, work, and have an enhanced quality of life. The provision of sustainable housing is essential to achieve this. It is the policy of the Council to facilitate the provision of high-quality residential developments, in accordance with the County's settlement hierarchy, in sustainable residential environments.

The Council has a dual role as the Planning and Housing Authority. Through its statutory powers as a Planning Authority, the Council regulates and manages private housing development through the development management procedures as set out in the Planning and Development Acts. In its role as the Housing Authority, the Council provides dwellings for residents in need of accommodation who are unable to obtain such accommodation through their own resources. The Council also assists other agencies that contribute to the housing requirements of the County. (See Chapter 7 Housing for All)

This section sets out the policies and objectives for the provision of housing in the County and to facilitate the creation of sustainable communities. These are further elaborated on in Chapter 7. The Housing Strategy included in Volume 6 is underpinned by all national policies and legislation and is applicable for the same timeframe as the Development Plan. It is in accordance with the core strategy and the settlement strategy set out in the Development Plan. The Council works in partnership with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and Approved Housing Bodies to deliver and manage social housing. In addition to Part V, the delivery of social housing is achieved through Direct Build, Acquisitions, Void Management, Long Term Leasing, Enhanced Leasing, Repair to Lease, Private Rental (RAS and HAP), and the Buy and Renew Scheme.

The overall aim of Housing Policy is to enable every resident/citizen to have an affordable dwelling of good design, suited to their needs, in a quality environment and, as far as practicable, at the tenure of their choice. This also refers to people with specific needs, e.g., older people or those who have a disability, either physical or intellectual. The Housing Strategy acknowledges the need to meet the housing requirements of those who are homeless and to provide suitable accommodation for the Traveller Community.

It is a policy of Kerry County Council to:

- Encourage and foster the creation of attractive mixed-use sustainable communities which contain a variety of housing types and tenures with supporting community facilities, public realm, and residential amenities.



- Require a high standard of design in all new residential schemes that are built in a style and scale that is appropriate to the landscape/urban setting.
- Integrate new housing into the existing social and urban fabric of the County's settlements.
- Recognise the need for people with disabilities to enjoy a decent living environment in the County and to support local communities, health authorities and other agencies involved in the provision of facilities to people with disabilities.
- Support the concept of independent living for older people and people with disabilities and ensure where possible that housing for such groups is integrated into mainstream housing in their existing communities.
- Provide appropriate accommodation in accordance with the identifies Housing Need identified in the Housing Needs Demand Assessment, Housing Strategy in accordance with the principals outlined in Housing for All. (See Chapter 7)
- Support proposals for day/resource centres for people with disabilities within, or close to towns, villages, and neighbourhood centres, subject to normal planning requirements.
- Ensure that all new housing is designed in a way that is adaptable and flexible to the changing needs of the homeowner, and has regard to the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government 'Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities (2007).
- Support a sequential approach to residential development in which the first-choice location for new housing is within the built-up area of towns and villages, while maximising under-utilised infill and brownfield lands within town and village centres.
- Promote rainwater harvesting, nature-based surface water management solutions and energy efficiency both during the construction phase and during the lifetime of residential development by sensitive design and layout taking into account topography, orientation, and surrounding features.
- Promote biodiversity, the use of SuDs and other nature-based solutions in the design, construction and maintenance of residential developments.

The Council will promote the provision of public (including social and affordable) housing by prioritising sites for servicing that have a potential for public (including social and affordable) housing.

### Housing for Sustainable Communities

#### It is an objective of the Council to:

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>KCDP 6-15</b> | Facilitate the provision of suitable housing for people with specific needs in their local communities through actively providing / assisting the provision of housing in settlements.                        |
| <b>KCDP 6-16</b> | Have regard to and promote increased residential densities in the towns and other appropriate locations in accordance with the 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' Guidelines 2009 (DoEHLG). |
| <b>KCDP 6-17</b> | Promote integration of social housing and ensure a housing mix within developments in order to promote a socially balanced and inclusive society.   |
| <b>KCDP 6-18</b> | Ensure that housing developments are completed to a standard that is in accordance with Kerry County Council's Taking in Charge Policy for Private Housing Developments.                                      |



**KCDP 6-19** Support the development of specialist housing, including the concept of independent living for older people and people with a disability and ensure where possible that housing for such groups is integrated with mainstream housing.

