

### 3.3.2 Waterville

#### 3.3.2.1 Context

The seaside town of Waterville (An Coireán) is situated on the WAW and Ring of Kerry driving routes on the scenic south western coast of the Iveragh Peninsula, nestled approximately 17km south of Cahersiveen and 14 km north of Caherdaniel.

Waterville is defined as a District Town in the county settlement hierarchy as set out in the KCDP. In the past Waterville's agriculture and tourism potential mitigated the effects of its peripherality and remoteness from the county's major economic centres. The town continues to play a very important role as a service provider for smaller villages and rural dwellers in more remote rural areas and is critical to the viability of these rural communities.

The town has a good range of educational, social and sporting facilities. These include a primary school, churches, Garda station, community centre with adjoining children's playground, Teach Amergin - a community, education and arts centre, G.A.A. pitch and associated facilities. Waterville is internationally renowned for golf, with its two 18-hole championship golf links. It is also the ideal location for participating in hillwalking and water sport activities. Waterville is characterised by a long seafront and promenade/linear park which frames the western boundary of the settlement. The promenade offers excellent strolling/recreational opportunities and panoramic views over Ballinskelligs Bay. Waterville has a range of accommodation options including high quality hotel and restaurant facilities which attract many tourists. Many of the residential units in the settlement are holiday homes.



