

# Submission on Draft Kerry County Development Plan 2022- 2028

For Land at Mounthawk and Caherslee, Tralee, Co. Kerry  
on behalf of Ruden Homes Ltd.

February 2022



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# 1. Introduction

McCutcheon Halley has prepared this submission to the Draft Kerry County Development Plan Review on behalf of Ruden Homes Ltd, who are the owners of land at Mounthawk and Caherslee (Townlands), Tralee, Co. Kerry.

This submission has been prepared in response to public notices inviting submissions from third parties and interested parties on the Kerry County Development Plan (KCDP) review in accordance with section 12(2)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000. Our client welcomes the publication of the Draft Kerry County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the opportunity to participate in the plan making process which will inform the future development including the delivery of homes in the lifeline of the plan and beyond. Accordingly, this submission requests the following provisions in the forthcoming KCDP for our client's site in Tralee:

- **The re-zoning of the northern and eastern portion of the subject lands from 'P1 Agriculture' to 'R1 New / Proposed Residential'.**

As part of the Draft Kerry County Development Plan, the southern section of the subject site is zoned 'R1 New/Proposed residential'. A small section in the south-west is zoned existing residential and facilitates access. The remainder of the lands are zoned P1 Agriculture.

Ruden Homes Ltd. are active housing developers in County Cork and Kerry and have a track record for bringing forward residential development in the immediate term, that is accessible, liveable and sustainable.

Our client welcomes the retained zoning of the southern section of their site for residential use, however, having regard to infrastructure services that are required to support the development of this portion of the site, it would not be financially viable. It is therefore submitted that the Planning Authority recognise that the significant costs to service the site would only be viable if a certain target of new housing units are provided.

The structure of this report is as follows:

- Section 1 Introduction
- Section 2 Site Context;
- Section 3 Existing Planning Policy Context
- Section 4 Draft Zoning and Policy Context and Rational for Submission Request
- Section 5 Conclusion

## 2. Site Context & Planning History

### 2.1 Site Context

The subject lands are located in the northern suburbs of Tralee and within walking distance of the town centre at approximately 2 km. The site is bounded to the east, south, west and north-east by existing residential development and is well connected with access onto the R551. Bounding the site to the north is a cycle and walkway which facilitates direct access to the town centre. and sporting fields. The site is well serviced by local amenities and employment uses.

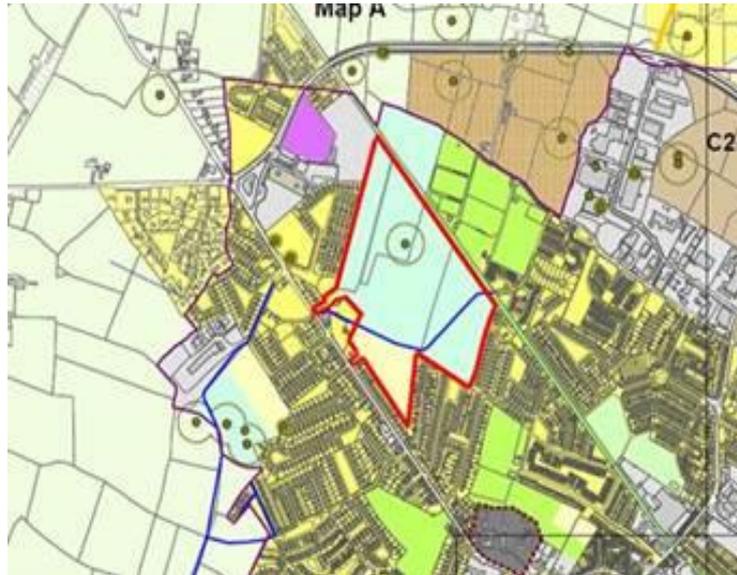


Figure 2.1: Site Context (site indicatively outlined in red)

Tralee is designated as a Key Town in the Regional Economic & Spatial Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES) and is defined as a large population scale urban centre functioning as a self-sustaining regional driver. Tralee sits at the top of Kerry's settlement hierarchy. Tralee is identified as the fourth largest urban settlement outside a city within the southern region and plays a significant role in terms of commerce, health, higher education, tourism and high order retail.

Tralee is also identified within the RSES as forming part of the Kerry Hub Knowledge Triangle, which is an established network comprising of Tralee, Killarney and Killorglin, where it is an aim to drive economic growth and capitalise on connectivity to the Cork and Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Areas. This also includes the sharing of assets including the merger of The Institute of Technology Tralee (ITT) and the Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) in early 2021 to become the Munster Technological University (MTU); and which will act as a catalyst for the development and growth of the region.