#### 6.2.4 Universal Design

One of the Strategic Priorities of the National Disability Authority Strategic Plan 2019-2021 is to continue to build awareness and adoption of the concept of Universal Design, maximising independence, and participation for all. The Council will promote Universal Design and Lifetime Housing in all new developments. This type of housing allows for the future adaption of units as needs present throughout the life cycle of the occupier/owner. It is a proactive step in addressing the housing needs of people with a disability, older people and the diversity of the family unit as well as increasing the value and sustainability of buildings in the long-term. The provision of housing for older people allows for the option of downsizing, thereby releasing larger houses to the market to meet the needs of young families.

The Council will support the provision of appropriate housing accommodation for people with disabilities and older people. Such facilities should be integrated wherever possible into established areas in towns and villages, where residents can avail of reasonable access to local services by walking.

#### Universal Design

##### It is an objective of the Council to:

- KCDP 6-20** Ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.
- KCDP 6-21** Identify and promote best practice with regard to universal design of the built and external environment in line with “Building for Everyone – A Universal Design Approach” and to increase the likelihood that people will be able to remain in their own homes longer and function better as they face aging-related disabilities.
- KCDP 6-22** Prioritise the adoption of technologies that allow for greater access to facilities and services for all citizens regardless of age and technological competency.

#### 6.2.5 People with a Disability

There were approximately 20,000 people with a disability in Kerry in 2016, comprising around 14% of the population. A significant proportion of the population will experience disability at some stage in their lives, particularly as the population of the County is ageing.

	2006	2011	2016
Total Population	139,835	145,502	147,707
Total number of people with a disability	13,186	19,168	19,965
Number of people with a disability as a % of total population	9.4%	13.2%	13.5%
Actual change in the number persons with a disability	1,689	5,982	797
Percentage change in persons with a disability since previous census	14.7%	45.4%	4.2%

**Table 6.2: Number of Persons Registered with a Disability (CSO)**

Many planning-related issues relevant to disabled people are similar to those that affect older people, including the need to facilitate independent living, access, and mobility in relation to buildings and the



environment and full integration with society generally. As many people with disabilities are of working age, access and proximity to employment are also important.

The Council will promote disability awareness and improve equal access for all through universal design for public transport access, housing, social, cultural, and recreational facilities, and the public realm to improve quality of life equally for abled and disabled citizens. The Council shall ensure that decision-making in relation to investment in infrastructure and facilities is informed by engagement with representatives of disability support organisations to ensure that perspectives of those they represent (e.g., wheelchair users) are understood and an appropriate level of environmental assessment.

#### People with a Disability

##### It is an objective of the Council to:

**KCDP 6-23** Ensure that all buildings, public and open spaces, recreational and amenity areas are accessible for people with disabilities, having regard to the Building Regulations, the objectives of 'Building for Everyone' (National Disability Authority) and 'Access for the Disabled' (No. 1 to 3) (National Rehabilitation Board).

### 6.2.6 Age Friendly Communities

Kerry has an ageing population and is likely that the population over 80 will quadruple by 2040. As people get older, they are likely to have increasingly complex healthcare needs, with a requirement for services and facilities to support provision of suitable and necessary care.

The 'Age Friendly Ireland' Initiative provides leadership and guidance in identifying the needs and opportunities of an ageing population and is embedded within the local government system, which, is best placed to respond to change at a local level.

The Council is committed to this initiative and the current Kerry Age Friendly County Strategy 2018-2022 sets out actions under the key themes of outdoor spaces and buildings, transport and access, home & where you live, community support & health services, respect & social inclusion, social participation, communication & information, civic participation & employment, transportation, and services & information.

The Council shall support Smart Ageing and National Positive Ageing policies and An Garda Síochána Older People Strategy (2010) and ensure that local planning, housing, transport/accessibility, and leisure policies meet the needs and opportunities of an ageing population.