**Figures 3.74 & 3.75: Aerial Views of Waterville**

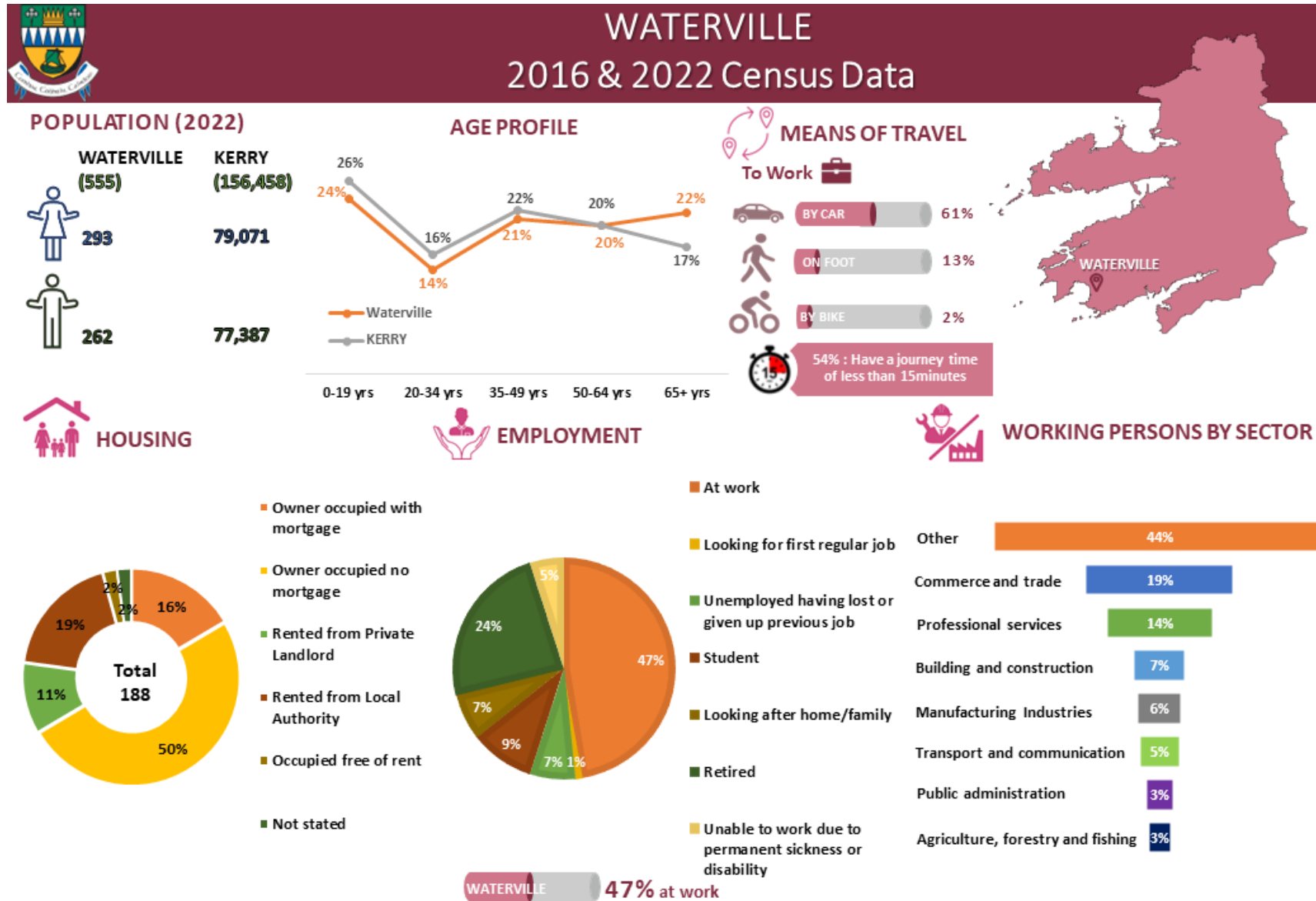


Figure 3.76: Waterville MD – Key Statistics (2016 & 2022 CSO)

### 3.3.2.2 Vision and Strategy

The vision for Waterville is to sustainably develop the town as an attractive, vibrant and distinct place for existing and future incoming residents, while maintaining and enhancing its physical assets, unique character and natural attributes.

It is vital that future development supports the existing role and function of the town as a rural service centre, seaside and tourist town having regard to the scale of the existing settlement and the setting of the town in an attractive coastal rural landscape.

### 3.3.2.3 Planning Considerations and Proposals

The development boundary for Waterville defines the existing extent of the area where new development may be considered, while also allowing for some expansion and re-development in the town core. The development boundary for the town is largely determined by topography and infrastructural considerations such as including the wastewater catchment area.

Waterville will be the primary focus for development for the settlement and the surrounding areas. This Plan facilitates an increase in population appropriate to its status as a District Town. In this regard, it is important that the number of permanent year-round residents is maintained but also increased.

The consolidation of the town settlement and the provision of an appropriate and sustainable range of social and physical infrastructure, facilities and services, including retail, commercial and enterprise development to serve the inhabitants of the town and its rural hinterlands is encouraged. The regeneration and re-use of existing properties within the settlement's core is important. The importance of tourism to contribute to the quality of life, economy, employment, and local community is recognised with further sustainable development in the quality and range of tourism product vital to increasing vibrancy in the town on a year-round

basis and securing the long-term economy of the town and the wider region.

The sensitive coastal location, biodiversity interests of designated nature conservation sites in the area and built heritage must be safeguarded.

### 3.3.2.4 Population and Sustainable Land-Use Development

Waterville falls within two EDs, An tImleach and Loch Luíoch. Table 3.9 outlines how the population of these EDs has changed in recent years. The population in the 2022 Census is 555.

Geo-directory figures for the period 2012-2022 illustrate a small growth in housing stock at 10 units.

	2006	2011	2016	2022
Waterville	546	465	462	555
An tImleach ED	924	926	871	962
Loch Luíoch ED	324	269	311	343

**Table 3.9: Population 2002-2022 (CSO)**

	Housing Target
Waterville	414

**Table 3.10: Housing Target 2022-2028**

#### 3.3.2.4.1 Residential Development

In compliance with the DoEHLG guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and recognising the need to allow for the consolidation of the town and development of a sense of place, proposals for residential development on infill sites within and adjacent to the town core will be prioritised.

It is considered that any new housing scheme must be of an appropriate scale and density to facilitate integration with the character of the surrounding landscape and must offer a range in house types.

General Objectives	
Objective No.	It is an objective of the Council to:
KENMD-WE-1	Promote the strengthening of Waterville as an employment and service centre commensurate with its function as a district town and as an attractive residential location, service centre and tourist town.

### 3.3.2.5 Sustainable Communities

#### 3.3.2.5.1 Community Facilities

The town is well served by community facilities including a national school (St. Finian's), a community centre and a playground. Under the Community Centres Investments Fund the Waterville Community Centre CLG received funding. There are opportunities to improve links between different parts of the town through implementation of traffic calming measures at key locations and provision of improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.

### 3.3.2.6 Heritage

#### 3.3.2.6.1 Built Environment and Heritage

The centre of Waterville has a one-sided linear settlement pattern which has been determined by the sea to the west which has resulted in development being concentrated on the eastern/landward side of the N70. The absence of significant development on the seaward side of the street affords panoramic views of Ballinskelligs' Bay and is probably one of the town's most valuable attributes. A significant amount of residential development

has occurred on the northern approach roads to the town, not only on the N70 but also on both the Spunkane and Tarmons roads.