Our client has a strategic interest in the planning policy framework for Tralee as he has a landholding at Mounthawk (see Figure 2.1) to the north west of Tralee town centre. The southern part is zoned for 'R1 New / Proposed Residential' with the remainder of the land being zoned for 'P1 Agriculture'. There is also policy provision for an indicative road to be provided throughout the entire landholding

to connect with the R551 Road to the south-west and to the north-east 'Lios Rua' road which facilitates an existing residential estate and connects with the 'Bracker O'Regan Road'.

## 2.2 Planning History

Planning permission (07/307502) was granted for the construction of 53 no. dwelling houses, 40 no. serviced sites, 2 no. underground attenuation tanks, creche, ESB substation, a bring site, all associated open spaces, site entrance, all roads, infrastructure and provision for the future development of additional housing and ancillary works to accommodate 291 no. dwelling houses and 34 no. serviced sites and neighbourhood centre subject to further planning permission or permissions on adjoining land within the site boundary.

This application was appealed to An Bord Pleanála (PL 81.227107) by local residents. The Board granted permission for the development in June 2009 and stated that:

*"Having regard to the zoning of the site, the availability of services and the pattern of development in the area, it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not seriously injure the amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity, would not be prejudicial to public health and would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety and convenience. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area".*

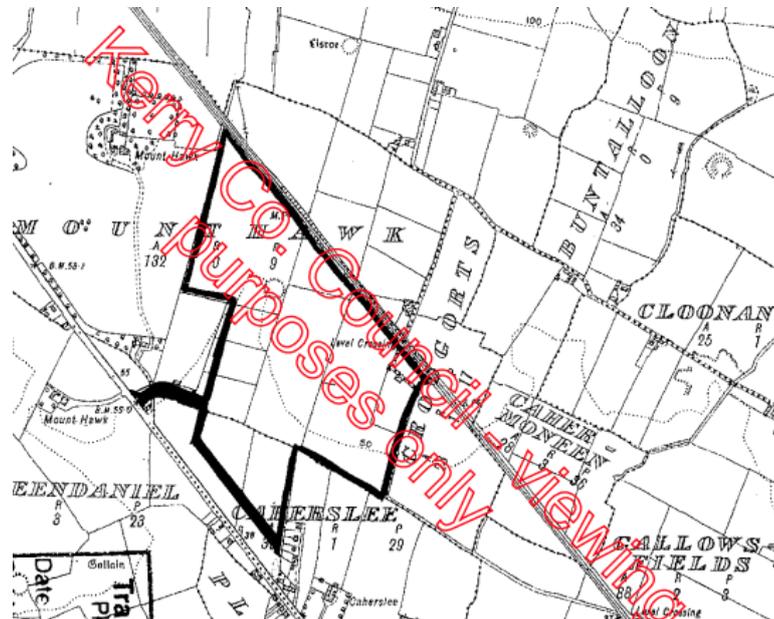


Figure 2.2: Site Boundary for Application Ref. no. 07/307502 - Source: Kerry County Council Planning Portal

An extension of duration application (14-397502) was granted in May 2014 to extend the appropriate period by five years until 01<sup>st</sup> June 2019.

## 3. Existing Planning Policy Context

### 3.1 Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework (NPF)

The National Planning Framework (NPF) makes provision for population growth of an additional 340,000 - 380,000 people in the Southern Region.

The NPF sets out a number of national strategic outcomes to shape growth and development up to 2040. Those of particular importance to the development of Tralee include:

- Compact Growth
- Sustainability Mobility
- Enhanced Regional Accessibility
- A Strong Economy
- Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society

The NPF targets a greater proportion (40%) of future housing development to be within and close to the existing 'footprint' of built-up areas.

### 3.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES)

The RSES identifies Tralee as a Key Town and categories it as a large population scale urban centre functioning as a self-sustaining regional driver. It notes that *Tralee "is a key settlement in the Kerry Hub Knowledge Triangle with Killarney and Killorglin. Tralee's population was 23,691 in 2016, experiencing an approximate 4% growth rate over the previous ten years. The town records over 12,500 jobs, the second highest regionally outside the cities"*.

The RSES recognises that Tralee is the southern region's fourth largest urban settlement outside the cities and that it *"balances protection of exceptional natural environment, ecology and heritage with inherent strengths as an administrative capital, a strong performing centre of commerce, education, tourism and high order retail. It is an economic driver on the strategic road and rail network and Atlantic Economic Corridor."*

Regional Policy Objective 18 of the RSES sets out a number of objectives for Tralee as follows:

