

3.4.4 Dún Géagáin

3.4.4.1 Context

Dún Géagáin is an important tourist village on the Skellig Ring. It is located off the R566 on the Iveragh Peninsula. Baile an Sceilg with which it shares many services is located 1.5km to the south. Although a certain level of development has taken place between the two settlements in recent years they can still be viewed as two distinct settlements. Dún Géagáin is located within An Gaeltacht Uíbh Ráthach. Dún Géagáin has a range of social facilities including a Roman Catholic Church, day care centre, community centre, national school and hard surface playing area, a public house, and an industrial unit producing veterinary products. Cill Rialaig Arts Centre with associated exhibition space, shop and café is located at the village edge. There is no grocery shop within the village but there is one located approximately 500 metres to the north of the village on the R566. The local GAA pitch (St Michaels) is located between Dún Géagáin and Baile an Sceilg.

3.4.4.2 Planning Considerations and Proposals

The development boundary for Dún Géagáin defines the existing extent of the area where new development may be considered, whilst also allowing for expansion re-development in the village core. The overall vision for Dún Géagáin is to maintain its compact urban form and develop a vibrant sustainable village which is an attractive place to live and visit. Future development should be in-depth in order to create a strong and identifiable village core.

The development boundary is largely determined by topography and infrastructural considerations. It is an objective of the plan to encourage the development of a compact and sustainable village structure by ensuring that new development is contiguous with existing development and makes effective use of backland and infill sites. It is important to maintain the open countryside between Dún Géagáin and Baile an Sceilg. The development strategy for Dún Géagáin is to promote a more gradual organic development as a

rural village and tourist centre commensurate with the level of infrastructure provision. Growth in recent years has been largely confined to the holiday home sector. The village is located within a Gaeltacht area, and it is important that no development takes place which will be detrimental to the promotion of the Irish language.

3.4.4.3 Population and Sustainable Land-Use Development

There are no population figures for the village of Dún Géagáin itself. It is located within the ED of Baile an Sceilg. The population in this ED decreased slightly between 2002 and 2006 from 358 to 355 people. It increased marginally in the 2011 census to 375 people. The 2016 Census recorded a population of 390, a 4% increase, and in Census 2022 the population of the ED increased to 419, a 7.4% increase.

	2006	2011	2016	2022
Baile an Sceilg ED	355	375	390	419

Table 3.14: Population Change 2006-2022

Two housing developments on the seaward side of the main street have been completed in recent years. These developments are used primarily as holiday homes. Other holiday home developments are located outside of the settlement boundary. A few single houses for permanent residents have been completed over the same period. The number of holiday homes constructed in recent years far outweighs the number of permanent residential completions. The new housing developments that have taken place however have been close to the urban core and have succeeded in maintaining a compact urban form.

3.4.4.3.1 Residential Development

Dún Géagáin has not been given a specific population growth and housing target under the Core Strategy as set out in Chapter 3 of the CDP, consequently lands have not been zoned for R1 (Proposed

Residential). However suitably located lands have been identified and zoned as R4 (*Strategic Residential Reserve*) to ensure that the long-term residential needs of the village can be met. The development of this land is dependent on the availability of capital investment in wastewater infrastructure.

3.4.4.4 Sustainable Communities

3.4.4.4.1 Coiste Forbartha na Sceilge

Coiste Forbartha na Sceilge is a voluntary development organisation which covers the Ballinskelligs area. It deals with the economic, social and cultural development of the area. One of its main activities is the provision of services from the Community Centre in the villages of Dún Géagáin and Baile an Sceilg.

The Council will work with the Coiste to ensure the provision of adequate services in Dún Géagáin and Baile an Sceilg to meet the local need.

3.4.4.5 Heritage

3.4.4.5.1 Built Environment & Heritage

Dún Géagáin is a traditional rural village, linear in form comprised of mainly detached structures without a set building line apart from an attractive stretch of village streetscape to the north of the church. If this streetscape was further developed, it would give the village a more defined core area and urban structure. There are a variety of building types within the village from the traditional single storey cottage to the more modern form of the Cill Rialaig shop. Building heights vary throughout the village. Some new cluster type developments in the village are of a uniform design which is untypical of the older built forms.

There are no recorded archaeological monuments in the village.

3.4.4.6 Economic Development

The largest employer in the village is Ballinskelligs Veterinary Products, which contains a state-of-the-art laboratory and manufacture products for the Irish and British markets. Other employment is provided at the primary school and at the community centre. Údaras Na Gaeltachta premises are located to the north on the R566.

3.4.4.7 Tourism & Outdoor Recreation

3.4.4.7.1 Natural Environment & Recreational Amenity

The village is close to the blue flag beach at Baile an Sceilg. The coast to the south and east of the village is designated as a *Visually Sensitive Area* in the KCDP. The bay area is part of Baile an Sceilg Bay and Inny Estuary candidate SAC which is of considerable conservation significance because of the presence of two types of salt marsh, which are listed in Annex 1 of the EU habitats Directive.

The area also has a significant population of Ringed Plover and Common Scoter and the sand dunes in the area support a population of rare liverwort species called the Petalwort (*Petalophyllum ralfsii*).

3.4.4.8 Water & Wastewater Management


Public water supply is available in the village, however, the existing waste water treatment plant serving both Ballinskelligs and Dun Geagan is at capacity. Ballinskelligs and Dún Géagáin upgrade is listed on Irish Water's Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme (STVGP) (See Chapter 13 Water & Waste Management of the KCDP). The Local Authority actively supports the provision of wastewater treatment infrastructure in a timely manner to protect sensitive designated European sites and to ensure the long-term sustainable development of the area. KCC will engage with Uisce Éireann regarding the upgrading of the existing infrastructure.

3.4.4.9 Transport & Movement

The village is located on local roads and due to its relative isolated location does not suffer from traffic congestion or high volumes of through traffic. However, traffic increases in the summer months as the area is particularly popular with campervan tourists and self-drive visitors on the WAW route. It is the policy of this Plan to seek the improvement and provision of footpaths where necessary to improve pedestrian safety, connectivity & permeability in and around the village settlement.



Figure 3.86: Cill Rialaig Arts Centre, Dún Géagáin

General Objectives	
Objective No.	It is an objective of the Council to:
KENMD-DG-1	Ensure that future development supports the existing role and function of the village as a small local focal point for its surrounding rural community and have regard to the scale of the existing settlement and the setting of the village in an attractive rural landscape.
KENMD-DG-2	Ensure that development does not detract from the amenities that make the Skellig Ring drive a popular tourist attraction.
KENMD-DG-3	Promote the use of the Irish language.
KENMD-DG-4	Facilitate the sustainable development of ecotourism and other niche markets along with the sustainable extension and diversification of tourist facilities as a possible source of employment.
KENMD-DG-5	Support and facilitate the Uíbh Ráthach Task Force and any reports/plans/actions that they promote, subject to environmental assessment.
KENMD-DG-6 	Facilitate and support the upgrade of existing wastewater treatment infrastructure in a timely manner to ensure the sustainable development of the area.