A certain amount of development has also taken place to the south of the town along the N70 and to the east of the town centre although landforms and the proximity of Lough Currane restrict development in this direction. The streetscape along the main street is mainly comprised of two-storey terraced structures. Roof profiles are fairly regular throughout the town.

Due to the physical constraints and the quantum of development on approach roads, particularly those from the north but also the N70 to the south and the road south of Lough Currane, has resulted in the creation of a dispersed settlement pattern. While the earlier terraces associated with the Cable Company allowed for a more compact urban settlement pattern subsequent development has diluted this.

#### 3.3.2.6.2 Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Area


There are twelve structures included in the RPS within the proposed development boundary, these are listed in Volume 3 of the KCDP. In addition to the architectural and social value found in individual buildings, certain streetscapes present an attractive traditional aspect which should be preserved. It is considered that future development should preserve and enhance elements of the existing built environment which define the character of the town. A number of streetscapes have been identified which present particularly coherent and attractive traditional frontage which should be retained. These are contained within the ACA. There is one recorded monument within the settlement area (KE 098-031).

Heritage Objectives	
Objective No.	It is an objective of the Council to:
<b>KENMD-WE-2</b>	Improve the urban definition of the boundaries of the settlement and to promote the development of attractive approach routes into the town.
<b>KENMD-WE-3</b>	Retain and improve, as necessary, the distinctive historical, architectural and physical character of the town.

### 3.3.2.7 Economic Development

The town itself developed traditionally as a market town serving the needs of a historically successful farming and fishing hinterland. The vitality of many of the town's small businesses is still dependant on the spending power of customers from the rural areas. However, the long-term decline in agricultural activities has reduced the contribution that the farming community makes to the town's economy. While its contribution is still significant, it is insufficient to support economic activity at traditional levels. In recent decades the economy of Waterville has been heavily reliant on tourism.

In order for the town to provide for future employment and economic growth it is imperative that this Plan supports and endorses facilities that retain the diverse range of employment sources within the town ranging from retail, services, and business enterprise.

Town Centre Objectives	
Objective No:	It is an objective of the Council to:
<b>KENMD-WE-4</b> 	Work with all stakeholders and community groups in the preparation of a Town Centre Renewal Plan to address the issues pertaining to the development of the town centre. This plan will address the physical enhancement and improvement of the town centre through urban design measures and improved traffic management in the town.
<b>KENMD-WE-5</b>	Facilitate and promote streetscape and civic area improvements throughout the town to attain an attractive urban environment, while protecting features of architectural & cultural importance.
<b>KENMD-WE-6</b>	Facilitate and promote sustainable development which will provide an all-year service to the public within the town centre.
<b>KENMD-WE-7</b>	Facilitate the sustainable provision of sporting, cultural & amenity facilities in the town as a means of boosting the tourism potential of the town.
<b>KENMD-WE-8</b>	Facilitate and promote a distinctive, high quality public realm along the waterfront area by creating a pleasant, usable space for local residents & visitors alike.

<b>KENMD-WE-9</b>	Facilitate and promote the sustainable development of Waterville as a golfing destination.
<b>KENMD-WE-10</b>	Facilitate and promote the sustainable development of a marine tourism centre in Waterville.

### 3.3.2.8 Tourism & Outdoor Recreation

#### 3.3.2.8.1 Tourism in Waterville

Waterville's location on the scenic southwestern coast of the Iveragh Peninsula, with Ballinskellig's Bay to its west and Lough Currane to its east, make it an ideal location and base for leisure activities and informal recreation. Whilst being a popular stop on the Ring of Kerry driving route, Waterville is also itself a tourist destination. Waterville offers a very high-quality tourism product including year-round attractions of golfing, fishing and hiking/walking.

The Lough Currane, Cumberagh and Inny River Catchments where a world-renowned sea trout/salmon fishery can be found is a significant contributor to the tourism economy of the Waterville area. Further investment in sustainable fisheries development has the potential to significantly contribute to increased tourism days and spend in the area.

The town is very reliant on tourism for its economic development and viability. Nonetheless, it is important that the town and the surrounding area should further develop in a sustainable manner and enhance its tourist potential and explore the option of promoting itself more as a year-round tourist destination.

Improving the attractiveness of the urban environment within the town will also be key in promoting the town as a year-round visitor destination. The Planning Authority will encourage the appropriate

reuse and sensitive restoration of unused/derelict vernacular properties in the town to facilitate the creation of attractive and active streetscapes. In addition, the promotion of a high standard of architectural design will also be key to increasing the vibrancy of the town centre and promoting the tourist potential of the town.