## RPO 15

### Tralee

- a. To sustainably strengthen the role of Tralee as a self-sustaining regional economic driver, key settlement in the Kerry Hub Knowledge Triangle and on the Atlantic Economic Corridor and build on inherent strengths as an administrative capital, centre of skills and education, innovation, enterprise growth, culture and tourism accessible to regional airport, port, rail and strategic road network assets;
- b. To seek investment to sustainably support strengthening these attributes and infrastructure subject to the outcome of the planning process and environmental assessments, including key inter-regional connectivity (transport networks and digital) on the strategic road network to the Cork and Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Areas, the Atlantic Economic Corridor and the Kerry Hub Knowledge Triangle;
- c. To strengthen 'steady state' investment in existing rail infrastructure and seek investment for improved infrastructure and services to ensure its continued renewal and maintenance to high level in order to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity;
- d. Future growth of the town should be planned for on a phased basis in consultation with the local authority and Irish Water to ensure that sufficient wastewater capacity is accounted for and that further growth avoids negative impacts on the nutrient sensitive Lee Estuary;
- e. To support higher and further education and training investment, and investment in the development of IT Tralee's campus and R&D facilities;
- f. To support the regeneration of opportunity sites, such as the Island of Geese, Fels Point, and underused, vacant or derelict town centre lands for residential and enterprise development to facilitate population and employment growth;
- g. To support the development and delivery of infrastructure for the delivery of additional employment through modern office, enterprise and manufacturing space;
- h. To support Tralee as an urban coastal tourism destination while protecting the natural resources on which it relies.

A number of Key Infrastructural Requirements are set out in the RSES including but not limited to:

- (i) strengthened inter-regional connectivity on the N21/N69, N22, N72 and connections to N20/M20 and N71 corridors
- (ii) Strengthen 'steady state' investment in rail infrastructure to ensure continued renewal and high level maintenance to provide quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity
- (iii) North and West Tralee Relief Roads

### 3.3 Kerry County Development Plan 2014 (CCDP 2014)

One of the key aims of the core strategy is to prioritise sustainable development at appropriate locations within the Hub towns of Tralee and Killarney as an economic driver for the County.

It further sets out that the Hub Towns of Tralee and Killarney will be promoted as anchors for regional growth. These towns are located in a growth corridor which provides locational advantages in terms of access to strategic rail and road networks and to Kerry International Airport.

### 3.4 Tralee Town Development Plan 2009 - 2015 (As Extended and Including Variations)

The southern part of the site is zoned for 'R1 New / Proposed Residential' with the remainder of the land being zoned for 'P1 Agriculture'. There is also policy provision for an indicative road to be provided throughout the entire landholding to connect with the R551 Road to the south-west and to the north-east 'Lios Rua' road which facilitates an existing residential estate and connects with the 'Bracker O'Regan Road'.

When the current Tralee Town Development Plan was originally adopted in 2009 it was assumed that the town population would reach 26,880 by 2020, an increase of 6,600 on the 2006 Census population of 20,288. At that stage all of our client's lands were zoned for development and a masterplan for the long-term development of the holding was agreed with the planning authority. Planning permission for a first phase of 93 units was granted by An Bord Pleanála in June 2009 for 93 dwelling units on the western part of the site

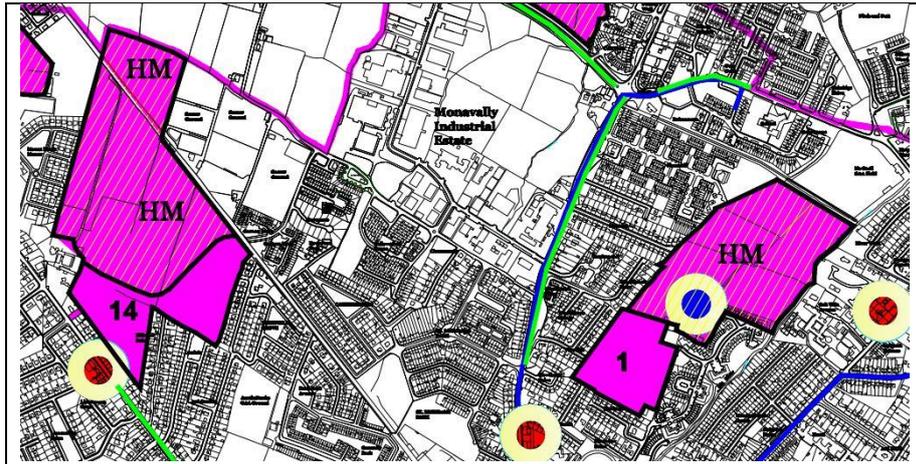
When the Kerry County Development Plan was adopted in 2015, it included a Core Strategy for the County which set a new population target for Tralee of 23,783 for 2021, an increase of 2,969 on the 2011 Census population of 20,814. It was assumed that this target would generate a demand for 1142 housing units at an occupancy rate of 2.6 per unit and require a net 81.50ha of development land. This objective was applied to the Town Development Plan by the adoption of Variation 1 which confirmed the residential zoning on all of our client's holding but divided it into two phases: Phase 1 on the southern part of the site and Phase 2 on the northern part. The Variation provided that lands in Phase 2 could commence when 75% of the lands in Phase 1 had been developed to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

