**Kerry County Development Plan 2022-2028 – Submission by Asdee Community Development Association**

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the draft County Development Plan, and we look forward to continuing to work with Kerry County Council and other stakeholders in ensuring that Asdee is a thriving, resilient, vibrant and sustainable community.

We welcome the fact that Asdee is a designated ‘small village settlement’ (map 3.3), as a step towards ensuring that we rightfully attain village status. In the meantime, we look forward to leveraging the opportunities this will bring, particularly new housing and population growth. We trust that the forthcoming Kerry County Development Plan will provide a proactive and supportive framework and impetus for the full delivery of the [Asdee Socio-Economic Development Plan 2020-2025](https://asdeevillage.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Asdee-Final-Plan-Web-Version.pdf).

We welcome the reference to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This framework underpins our own development plan, and we encourage Kerry County Council to ensure the UNSDGs are more explicitly and consistently applied in the final version of the county development plan.

We are committed to working with the designated regional and district towns in North Kerry and to playing our part in the wider development of this part of the county. We note that some of the language in the plan is problematic, as it refers to rural areas, like Asdee, as being in the “hinterland” of towns. We believe such an approach is outdated, as places interact with each other depending on the various functions and services they provide. Asdee’s amenities, and in particular our natural resources, such as Littor Strand are important regional assets, and many of the businesses in rural towns depend on custom from Asdee. We recommend that Kerry County Council show greater regard for the contributions rural communities make to the overall development of the county.

The chapter on economic development and the text about agriculture (page 68) ought to be revised in order to present a more accurate picture of the significance of agriculture – directly and indirectly. The plan needs to provide for sustaining and growing number of jobs on family farms and in the various ancillary activities, including food-processing and contracting. Page 68 wrongly asserts that Kerry has ‘relatively low agricultural employment figures’. In fact, the county has the eight-highest proportion of persons working in the primary sector, and sustaining these jobs is vital for our county, especially North Kerry. There are several other thousands of workers depending on the primary sector, and their value needs to be recognised and supported throughout the plan.

We note that Asdee is included in the Shannon Estuary Coastal Network, which also covers parts of Counties Limerick and Clare. We welcome the potential this designation may offer in terms of an investment focus and the potential for better connectivity. We encourage Kerry County Council to consult systematically with all the communities and stakeholders to be affected by this designation. We ask Kerry County Council to ensure that any developments (paragraph 9.6.1.1) are commensurate with the locality’s carrying capacity and that the benefits they generate accrue, in the first instance, to the local communities, rather than to the multinationals. We recommend that Kerry County Council broaden out the scope of the policy objectives that are presented after paragraph 9.6.1.1 to ensure they provide for sustainable development, not just in the designated land banks along the estuary, but across the entire catchment area. This requires investing in local infrastructure, including housing and carrying capacity, so that any workers who are attracted to the area are enabled to live locally. Otherwise, we risk generating reverse commuting from the Limerick Metropolitan Area.

We welcome the greenway strategy and the routing of the North Kerry Greenway through Asdee (Map 14.1), and we encourage Kerry County Council to expedite this project. We welcome the other provisions (in Chapter 14) in respect of active travel, and we look forward to this infrastructure being rolled out in Asdee.

We welcome the mapping of the Wild Atlantic Way (Map 14.3), and we encourage Kerry County Council to ensure that all road signage, applications and publicity material adhere to this route – which goes through Asdee, Ballylongford, Beal and Ballybunion. We welcome the designation of Carrigafoyle Castle, Beal Strand as ‘discovery points’ and we recommend the inclusion of Littor Strand in this category.

The Economic Development Chapter places very considerable emphasis on digital hubs, yet, as Map 14.4 illustrates, there are none in North Kerry (outside of Listowel), and there is no broadband connection point. In order to redress this deficit, we wish to propose Asdee as the location for a digital hub – to serve the locality and the surrounding communities. This can be factored into the forthcoming re-development of the Asdee Community Centre.

Map 5.1 and the associated approach to housing in the countryside are of profound concern to the entire community. These need to be revised, so that the negative trends that are acknowledged in Chapter 3 are arrested and reversed. Under the draft strategy, Asdee (village and rural townlands) are classed as being ‘under urban influence’. This inaccurate classification is used to seek to justify unworkable restrictions (page 78) on the construction of homes in our parish. We call for the total deletion of the points listed in KCDP 5-13 and their replacement with housing guidelines that foster a living countryside in line with the 2016 EU declaration. Any notion that a person would need to have lived in the locality for seven years prior to applying for planning permission is discriminatory and highly objectionable. People from all over Ireland and further afield have come to live in Asdee, over the years, and they are as important to our community as the people who grew up here. We are a welcoming and inclusive community, and we do not want such restrictions. Many people – not just farmers – have economic and social needs to live in the countryside, and their needs and rights must be respected and facilitated. This can be done in a way that does not adversely affect the importance of consolidating and growing our village.