The Local Authority recognises that the area around the seafront has a central part to play in the development of tourism in Waterville. The Council will encourage investment in this area to enhance its tourism potential through the provision and promotion of sustainable tourism and leisure facilities and the environmental upgrading of the area. In this regard, the amenity value of the waterfront will be promoted and sustainably enhanced.

There is a need to market Waterville as a tourism destination, both in terms of the facilities available in the town and as a base from which to access the surrounding area. This involves improving signage into and around the town and developing a tourism strategy for the town and promoting Waterville as a tourism destination nationally and internationally.

Efforts need to be made to lengthen the tourism season in this area and this could be achieved by further promoting ecotourism in the area and the development of other niche markets. When considering proposals for new tourism development, priority will be given to those that are encouraging longer visitor stays and add to the range of facilities available to people who live in the area all year round. The Charlie Chaplin Comedy Film Festival, Éigse na Brídeoige, and other events attract people and business to the town. Other aspects of the town's history could be used to promote festivals such as the Cable Company etc. Waterville's location in the Buffer Zone of the Kerry International Dark Sky Reserve; (the only Gold Tier awarded Dark-Sky Reserve in the whole of the Northern Hemisphere) can be marketed as an ideal location to stay and discover the Kerry International Dark Sky Reserve.

### 3.3.2.8.2 Natural Environment and Recreational Amenity

Waterville's distinctive setting overlooking Ballinskellig's Bay and on the shore of Lough Currane with mountain ranges to its backdrop are its prime natural assets. Coastal waters to the west of the town from part of the Ballinskellig's Bay and Inny Estuary SAC, with Lough Currane forming part of the Killarney National Park, McGuillicuddy Reeks and Caragh River catchment SAC. Some coastal lands within and adjoining the plan area to the north, east and south of Waterville have been designated visually sensitive areas in the KCDP, which recognises areas of outstanding landscapes in the county. The KCDP also sets out views & prospects from the village which are protected from inappropriate development. Within the plan area, some lands have been identified as green spaces requiring conservation and protection where they adjoin sensitive designated lands. It is of importance that development proposals do not adversely impact on Natura 2000 sites.

### 3.3.2.9 Water & Wastewater Management

Waterville town is served by the Waterville Public Water Supply Scheme. This scheme has adequate capacity to cater for the targeted growth of the town within the plan period.

Waterville town has a public wastewater scheme. The existing scheme has spare capacity available. The current capacity is 3,000 PE with the 2017 load being 1,736 PE.

### 3.3.2.10 Flood Risk Management

It is the policy of the Council, that development should not be subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding nor should it cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations. In this regard, development shall ensure that the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines where relevant and appropriate are met.



### 3.3.2.11 Transport and Movement

Transport and infrastructure are important quality of life factors. Good transport links, free flowing traffic and adequate parking are important determinants in achieving sustainable growth in population, employment and tourism as well as developing an attractive town. The Council has obtained planning permission for an extension to the existing carpark on the waterfront which includes the provision of 6 additional coach parking spaces. This space also contains a multi-use area which can accommodate different uses and has the option to be used as additional car-parking during peak periods of demand.



**Figure 3.77: View of Waterville Village**

Waterville is located on a National Secondary route (N70), the renowned Ring of Kerry tourist route, which experiences considerable through traffic and congestion during peak times in the tourist season. Its physical configuration and junction layout aggravates the problem. Local traffic combined with through tourist traffic volumes can leave a marked effect on the town's environmental qualities, at times. The provision of improved parking facilities particularly for tour buses are required for the town.

Transport and Movement Objectives	
Objective No.	It is an objective of the Council to:
<b>KENMD-WE-11</b> 	Provide for the sustainable development and improvement of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in the town as required.
<b>KENMD-WE-12</b>	Provide for the sustainable development of car parks with the capacity to accommodate dedicated tour bus parking, at appropriate locations.
<b>KENMD-WE-13</b>	Facilitate the alleviation of traffic congestion and the restructuring of parking spaces in the town centre. Provide for easy and safe pedestrian movement throughout the town centre.
<b>KENMD-WE-14</b> 	Facilitate and support the extension of the existing seafront walkway southwards along the N70 to existing facilities and services to provide an amenity walkway (subject to environmental assessment).
<b>KENMD-WE-15</b>	Support the N70 Waterville to Ballybrack Road Improvement Scheme, subject to environmental assessments.



**Figure 3.78: View from N70 to Ballinskelligs Bay**