On 19/05/2014, the Planning Authority decided under Planning Register 14/397502 to extend the duration of the planning permission granted under PL 81.227107 until 01/06/2019. During this period Variation no. 3 was adopted which reassessed the housing land required for the Core Strategy. While there was no change in the population or housing targets a gross density of 21 units per hectare was applied which, with headroom of 50%, reduced the housing land requirement from 81.50ha to 75ha. It was therefore decided to dezone several areas which had been designated as Housing Phase 2 in Variation No. 1 including all of the phase 2 lands within our client's holding.

While Variation No. 3 claimed that the zoning objectives were reviewed in accordance with the sequential tests set out in Section 3.1.2 of the County Plan, there was in our opinion no justification for zoning in the case of our client's lands having regard to:

- (a) the fact that there was an agreed masterplan and an extant planning permission on the site;
- (b) the assessment made of these lands under Variation No. 1 which concluded that this area is well served by educational community and neighbourhood services; was not a Flood Risk or environmentally sensitive area and had no road or water service constraints.
- (c) the fact that less well-connected Phase 2 lands located farther from the Town Centre were not being zoned.

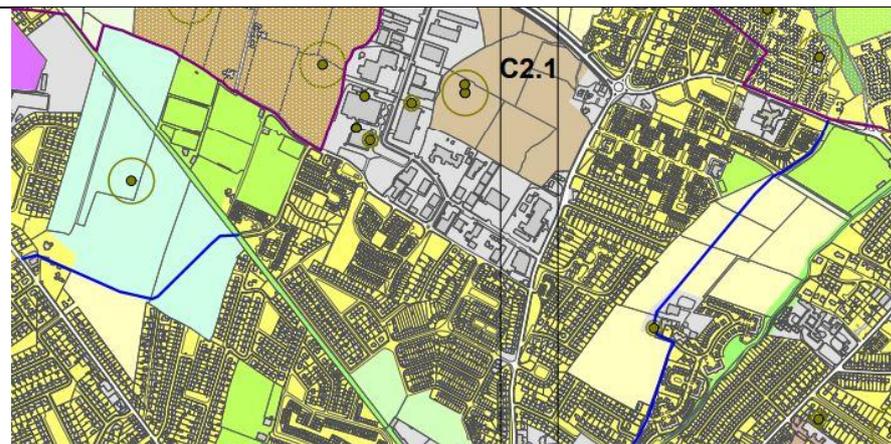
A further reduction in the residential zoning of our client's lands was carried out under Variation 5 by the rezoning for agricultural use of the western part of the area which had been designated as Phase 1 under Variation No. 1. At the same time lands at Ragoonane which had been designated as Phase 2 Housing in Variation 1 and as Agriculture in Variation 3 had their residential zoning fully restored in Variation 5 (see Fig 1). We could find no justification for the inconsistency of these zoning changes in any of the documentation relating to Variation No. 5 which has been published on the Council's website.



Zoning Map for Variation 1



Zoning Map for Variation 3



Zoning Map for Variation 5

Figure 3.1: Zoning History of the Mounthawk and Rahoone Areas - Source: Kerry County Council Website

The new zoning map for Tralee which has been published as part of the new Draft Kerry County Development Plan appears to be identical to Variation 5 of the current Tralee Town Development Plan 2009-2025 (as varied and extended). This raises two important legal and procedural questions:

1. Whether the zoning objectives in the new draft plan should have been amended to explicitly address the legal anomalies in regard to the adoption of Variation No. 5 of the current Town Plan;
2. Whether the zoning objectives should have been amended to have more regard to the status of Tralee as a Key Town in the national and regional spatial strategies.

## 4. Draft Zoning and Policy Context

### 4.1 Draft Kerry County Development Plan 2022-2028

As part of the Draft Kerry County Development Plan (Draft KCDP), the southwestern section of the subject site is zoned 'R1 New/Proposed residential'. A small section to the west is zoned existing residential and facilitates access to the lands. The remainder of the lands are zoned P1 Agriculture. There is also provision for an indicative road to be provided throughout the landholding, as per the blue line. This proposed road, which will connect the R551 Road to the west and with 'Lios Rua' road to the east formed part of the agreed masterplan and the permission granted PL 81.227107. Realistically it will only be delivered if and when the lands along the entire route are zoned for development



Figure 4.1: Draft Zoning Map - Source: Draft Kerry County Development Plan

In respect of residential areas, the Draft KCDP states that:

*“Residential Areas are intended primarily for housing development but may also include a range of other ancillary uses for residential, particularly those that have the potential to foster the development of new residential communities. These are uses that benefit from a close relationship to the immediate community, such as crèches, some schools and nursing homes. A limited range of other uses that support the overall residential function of the area may also be considered. This category also provides for strategic residential reserve which identifies areas which are intended for residential development at some future date”.*

In regard of P1 Agriculture, the Draft KCDP states that:

*“This category relates to uses that mainly deal with the exploiting of natural resources such as agriculture, forestry and quarrying. Generally residential development is not permitted on agricultural zoned land however consideration will be given, in the case of an application, for the construction of a dwelling house for the landowner or the son or daughter of the landowner or the favoured niece or nephew of the landowner to be used as their full-time permanent residence”.*

## 4.2 Consistency of the draft Core Strategy with National and Regional Spatial Strategies

The Draft KCDP designates Tralee as a key town and describes it as a “*large population scale urban centre functioning as self-sustaining regional drivers, and strategically located urban centres with accessibility and significant influence in a sub-regional context*”.

The population growth for Tralee from 2022 to 2028 is 2,663, with a housing target of 2,087. The Draft KCDP states that this growth allocation will ensure that the key towns will grow by over 30% by 2040 in accordance with the RSES) positioning these settlements as sufficiently sized urban zones to attract additional employment and population, which will increase their competitiveness and attractiveness as national and regional investment locations. In our opinion the current draft County Plan fails to allocate a sufficient amount of the growth projected for County Kerry to Tralee to ensure that the national target of population growth in excess of 30% will be achieved. The submission made by the Office of the Planning regulator in response to the Issues Paper stated clearly that:

*Section 3.5 Key Towns of the RSES identifies Tralee as **one of six key towns in the region as self-sustaining regional drivers**, being major centres for delivery of public services, which should plan for population growth **in excess of 30%** by 2040.*

This means that Tralee has a stronger role than Killarney mallow or Clonakilty as it must reach a point where the growth is self-sustaining. In our opinion the draft County Plan spreads the projected growth for County Kerry too thinly across the settlement hierarchy with the result that the current zoning and infrastructural objectives are not sufficient to support strong and self-sustaining growth.

The OPR has already highlighted a similar issue in regard to the Key Towns of Cork County when they stated in regard to the Draft Cork County Development Plan that:

*The core strategy tables do not currently designate or identify the Key towns of Mallow and Clonakilty as a tier, which is inconsistent with section 3.5 of the RSES and RPO 11 and does not reflect their critical role underpinning the implementation of the RSES.*

The Draft County Plan must therefore be based on

- (a) An accurate estimate of the current 2022 population of Tralee;
- (b) A target population for 2040 that will deliver population growth in excess of 30%;
- (c) An accurate assessment of the development potential of the available and serviceable housing land.

In our opinion the Draft County Plan has made a number of questionable assumptions in regard to each of these parameters. In the first place 25,297 appears to be a significant overestimate of the current population of Tralee given that the 2016 census population of 23,691 followed a five-year period of stagnation and a ten-year period over which population grew by 4%. There have

not been sufficient house completions in recent to justify the assumption that the town's population grew by 6.78% since the last census

If the target of at least 30% by 2040 is applied to a base line of 2016, the rate of growth has already fallen well behind the target during the extended period of the current Town Plan. This may be due to the fact that much of the land that is currently zoned for development is unavailable or unserviced and/or is not suitable for the type of housing for which there is market demand. This mismatch between the zoning objectives and the housing market is reflected in the fact that during the 12-year period of the current town plan our client's lands were progressively dezoned even though it was owned by an active development company and its suitability for development was confirmed by

1. A masterplan for the entire holding which had been agreed with the Planning Authority
2. An Environmental Impact Assessment which was approved by An Bord Pleanála and had considered the cumulative effect of the development of the entire holding; and
3. A grant of permission for the first phase of the development.

In our opinion the fact that the 2009 zoning of our client's lands has not yet been restored highlights the inadequate population target for Tralee in the Core Strategy and the failure to provide sufficient zoned and land for even the current inadequate target.

## Rationale for Submission Request

### 4.3 Population Growth and Sustainable Development

The draft Development Plan identifies Tralee as a Key Town, which is described as a large-scale population scale urban centre functioning as a self-sustaining regional driver.

The overall population growth anticipated for the lifetime of the new development plan for County Kerry is 9,363 persons, with an overall housing target of 7,000 units. Of this, only 28.5% (2,663 persons) is allocated to Tralee. In our opinion this figure does not reflect the strategic role of Tralee in the national and regional spatial strategy and will not achieve the critical mass in terms of population and employment which is required for a Key Town.