Our aging population have specific housing needs relating to access, medical care, security, and personal safety. In addition to the concept of Universal Design the location of housing is an important issue for older people particularly those who live alone and are reliant on public transport and local services. Dwellings and other residential facilities catering specifically for older people should be located in close proximity to convenience shops, community facilities and public transport nodes. Living close to local services and facilities creates a convenient lifestyle for older people and encourages them to remain active and healthy. It is the policy of KCC to support older people to live with dignity and independence in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. Consideration should be given to providing single storey properties in large residential developments that would provide older people with the option of downsizing if so desired. This would have the positive knock-on effect of releasing larger homes for younger families. The adaptation of existing homes to meet the changing needs of older people is also supported.

This further reinforces the need for well-designed lifetime adaptable infill and brownfield development close to existing services and facilities, supported by universal design and improved urban amenities, including public spaces and parks as well as direct and accessible walking routes. (Housing Policy for older people outlined in Chapter 7)



### Age Friendly Communities

#### It is an objective of the Council to:

**KCDP 6-24** Support the implementation of the Age Friendly Kerry Strategy, 2018- 2022 (and any successor strategy) in consultation with the relevant agencies and authorities.

### 6.2.7 Towards a more Diverse and Inclusive Kerry

In moving towards a more diverse society over the last decade, Kerry's population is more varied than ever before, comprising a range of ethnicities and nationalities. In addition, the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy sets out Government Actions to create an Ireland that cherishes its LGBTI+ people equally. The County Development Plan supports the strategy's mission to promote inclusion, protect rights and to improve quality of life and well-being for the LGBTI+ community to enable them to participate fully in Ireland's social, economic, cultural, and political life.

However, providing access of opportunity to everyone is not a finite exercise, particularly where distinct and tailored solutions are required to continually address the needs of all, particularly those who remain vulnerable or marginalised.

This Plan will facilitate and deliver a more socially inclusive society through better integration and greater accessibility at all stages of the life cycle. Housing, education, health, and transport are four key areas where social inclusion can be improved; for example, through universal design of buildings to deliver greater accessibility for all, or co-location of community facilities and uses to ensure communities are active during the day and into the evening.

The Council supports continued progress towards achieving a more inclusive society that supports our citizen's basic human rights and assists in helping people to gain access to a better quality of life. This Plan contains measures aimed at tackling poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion and its implementation will make a positive contribution to communities in the county. Social infrastructure plays an important role in developing strong and inclusive communities

The Council will work to support the implementation of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) which aims to tackle poverty, social exclusion and long-term unemployment through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies.

### Towards a more Diverse and Inclusive Kerry

#### It is an objective of the Council to:

**KCDP 6-25** Facilitate for a more diverse and socially inclusive society that targets equality of opportunity and a better quality of life for all citizens, through improved integration and greater accessibility in the delivery and the provision of associated services.

**KCDP 6-26** Support the implementation of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP).

**KCDP 6-27** Improve access to quality childcare, education, and health services through initiatives and projects under the National Development Plan, alignment with Healthy Ireland and support development of outreach and community services for an expanding and ageing population.

**KCDP 6-28** To facilitate and support the actions of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy to promote inclusion, protect rights and to improve quality of life and wellbeing for Kerry's LGBTI+ community to enable them to participate fully in the County's social, economic, cultural, and political life.



### 6.2.7.1 Ethnic Minority Groups

Kerry also has vibrant ethnic minority groups and nationalities with diverse cultures. It is estimated that c12.5% of the population is within this category. Kerry is home to people from diverse cultures and Kerry County Council, through its Community Unit and Municipal District Offices, supports awareness of cultural diversity and intercultural engagement, by supporting cultural showcases that encourage intercultural understanding and dialogue. As Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated across the world to reflect what it is to be Irish, the Council supports celebratory cultural days to celebrate the diverse cultures living in Kerry.

This Development Plan has an important role in promoting social inclusion in the County and includes a range of strategies to promote access to housing, community facilities, amenities, participation in cultural life etc. It is the policy of the council to work with all relevant stakeholders to help tackle disadvantage and social exclusion, to secure improvements in quality of life and to promote equality of access to public and social services. The council will work with all ethnic minority groups, the Traveller community, refugees, and migrants, to advance their physical, social, and cultural integration.

#### Ethnic Minority Groups

It is an objective of the Council to:

**KCDP 6-29** Support and work with all ethnic minority groups, including the Traveller community, refugees, and migrants, to advance their physical, social, and cultural integration.