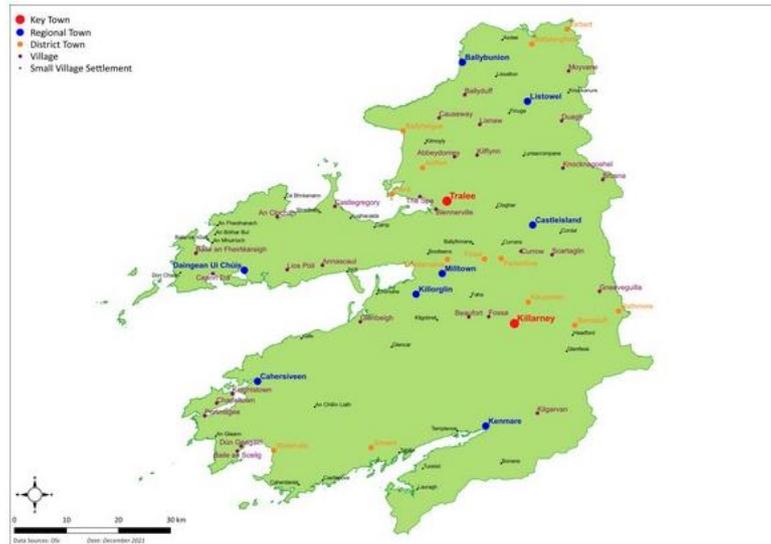


Figure 4.2: Settlement Hierarchy Map - Source: Draft Kerry County Development Plan

It is an objective of the Draft Plan (KCDP 3-4) to deliver at least 30% of all new homes in the key towns of Tralee and Killarney within the existing built-up footprint of the settlements. Although the site is currently in agricultural use and zoned Green Belt it may be deemed to be located within the existing built up area of Cork City and suburbs which is defined by the National Planning Framework (NPF) to include sites “within and close to the existing ‘footprint’ of built-up areas.

The Core Strategy notes that development of residential units will be prioritised on vacant and infill sites within close proximity to the town centre. Our client’s site is an infill site and is available to deliver residential development. It is also located within an established residential area within the built-up area of Tralee and has good access to road infrastructure with a cycle and walkway to the north providing direct access to the town and footpath connectivity feeding directly into the town from the R551. The site is less than 2km from the town centre and is in close proximity to a number of key services including Mounthawk Mercy Secondary School, Kerry College and employment uses.

A significant portion of the active open spaces are located within the north-western suburbs of Tralee including the sports fields to the immediate north of the subject site. There is a significant concentration of services within the north western suburbs, which makes it an attractive location for future residents as well as promoting compact growth and creating sustainable communities that are no dependent on cars. Notwithstanding this, the draft KCDP fails to allocate sufficient zoned land in the north-western suburbs to accommodate future growth. Although there appear to be some infill sites within the existing residential zone in this part of Tralee, none are of a scale comparative to that of our client’s site which can deliver the housing targets required to ensure Tralee performs as a key town.

Furthermore, it is evident from the draft zoning map, that a significant quantum of new residential land is zoned to the south and south-west of Tralee town centre. These lands in particular are on the periphery of the settlement of Tralee

and are considered to be isolated and not in close proximity to the town centre and main concentration of services.

As noted, our client's site is an infill site within close proximity to town centre, employment uses and amenities and can be served by public transport, walking and cycling. It is also a key infrastructure requirement of the RSES and an objective of the Draft KCDP to provide the northern relief road for Tralee. This road will significantly open up the existing infrastructure services in the northern part of Tralee and enhance connectivity both within the town and to the wider county and region. The zoning of the entire subject site for new residential will promote compact growth in line with the principles of the NPF and RSES.

In terms of the vision and strategy for Tralee, the Draft KCDP states that the long-term vision for Tralee is to enhance its position as a regional economic driver and a 'Destination Town' that is competitive nationally and internationally in attracting investment, talent, enterprise and visitors. Tralee's pathway to transition and regeneration will enhance its competitiveness in attracting new residents, visitors and national and international investment. This will be achieved through increased high-quality employment spaces, residential opportunities and the development of an excellent quality environment, by means of strategic investment in office development, public realm improvements, leisure and amenity areas and strengthening Tralee's sense of place and identity.

In order to ensure Tralee continues to perform its role as a Key Town in terms of its functions to provide education, services, public transport and employment, it is imperative that the forthcoming development plan allocates sufficient zoned land to accommodate residential development in the short, medium and long term. It is important that a mix of housing types are provided to cater for the varying housing needs of Tralee in tandem with its projected growth as a key town up to 2040 and to adapt to changing demographic trends. The forthcoming development plan therefore needs to be cognisant of the changing demographic trends and household profiles of Tralee as it grows and develops in line with its designated status as a key town.

#### **4.4 Suitability of Site**

There are a number of sites within the settlement boundary that are zoned for agricultural land, including the northern portion of our client's lands. The appropriateness of this zoning within the built-up area of Tralee, including our client's lands, is questioned as it is not reflective of the development established within an urban context and does not promote sustainable development or compact growth. For the agricultural zoning, the Draft KCDP indicates that *"generally residential development is not permitted on agricultural zoned land however consideration will be given, in the case of an application, for the construction of a dwelling house for the landowner or the son or daughter of the landowner or the favoured niece or nephew of the landowner to be used as their full-time permanent residence"*.

A significant portion of our client's site is zoned agriculture, notwithstanding that it is an infill site located within an established built up area with existing residential development to the south, east and west. To the north is a cycle and walkway, primarily active open space zoned land (occupied by a football club) and a small portion of agricultural zoned land. Beyond this is enterprise zoned land. Tralee is

identified in the draft plan as the highest order retail town in the County having the greatest sphere of influence, catchment population and range of retail facilities. There is also a train station located in the town centre and Tralee has strong educational links to Limerick and Cork with the recent merger of Tralee and Cork Institutes of Technology to form the Munster Technological University (MTU).

Tralee forms part of the knowledge triangle for Kerry linking Tralee, Killarney and Killorglin and it is acknowledged in the draft plan that Tralee offers a higher range of functions than similarly sized towns nationally, including the new third level MTU, infused with local job supported platforms and local industry, public and private hospitals and a strong and vibrant internationally renowned tourism industry.

A zoning which encourages one off housing in a built-up area on an infill site contravenes best practice and national guidelines in terms of sustainability and compact growth.

As noted, our client's site is an infill site within the existing built up area of the key town of Tralee, is accessible from the R551 road, which has direct connectivity for pedestrians and vehicles to the town centre. There is also a cycle and walkway bounding the site along the northern boundary which connects directly to the town centre. The zoning of the site for residential use therefore forms a natural sequential development of the lands.

The principles of the NPF and RSES are to promote compact growth within and contiguous to existing urban footprints where it can be served by public transport, walking and cycling. In line with this principle, future zoning should prioritise areas which consolidate existing developments and benefit from excellent connections to the town centre, public transport, local amenities and services and employment opportunities.

#### **4.5 Infrastructure Investment**

It is critical that the new development plan has regard to other key criteria including the housing market for Tralee. This town forms an attractive location for people to live and work due to its strategic location and quality of life offered, as well as the affordability of the housing market. The current market prices for houses in Tralee are not very strong at present to support the level of infrastructure services required to facilitate the delivery of housing on the residential zoned section of the site in the southern portion.

As it stands, the site is currently serviced by a combined sewer and will require significant capital investment to accommodate any new houses on the residential zoned portion of the lands. To connect development on the zoned land to the nearest sewer would require significant capital and possibly also additional services including new and additional roads.

The investment required to service the site coupled with the current market prices would make the existing zoned lands unviable to deliver and would result in an optimum infill site being left vacant, which conflicts with national policy in terms of compact growth and sustainable development.

It is also important to have regard to the zoning provision for an indicative road to be provided throughout the entire landholding, which will connect the landholding with the R551 Road to the south-west and with 'Lios Rua' road to the north-east. It will enhance connectivity and permeability for pedestrians. The indicative road forms part of a network of roads indicated for delivery for Tralee which will feed into the wider infrastructure network and enhance connectivity between the residential estates and with the town centre. The indicative road for the subject site will also connect with the cycle wand walkway to the north as well as the sports grounds and residential estate to the immediate north-east.

The objective to deliver on this connectivity along with the required services infrastructure to facilitate the proposed new residential zoning in the southern section of the subject site will place significant costs on our client and will far outweigh the return once the houses are sold. In order for our client to provide the necessary works to facilitate the infrastructure upgrades, and to be able to fund these works, the number of residential units that can be achieved needs to be of a sufficient number to ensure the overall scheme is viable and the associated significant infrastructural costs can be covered. Otherwise, it would be unfeasible for our client to develop the site. It is therefore requested that the Council recognise the high threshold costs that are associated with providing the required infrastructural upgrades to facilitate the infrastructure services for the site. It is therefore requested that the Council recognise the infrastructure investment required and re-zone the northern portion of the lands from P1 Agriculture to R1 New Residential. This will not only encourage development on an infill site in line with national guidance but will also ensure the development is viable.

#### **4.6 Deliverability**

In terms of allocating future growth, the RSES notes that local authorities will have regard to settlement typologies, scale of employment provision, extent of local services and amenities and the availability and deliverability of lands within the existing built up footprints. It sets out that these principles will provide clarity for how sustainable and viable development will be progressed during the life of the development plan, including targeted timelines for addressing infrastructure deficits, delivering public transport improvements, delivering land supply, and transitional steps to achieve compact growth targets. It is important that the forthcoming development recognises that not all infill and brownfield sites can be delivered during the life time of the development and should therefore be cognisant of the principles that can limit the potential delivery of certain sites in the short or medium term and that flexibility is provided to ensure that sufficient lands are zoned for residential use.