### 6.3 Community Infrastructure, Services and Facilities

Community infrastructure is an essential part of all communities. Facilities such as community centres, sports centres, libraries, and playgrounds can serve as a focal point for communities they serve, and provide venues for local sporting, cultural, community, education, and social events. The Council recognises that the provision of good quality community facilities in existing and developing areas is a key element in the development of sustainable, healthy communities across the County. There are a large number of voluntary agencies and community initiatives that continue to play a central role in contributing to the delivery of a wide variety of local social infrastructure.

The Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines (2009) emphasise the need to integrate housing with the provision of supporting community and social infrastructure. The Guidelines acknowledge that community facilities should be located within, or close to, neighbourhood centres and be well served by public transport.

Different levels of service provision are appropriate to settlements of different sizes, it is therefore important that the Council ensures that an appropriate range of community facilities are provided in all communities, taking account of the population profile and growth targets identified in the Core Strategy.

In designing new facilities, it is essential to ensure that they are adaptable over time to meet the changing needs of the population and to provide potential for maximising their dual usage during evenings/weekends/school holidays. When considering proposals for development, the Planning Authority may take into account benefits to the public in the form of community facilities. Where new social and community facilities are being retrofitted into established neighbourhoods, the issue of potential adverse impacts on residential amenity and increased pressures on limited on streetcar parking spaces will be addressed in a sensitive manner. The Council will also support improvements to and/or redevelopment of existing community facilities throughout the County as appropriate.





### Community Infrastructure, Services and Facilities

#### It is an objective of the Council to:

**KCDP 6-30** Support local sports groups, community groups and other groups in the development of facilities, at appropriate locations, throughout the county.

#### 6.3.1 Sporting, Leisure Facilities and Open Space

The provision of sporting, recreation, and amenity facilities, which can cater for the demands of an increasing population and which will be accessible for all sectors and age groups of the population is a central element in the delivery of sustainable communities. The Council recognises the role that good quality open space, recreation and amenity facilities can play in creating healthy and active lifestyles to ensure the wellbeing and improved quality of life of the entire community.

The Council will normally favour any development proposals for sustainable recreational facilities for the community in a suitable location, Site selection should take into account biodiversity and wider sustainability considerations.

It is the policy of the Council to:

- Encourage and support local sports, community groups and other groups in the sustainable provision and development of outdoor and indoor sporting and community facilities.
- Support local sports groups, community groups and other bodies in the sustainable development of facilities through the reservation of suitable land at appropriate locations for such facilities.
- Cater for the sporting and recreational needs of all sectors and ages of the community and promote the integration of those with disabilities into the sporting and recreational environment.
- Support the provision of public open spaces throughout the county.

### Sporting, Leisure Facilities and Open Space

#### It is an objective of the Council to:

**KCDP 6-31** Facilitate the sustainable provision of sports facilities having regard to local recreational needs.

**KCDP 6-32** Implement the recommendations of 'Developing Play in Kerry' Policy', in a sustainable manner, in conjunction with all relevant agencies.

**KCDP 6-33** Support the 'Sláintecare' and 'Healthy Kerry' initiatives.

**KCDP 6-34** Resist the loss of existing sporting facilities unless the facility is provided on an alternative site or it can be demonstrated that there is no longer sufficient demand to sustain such a facility.

**KCDP 6-35** Provide multifunctional open spaces at locations deemed appropriate providing for both passive and active uses.

#### 6.3.2 Libraries

The Council recognises the importance of libraries in the community and has responsibility for the public library service countywide. The Kerry Library service has a physical network of 9 branch libraries, 2 mobile libraries and a dedicated local history and archives section. Through the library website [www.kerrylibrary.ie](http://www.kerrylibrary.ie) online services are now a core part of the library offering with free access to a range of resources including public internet and Wi-Fi, e-books, e-audio books, e-newspapers, e-magazines, e-language courses, and e-learning. Ongoing programming includes literacy and schools support, reading development, an events and exhibitions programme and the Kerry roll out of the national Right to Read, Work Matters and Healthy Ireland at Your Library initiatives.



Kerry County Council will continue to promote library services as a key community resource and encourages groups and individuals to avail of the growing range of both physical and online library services.

#### Libraries

##### It is an objective of the Council to:

- KCDP 6-36** Support, expand and promote the services provided by the Libraries to local communities across the County in line with the Kerry Library Development Plan 2016-2021 and the libraries national strategy *Our Public Libraries 2022: Inspiring, Connecting and Empowering Communities* (and any successor plans).
- KCDP 6-37** Provide and improve access to library facilities and services and to encourage an integrated approach to the delivery of library, arts, and other related services.
- KCDP 6-38** Continue the sustainable development of library infrastructure and make provision for new library facilities at appropriate locations, or extensions and refurbishment of existing facilities, sufficient in their overall extent, quality, and distribution to meet needs for library services.

### 6.3.3 Health Services

Healthcare facilities are essential to ensure that the residents of the County have access to the care that they need. Health care is provided by a range of private, community and charitable service providers. HSE policy reflects a shift away from traditional hospital-based care, towards more community-based care with increased emphasis on meeting people's needs at local level within primary care teams. Kerry County Council will seek to facilitate the provision and expansion of built facilities at appropriate locations to ensure accessible healthcare services are integrated into communities throughout the County.

The Council will support the Health Service Executive and other statutory and voluntary agencies in the provision of appropriate healthcare facilities, including the development of both the system of hospital care and the provision of community-based primary care facilities.

#### Health Services

##### It is an objective of the Council to:

- KCDP 6-39** Facilitate the provision of health services and other health related facilities and their integration within new and existing communities and facilitate public, private, and community-based agencies to provide appropriate health related facilities throughout the County.
- KCDP 6-40** Facilitate and encourage the accommodation of emergency services including fire services, rescue services, heli-pads and acute care in appropriate locations that facilitate ease of access, effectiveness, and safe functioning with respect to the road network.

### 6.3.4 Education and Lifelong Learning

Education has been critical to Kerry's transformation over recent decades. Education, training, and life-long learning are key enablers and are central to sustaining economic success and building strong communities. In knowledge-based economies, education underpins growth as it is the main driver of technological innovation and productivity. Accessing a high standard of education is a priority now and in the future.

Decisions on the future requirements for educational facilities are primarily a matter for the educational authorities. However, the 'Provision of Schools and the Planning System, A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities' (2008) outlines that the planning system plays a critical role in anticipating future development and co-ordinating the provision of essential supporting infrastructure such as transport, water services,



schools, amenity and community facilities through the actions of the planning authorities, the investment programmes of government departments and their agencies and through the private sector.

The primary role of the Council is to reserve sufficient land within the identified development centres to meet likely future demands for community facilities including education. The provision of educational facilities should be planned and implemented in concert with residential development, especially where this is undertaken in the context of Local Area Plans or Masterplans.

The Council shall support a planned approach to location of school facilities such that both proposed locations and existing schools are accessible by cycling/walking from the main catchment areas and by public transport.

In the Higher Education sector, the development of the Munster Technological University has the potential to deliver significant economic benefits to students in the county and wider region, and to the broader local economy and society. By creating institutions of scale and strength, multi-campus technological universities will bring greater social and economic benefits to their regions through a strengthened role in research and innovation and the delivery of a broad range of high-quality education and training in each of their campuses.

The Council also recognises the value and necessity for lifelong learning. It is the policy to support the further development of the Region as a Learning Region support the expansion of the Learning City initiative to other urban and rural centres of population and support the initiatives of the Irish Network of Learning Cities and preparation and implementation of a Learning Region Strategy.

The Council will promote co-ordinated investment in infrastructure comprised of regional education and training providers, local government agencies and industry to facilitate a collaborative approach to regional/county skills development, aligned to the needs and opportunities of regional economies and to promoting lifelong learning to all citizens.

It is the policy of the Council to:

- Facilitate the sustainable development of primary, post primary, third level, outreach, research, adult, and further educational facilities in appropriate locations to meet the needs of the County.
- Ensure the provision and implementation of primary and secondary education facilities in conjunction with the planning and development of residential areas in order to maximise the opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport.
- Ensure that adequate lands and services are zoned and reserved in appropriate locations to cater for the establishment, improvement, or expansion of primary and post-primary educational facilities in the County. The Council supports the concept of multi-campus educational facilities.
- Co-operate with all relevant agencies in the preparation of an integrated County strategy for education and training provision.
- Encourage, support, and develop opportunities to open up schools to wider community use.

### Education and Lifelong Learning

#### It is an objective of the Council to:

- KCDP 6-41** Facilitate the Department of Education & Skills and Kerry Education and Training Board, other statutory and non-statutory agencies in the necessary provision of primary, post primary and third level educational facilities throughout the County by reserving lands, at appropriate locations, for such uses in the Local Area Plans.
- KCDP 6-42** Facilitate where possible, that proposals for future developments are located as close as possible, to community facilities such as sports facilities, libraries etc. so that these can be shared between the school and the community.



<b>KCDP 6-43</b>	Promote the sustainable provision of dedicated facilities for adult and community education and encourage the retention and expansion of all tiers of educational services and associated educational and skills training programmes.
<b>KCDP 6-44</b>	Have regard to the DoEHLG and Department of Education and Skills document titled The Provision of Schools and the Planning System – A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities (2008).
<b>KCDP 6-45</b>	Promote the expansion and consolidation of Higher Education facilities including Munster Technological University, and to retain and enhance the Regional Skills Fora as a permanent part of the education and training infrastructure.
<b>KCDP 6-46</b>	Encourage and promote the shared use of school facilities with community groups where possible.

### 6.3.5 Children and Young People

ESRI projections indicate that the average age of people in Kerry as a whole will increase, but the overall number of young people will not decrease significantly. This means that the continued provision and enhancement of facilities and amenities for children and young people, such as childcare, schools, playgrounds, and sportsgrounds, remains necessary and will need to be maintained at similar levels for the foreseeable future thereafter.

It also means that, if a significant proportion of future population growth occurs within or close to the current built-up footprint of settlements as targeted, it will be possible to maximise the use of existing facilities near where children and young people live.

#### Children and Young People

##### It is an objective of the Council to:

<b>KCDP 6-47</b>	Work with the relevant agencies and authorities to advance the physical, social, and cultural needs of children and young people.
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### 6.3.6 Childcare

Access to affordable and high-quality childcare is an essential requirement for an equitable society, a thriving economy and sustainable communities and is a critical part of our nation's infrastructure. Childcare provision in Kerry is reaching capacity and new planning approaches and sustained investment are required, to ensure effective access to childcare provision is maintained.

#### Childcare

##### It is an objective of the Council to:

<b>KCDP 6-48</b>	Facilitate the provision of childcare facilities and new and refurbished schools on well-located sites within or close to existing built-up areas, that meet the diverse needs of local populations.
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### 6.3.7 Places of Worship, Burial Grounds and Crematoria

The Council recognises the valuable contribution that places of worship have in a community context and will endeavour to accommodate and facilitate their provision and/or extension, where appropriate. The Council also has a responsibility for the provision of burial grounds including as necessary, the acquisition of lands and the undertaking of any necessary works on these lands. The Planning Authority has a role in ensuring that adequate land is reserved to accommodate such a use in accordance with future needs within the county. A number of these burial grounds may need to be extended and/or new sites identified over the period of this Plan. The use of crematoriums has increased significantly in recent years but there is currently no such facility



serving the County. In recognition of the multi-cultural population of the county and the changing trends in end-of-life service, the Council will support the development of crematorium in the county, where appropriate.

#### Places of Worship, Burial Grounds and Crematoria

##### It is an objective of the Council to:

- KCDP 6-49** Facilitate the sustainable provision of new burial grounds and the extension of existing cemeteries as appropriate to cater for the needs of the County. Develop all new burial grounds in the open lawn style with adequate provision of car parks. Facilitate a designated section for ashes, such as a garden or a columbarium wall for ashes in burial grounds.
- KCDP 6-50** Encourage local community groups to develop, manage and maintain (new) burial facilities, in a sustainable manner.
- KCDP 6-51** Facilitate the establishment of a crematorium in Kerry at an appropriate location.
- KCDP 6-52** Facilitate the change of use of premises into places of worship subject to the adequate provision of parking and minimal loss of existing residential amenities.

#### 6.3.8 Fire Stations

The Council will continue to support the development and upgrading of the fire service in the provision of the County's fire service.

#### Fire Stations

##### It is an objective of the Council to:

- KCDP 6-53** Continue to support the provision of a modern and efficient fire service.