Our client has a proven track record for actually delivering houses in the short and medium term. Ruden Homes Ltd has established itself as an active developer in the southern region of Ireland, predominantly County Cork and has also engaged with Kerry County Council in the past to obtain planning permission for a residential development in Tralee (Planning Ref. no. 07/307502). It is therefore submitted that the future development plan should prioritise the development of residential zoned lands where they can be delivered during the lifetime of the development plan.

## 4.7 Long Term Residential Development

National policy guidance emphasises the need to provide compact growth and to use infill sites. It is imperative that the forthcoming development plan places a focus on fostering the sustainable growth of Tralee in line with its vision to sustainably strengthen the role of Tralee as a self-sustaining regional economic driver and key settlement in the Kerry Hub Knowledge Triangle and to build on its inherent strengths as an administrative capital, centre of skills and education, innovation, enterprise growth, culture and tourism accessible to regional airport, port, rail and strategic road network assets.

It is therefore important that the zoning provisions for Tralee are strategically planned to allow for any increased expansion and plan for any future residential growth in the short, medium and long term. The extant Tralee LAP places a focus on strengthening the urban structure of Tralee and encouraging sustainable residential development within the town boundary in order to avoid one off houses in more rural areas. It recognises that the development of houses and physical and social infrastructure are interlinked and that this can take longer than the plan period of 6 years. The LAP emphasises that a strategic land bank should be put in place to accommodate long term growth and has therefore categorised the delivery of residential zoning in tandem with infrastructure provision as follows:

Residential	
R1	New/proposed residential
R2	Existing residential
R3	Residential, mixed residential and other uses
R4	Strategic residential reserve

It is submitted that the forthcoming development plan ensures that sufficient land is provided to accommodate the residential growth of Tralee in the short, medium and long term. This type of zoning would also facilitate the phased development of a number of sites in Tralee and ensure that housing is delivered in line with demand and capacity of infrastructure services. As noted, the RSES has designated Tralee as a key town with a considerable scope for growth of more than 30% up to 2040. For this reason, the forthcoming development needs to recognise the projected long-term growth of Tralee and plan for the phased delivery of lands to develop sequentially in line with national policy and its long term vision to regenerate Tralee as a regional economic driver through boosting the supply of high-quality employment spaces, residential opportunities and the development of an excellent quality environments.

## 5. Conclusion

This submission is made on behalf of Ruden Homes Ltd. and relates to the strategic growth of residential lands to support the future growth of Tralee by more than 30% up to 2040. It is imperative that the forthcoming development plan recognises that a sufficient supply of land that is deliverable and viable is provided to facilitate the long-term growth of this key town and that a strategic framework is set in place to ensure there is a balance between the demand for services and supply of houses.

Our clients holding was fully zoned for residential development when the current Tralee Town Development Plan was adopted in 2009. During the 12-year period of the extended Town Plan our client's holding was progressively dezoned even though it was owned by an active development company and its suitability for development was confirmed by:

1. A masterplan for the entire holding which had been agreed with the Planning Authority;
2. An Environmental Impact Assessment which was approved by An Bord Pleanala and had considered the cumulative effect of the development of the entire holding; and
3. A grant of permission for the first phase of the development.

In our opinion the fact that the 2009 zoning of our client's lands has not been restored in the Draft County Plan highlights the inadequate population target for Tralee in the Core Strategy and the failure to provide sufficient zoned land for even the current inadequate target.

Our client's holding is an infill site within an established residential area with excellent connectivity to to the town centre, local services, public transport, vehicular and pedestrian infrastructure, schools and sporting grounds. The restoration of the previous zoning will promote compact growth and sustainable development in line with national guidance and will facilitate Tralee in performing as a Key Town. It is therefore submitted that the Draft KCDP undertakes a review of more appropriate zoning provisions for lands currently zoned for agricultural purposes, to reflect the pattern of development and surrounding built up area within an urban context.

Our client welcomes the retained zoning of the southern section of their holding for new residential use, however, having regard to infrastructure services and connectivity objectives that are required to support the development of this portion of the site, it would not be financially viable. It is therefore submitted that the Planning Authority recognise that the significant costs to service the site would only be viable if a certain target of new housing units are provided.

It is therefore requested that:

- **The northern and eastern portions of the subject lands be re-zoned from 'P1 Agriculture' to 'R1 New / Proposed Residential'.**

On behalf of our client, we would like to thank you for your consideration of this submission and look forward to continuing to engage with Kerry County Council

during the development of the Draft Development Plan. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries.