

Review of County Development Plan,
Forward Planning Department,
Offaly County Council,
Áras an Chontae,
Charleville Road,
Tullamore,
Co. Offaly

Monday, 23rd September 2019
[Online: www.offaly.ie/cdp2021-2027]

-: SUBMISSION IN ADVANCE OF DRAFT COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN :-

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: OFFALY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2027
ISSUES PAPER – PUBLIC CONSULTATION - SETTLEMENT STRATEGY – KILCORMAC – LOCAL
SERVICE TOWN

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Planning Partnership, 29 Oliver Plunkett Street, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath are instructed by Mr. Pat Horan *CNN Construction Ltd.*, Patrick Street, Mountmellick, Co. Laois in respect of the advanced consideration of the subject lands as providing an opportunity to present a consolidated village form to meet the growing demands of creating sustainable and sequential development and in particular for the future growth for example of a significant strategic policy need currently and in line with National Policy on Housing Options for Our Ageing Population supplying much needed retirement living accommodation not just within Kilcormac but in rural County Offaly.

We note that there will be an opportunity to make submissions to the forthcoming Draft Development Plan process and site specific zoning submissions, as may commence in the near future, but the importance and significance of the subject lands are heightened with the strategic issues highlighted within the *Issues Paper* such as:

1. Compact Growth - focusing on the regeneration of towns and villages in order to make them more attractive.
2. Housing - to target at least 30% of all new homes that are proposed in settlements within their existing built-up footprints.
1. Sustainable Communities - the importance of promoting settlements and communities with access to a range of quality community facilities a vital component in increasing social inclusion and contributing to the quality of life for all. Social inclusion refers to the manner in which all members of the community are integrated in an equal manner e.g. the youth, older people etc.

In this respect our Client, CNN Construction Ltd. as a significant landowner can contribute to the sustainable development of the Village of *Kilcormac*, an established *Local Service Town* with existing infrastructural advantages can be maintained in respect of its Plan Status within the

Settlement Hierarchy to ensure the key issues of compact growth, housing and sustainable communities can be delivered in Co. Offaly and the advantageous 'spatial planning' location of the town/village as serving a wide rural hinterland can further benefit the County's sustainable service infrastructure growth patterns.

It is important to note the issues highlighted in the Issues Papers published and subject of this submission presents an opportunity to take account of the much needed growth capacity of Kilcormac and opportunities for a planned extension of the town to provide for specific housing requirements outside the current pattern of standard approach residential zoning.

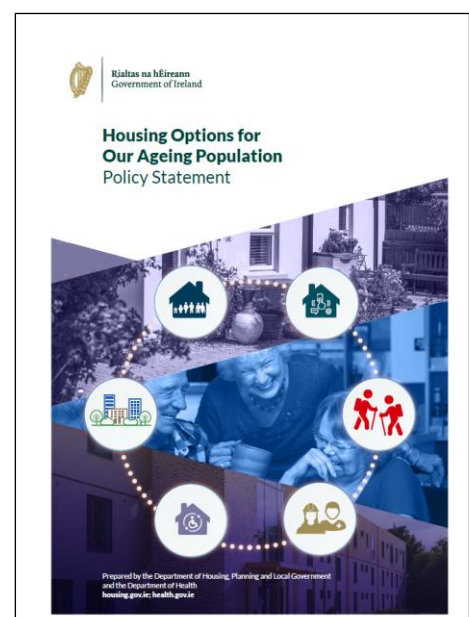
In this instance within the context of unique opportunities provided for meeting the housing options of an ageing population, those in rural isolation and those with a variety of access to either independent living, assisted living or full care residential opportunities the needs of such a demand can be met on lands such as those herein presented.

We fully realise that the current Development Plan process does not allow targeted zoning submissions so in this instance whilst we identify available lands and to which a previous but expired planning permission was granted for 47 houses in 2007, as expired 2012, the submission is focussed on the need for the Local Service Town of Kilcormac to retain its status within the identified Settlement Strategy as providing;

- the best use of economic resources and available infrastructure.
- the benefits of logical, orderly and sustainable planning
- the available government guideline documents such as 'Housing Our Ageing Population' which emphasises the needs for a specific form of housing allocation to combat rural isolation,
- the opportunity to make Offaly's village and town 'settlement hierarchy' more sustainable, and
- to maximise use of available infrastructure in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development.

1.1 Purpose of Advanced Submission – High Level Issues - Objective to Meeting Growing Demands of an Ageing Population - Housing Options for Our Ageing Population (DHPLG February 2019)

Whilst we note and acknowledge the site-specific zoning submission period is not open our Client wishes to give advanced information to assist in the forming of the *Kilcormac Plan* in association with the *Draft Issues Papers for Public Consultation of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027*. The issues raised do not fall into the standard zoning provisions of the development plan and as to that matter our Client would like to present his lands to meet growing demands for an ageing retirement community and residential care environment which can present social demands for the active retired, independent living units, assisted living units and a necessary full-care environment associated with a compact urban form. ***Housing Options for Our Ageing Population, DHPLG Policy Statement -2019*** presents the spatial planning demands on the effects of our ageing population and states:



We need to plan ahead to meet the accommodation needs of an ageing Ireland. The policy statement provides a framework by which the

Government can facilitate and promote a variety of housing options, including housing with care/supported housing, for older people. While a number of different models of housing for older people have emerged at local level, there is a need for a more strategic and collaborative approach to ensure the best possible outcomes for all. It is also important to recognise that housing with supports is a vital element of facilitating older people to remain in their communities. (Page 1)

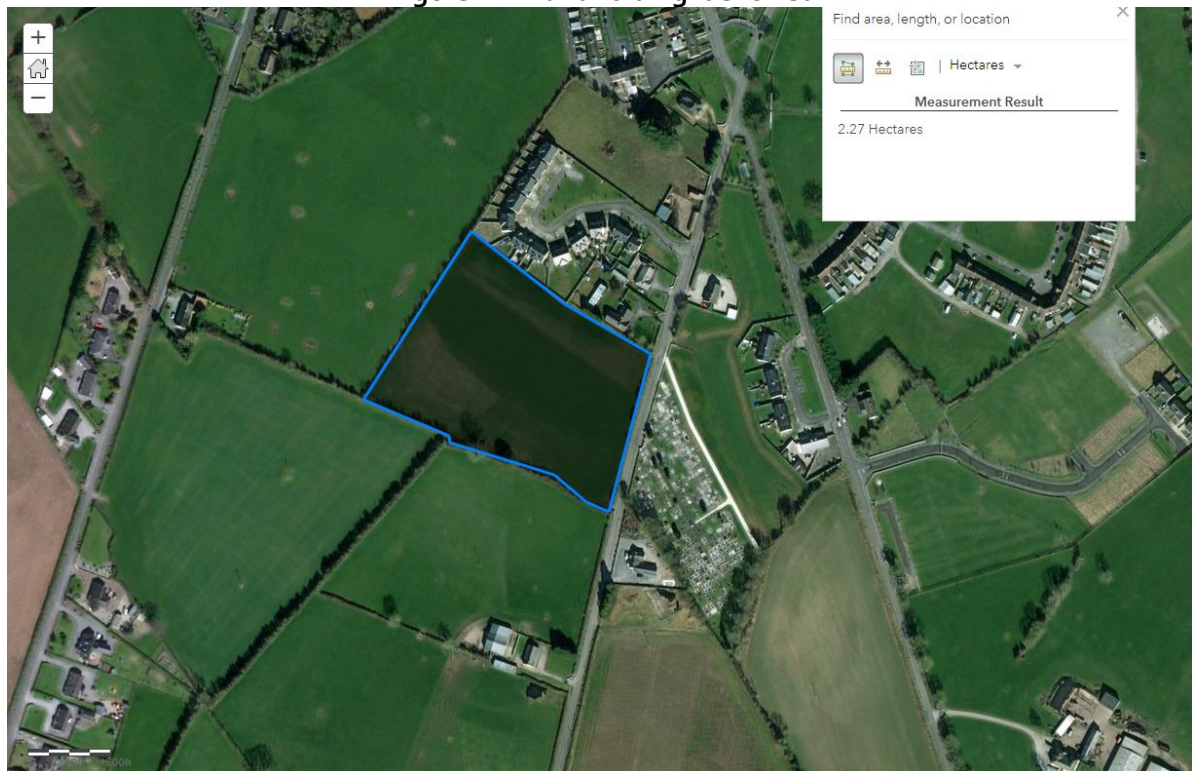
The current development plan drafting process presents an opportunity to 'advance plan' rather than retrofit such a housing demand and reality within the spatial planning process for the Offaly County Development Plan. The spatial planning needs of an ageing population are advised to be taken into account by the referred documentation and as we present herein the opportunity to meet the key principles for supporting housing for an ageing population.

1.2 Executive Summary

The subject site is currently unzoned and excluded from the development plan boundary for the current Kilcormac Plan (previously included at the time of granting of a 47 unit residential scheme in October 2007) and represents an opportunity to establish a fully functioning life-time housing solution to meet the needs of an increasingly ageing population.

Our clients **CNN Construction** own a landholding comprising circa 2.27 Ha to the rear of established building plots on the Kinnitty Road to the south of Kilcormac and as due west of the established built footprint of the town as provided by St. Josephs Cemetery and the St. Cormac's residential enclave. The extent of the landholding is shown in **Figure 2.1**.

Figure 1.1: Landholding Identified



Source: The Planning Partnership – ESRI ArcGIS

There are currently no proposed zoning objectives for the subject lands and as such whilst we acknowledge the current Plan as may provide for the 'standard' residential growth of the settlement we present the need for a 'specific local objective' as to deliver future housing needs for an ageing

population and as can provide a mixture of independent living, assisted living and full residential care units as representing the needs of the County to deliver same.

The owners and prospective developers of the subject lands wish to deliver within the confines of their land ownership, a specific development to cater for the existing population of the settlement, the wider rural area and the County and much demanded retirement homes which, as such, do not present population growth but the restructured location of an ageing population closer to the facilities and services offered by Kilcormac, currently a *Local Service Town*.

The lands as previously subject to a granted residential scheme of 47 units (Reg. Ref: 07/1137) commenced development and installed service connections into the local infrastructure for power and water service connections (waste and supply). In essence, infrastructural connections are in place to service the lands and as make them a potential priority for development.

The current Plan for Kilcormac presents objectives to openly access the lands as indicated in the current zoning map for the town and as indicated in Figure 2.2 below.

Figure 1.2: Kilcormac Town Plan



Source: Offaly Co. Co.

The subject submission wishes to highlight the strategic need for the logical, orderly and sustainable growth of the County towns and villages to take account of the specific needs of *Options for Housing our Ageing Population, Rebuilding Ireland, National Planning Framework, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)* for the EMRA and the associated Offaly County Settlement Hierarchy as promoting *Compact Growth, Housing Need and Sustainable Communities*.

The subject site's location is evident from the aerial view associated with the current zoning plan and highlights its significance in the context of sustainable growth patterns associated with the Town's future growth.

The Planning Partnership have drawn on their development plan preparation experience and have advised that, necessary alterations to the zoning pattern and the specific requirements associated with the ageing population can be introduced via a **Specific Local Objective (SLO)** to allay any concerns that additional zoning will challenge the 'core strategy' of the County Development Plan.

Such SLO's can overlay existing plans and can run concurrently with any existing SLO to promote 'Access Points' to the subject lands and as to be specific to the demands of our ageing population as might provide a range of retirement accommodation so as not to conflict with the *Core Strategy* and *Settlement Strategy* objectives in relation to the provision of 'standard' residential dwellings and where the underlying residential / community zoning can remain.

This submission is mindful of the strong policy objectives as currently exist within the Offaly County Development Plan to support a range of housing options for older people in the form of retirement homes, residential care facilities etc. The current submission is in this case 'policy and issues-led' but seeks to present complementary material (zoning) amendments at **Issues Paper stage** as would facilitate the much-needed forms of accommodation referred.

Population statistics and elderly care accommodation statistics (*evidence-based analysis*) demonstrate that Kilcormac is currently underprovided for in terms of these facilities. The spatial distribution of such facilities is low in relation to Co. Offaly and where CSO figures from the 2016 Census of Population suggest that 222 persons, 16% of Kilcormac's (ED) population is over the age of 65, this is likely to increase in the 2021 Census with life expectancy rates further extending. This rate is well above the national average of 13% over 65 years of age and also highlights aspects of rural isolation of our ageing population and particularly in rural counties such as Co. Offaly.

The development for example of a 30-60 bed / unit retirement development in Kilcormac and as could comprise a 20 unit residential care nursing home with a further 20 units for assisted living and 20 units for independent living represents a sustainable model for future proofing our ageing population. Such a proposed development on the subject site or within the Offaly *Local Service Towns* has the potential to make a significant contribution to local employment both in terms of the creation of construction phase jobs and operational phase care jobs.

Whether the subject lands are appropriately considered or not will be a matter for the Draft Plan but the issues raised in association with growing demands for housing options for our rural ageing population needs to be highlighted at *Issues Paper* stage.

This message is echoed loudly in the most recent Ministerial statements (from Damien English TD – with responsibility for Housing & Jim Daly T.D. – with responsibility for Older People) and Policy Objectives highlighted to confirm:

We need to plan ahead to meet the accommodation needs of an ageing Ireland. ... there is a need for a more strategic and collaborative approach to ensure the best possible outcomes for all. It is also important to recognise that housing with supports is a vital element of facilitating older people to remain in their communities. (Page 1)

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The site is located on the Kinnitty Road (L6041) south of the Town core and well positioned to take advantage of infrastructural opportunities and the existing pattern of development locally to date.

Figure 2.1 Strategic Issue - Site Location



Source: The Planning Partnership – ESRI ArcGIS

Figure 2.2: Aerial View of Available Strategic Site



Source: The Planning Partnership – ESRI ArcGIS

There are a number of existing residential houses framing the site to the north, Frankford Park estate, St. Cormac's park further north and east and St. Josephs Cemetery immediately to the east and on the opposite side of the Kinnitty Road. The lands are open in nature with a perimeter hedgerow and with mainly grassed to pasture and with service connections evident to the front of the site and linking back into town.

The following photographs / plates are indicative of the site's context and available infrastructure locally.

Plate 1



Source: The Planning Partnership

Plate 2



Source: The Planning Partnership

Plate 3



Source: The Planning Partnership

Plate 4



Source: The Planning Partnership

2.1 Relevant Planning History

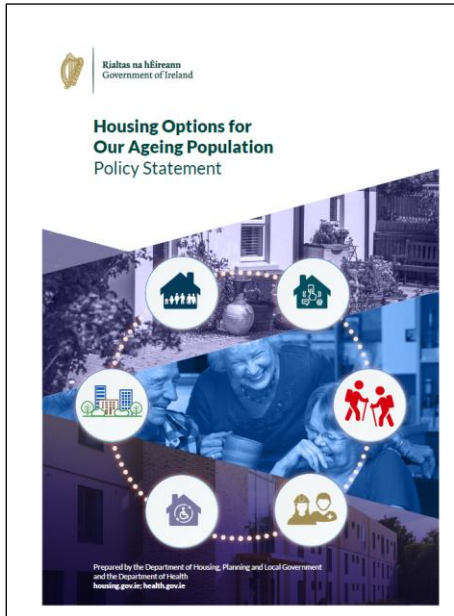
The subject lands have been party to relatively recent planning history in the context of the Town's growth and an expired permission for 47 units was grant under Offaly Co. Co. Register Reference 07/1137.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 National Policy Context

Housing Options for our Ageing Population – Policy Statement 2019

This document identifies a required change in approach to provide specialist housing for the ageing population in Ireland. It states:



*The changing demographics and the implications for future health care costs underpin the importance of **developing a wider choice of appropriate housing options for older people suited to their needs.** The aim of this policy statement is to encourage and facilitate timely planning by older people, and to **rebalance the care model away from inappropriate residential and/or acute care, to supporting older people to remain living independently in their own homes and communities for longer,** as opposed to fast tracking into long term stay or acute settings. Much of the current research reflects the preferences of older people themselves and their advocates, that is to continue to live as independently as possible in their own community.*

Housing for Older People - Thinking Ahead

The document outlines research carried out by the Housing Agency to inform their actions. The research found:

*In order to review the housing needs of our ageing population, the Housing Agency commissioned a report entitled *Housing for Older People: Thinking Ahead*. This research was commissioned to identify the important issues associated with housing for older people such as the current and future requirements of our older population and the models of housing to best suit these needs.*

Perhaps the most important concept emphasised within the report is the preference of the people concerned to 'age in place' and that if more 'age appropriate' housing was available within the persons existing community they may be more inclined to downsize or could avoid unnecessarily moving to residential care.

The work between the Departments, the assistance and support of the Steering Group and the input of experts and stakeholders at the Conference on Housing for Older People have informed the development of this policy statement. Through this process we have identified a number of challenges and opportunities by hearing directly from older people and key stakeholders. The challenges and opportunities include:

- *A rapid ageing population across Ireland*
- *A large number of people aged 55+ on the social housing list interested in moving to more age appropriate accommodation*
- *A large number of under occupied dwellings indicating older people who are living in **homes that are too big for their current needs** would like options to down size but that there is a lack of appropriate housing stock.*

- Many older people are living with a disability which impacts on their quality of life in their home
- There are a number of brownfield sites across Ireland **in both urban and rural areas** suitable for housing developments for older people
- There is a **lack of alternative housing options available to people in their own communities**
- While there is a wide range of services, social opportunities and existing facilities in place many people still feel socially isolated, have difficulty accessing information and may not have access to transport

The document identifies six principles to inform strategic thinking and practical planning in developing housing options and supports for older people.



Source: Housing Options for our Ageing Population

Ageing in Place

Where you live impacts on how you live, therefore choosing the right location is critical. It is about focusing on supporting our existing and new communities in a sustainable manner by securing high quality design elements that provide greater quality of life for all.

To best facilitate social interaction and to provide appropriate support for our older people, housing should be located close to amenities and services to enhance their general independence. Developments and neighbourhoods should incorporate a mix of dwelling type, size and tenure to support sound social and environmental policy objectives. These factors contribute to an improve quality of life and are therefore more successful in terms of residents satisfaction and long tenure.

The range of schemes highlighted in Appendix A demonstrates in different ways, how a suitable location can help older people to age in place whether in an urban/suburban town or rural village setting.

Supporting Urban Renewal

Actively supporting the renewal and regeneration of our towns, villages and urban centres is a key Government priority as articulated in Project Ireland 2040, the

Programme for a Partnership Government and Rebuilding Ireland. A key element of urban renewal is not just supporting high quality development but also a focus on the quality of place making.

To achieve this the quality and design of housing is as crucial as demonstrated by the Health and Positive Ageing Initiative (HaPAI) which found that poor design and quality of housing can reduce quality of life as people age and may actively prevent ageing in place.

Quality of placemaking is not limited to buildings but about making our streets and urban spaces attractive, accessible and safe. It is also about supporting the development of housing and services on centrally located sites within the urban area.

The development of good quality well connected, urban centres with a range and choice of housing tenures and types actively supports ageing in place, It allows older people to choose housing that is appropriate to their needs, which will help them to enjoy more active, healthy and socially connected lives and to age confidently and comfortable within their community. This will help people to choose the most suitable home to meet their needs and enable them to 'rightsized' as they move through different stages of their lives.

Promoting Sustainable Lifetime Housing

Lifetime communities are key to achieving sustainable environments across the life course. *The ambition will be guided by Universal Design principles in so far as practicable, whilst maintaining the domestic scale. This means that the design and composition of an environment is developed in a way that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.*

All new housing should be reasonably accessible for older people and, in so far as possible, the design should provide for flexibility in use, accessibility and adaptability. The aim is to ensure that dwellings can meet both the immediate and changing needs of the occupant over the course of their lifetime including needs associated with moderate mobility difficulties and the normal frailty associated with the ageing process.

This will enable older people who wish to remain independent in their own home, to do so without the need for costly and disruptive remodelling of the dwelling.

Using Assistive Technology

Technologies, and in particular assistive technologies, are a critical intervention in allowing people to remain at home. The use of assistive technology solutions can improve the quality of life of older people immensely, and oftentimes, with relatively low installation cost. A simple technological adaptation to the home can prevent or delay deterioration in health and wellbeing, thereby decreasing the need for a higher level of support.

When used appropriately assistive technology has the potential to support older people to age with dignity and independence and allow them to continue being active members of their community.

Staying socially connected

Social isolation can be associated with a higher mortality rate amongst older people. The importance of social interventions and interaction is vital in ensuring that the ageing population is adequately cared for and supported. Social interventions are centred

around a person centric model of care where tailored care and support services meet the needs of the individual.

Social supports can substantially increase a persons quality of life. A person centric approach is essential to ensure a good standard of living for older people and this should be a key consideration in choosing a home that will best meet the persons needs.. Furthermore, the importance of a sense of community should not be underestimated. Research suggests that older people wish to remain in place, however for many people this desire is based on a link and connection to the community rather than the actual physical dwelling.

Working Together

A collaborative and integrated approach is critical in ensuring the best possible outcomes for older people when developing housing options that are appropriate to their needs.....It is essential that all stakeholders work together in a spirit of common purpose.

County Development Plans

*Local authorities are required to make a development plan every six years. The development plan sets the agenda for the development of the local authority's area over its six year lifespan. Development whether it be residential, industrial, commercial or amenity, must generally take place in accordance with the development plan. The plan is therefore a blueprint for the economic and social development of the city, town or county for which it has been made. **Critical to this is the provision of sustainable housing to meet the needs of all citizens.***

It is clear from the above principles that specific provision needs to be made in the Offaly County Development Plan for people in this category that goes beyond provision for retirement homes and hospitals. It is further submitted that provision needs to be made for this type of accommodation in areas of rural Ireland that are somewhat distant from large service centres such as Tullamore and serve the smaller towns and rural hinterlands of Local Service Towns geographically well spread throughout the County.

It is respectfully submitted that the subject site offers a good potential location for this specific type of accommodation. This location would allow people who currently live in Kilcormac ED and the surrounding rural townlands the option of continuing to live independently in the local area in accordance with the six principles identified above.

3.2 Local Policy Context – Offaly County Development Plan 2014-2020

COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2014-2020 - INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

8. Overall Vision

That all people in Offaly will enjoy equal opportunity and a good quality of life – that they will look forward to the future with confidence while cherishing the past.

Core Strategy - 1.0 Aim

To ensure that the development objectives of the Offaly County Development Plan are consistent with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy and the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines.

1.1 Purpose of Core Strategy

The Core Strategy seeks to:

- Rationalise spatial land-use planning and population distribution in accordance with higher order plans.
- Align these with investment in infrastructure services and facilities.
- Enhance sustainability and ensure quality of life and protection of the environment.

1.3 Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy

Strategic Objectives have been identified to ensure that the Core Strategy will direct the focus for appropriate development to appropriate locations in County Offaly over the lifetime of the Development Plan. The Strategic Objectives as identified in the Core Strategy permeate through the Development Plan and will be addressed and elaborated upon in other sections of the plan.

1. To strengthen the role of the Offaly Development Plan in implementing the objectives of higher order plans, where appropriate and ensure that the Offaly County Development Plan is consistent with the objectives and provisions of national and regional strategies, policy guidelines and national and regional population targets.

2. To develop a settlement strategy framework setting out a settlement hierarchy and providing an evidence base within which sustainable development, infrastructure, amenities and economic investment can be provided in a coherent and structured manner that maximises the use of resources in the county.

4. To provide for an appropriate quantity and location of zoned land so that this Plan accommodates the level of development anticipated over the plan period and support the priorities for growth as indicated in the settlement hierarchy of the Core Strategy whilst maintaining a level of development to secure the viability of rural communities.

Settlement Strategy

1.12 Settlement Strategy Aim

To provide for sustainable population growth and to manage development pressure within both the urban and rural environment in accordance with the Core Strategy whilst promoting quality of life in achieving a balance between social, economic and environmental factors.

Tier 4 Local Service Towns

Banagher, Daingean, Kilcormac

Local Service Towns perform important local level residential, retailing, social and leisure functions and provide appropriate local services to a wider rural hinterland. Local enterprise is encouraged within this settlement tier and the location of industry where appropriate may also be considered. The success of Local Service Towns can be achieved by adequate zoning of lands, servicing and a facilitatory approach towards appropriately scaled and designed urban development

1.21 Special Needs Accommodation

The Council continues to address particular identified needs through the provision of purpose built, adaptable dwellings, where feasible. This includes provisions for the needs of the elderly, persons with physical disabilities and persons with learning disabilities.

House Types and Sizes

HS-08 It is Council policy to ensure that an appropriate mix of house types and sizes are provided in each residential development. House designs and layout should reflect the requirements of different categories of households within the county – particularly those needs and requirements of elderly persons and persons with disabilities coupled with

continuing trends in changing demographics (i.e. decreasing household size). This will be considered in relation to each settlement tier within the county's settlement hierarchy.

Purpose Built Dwellings

HSO-04 *It is an objective of the Council to provide purpose built dwellings for those with special needs, including provisions for the needs of the elderly, persons with physical disabilities and persons with learning disabilities where feasible and in conjunction with other voluntary bodies and the private sector.*

6.11 Elderly

Offaly County Council recognises that the county has an ageing population. The Planning Authority supports the 'Offaly Age Friendly County Programme' as implemented by the Ageing Well Network.

The key priorities of the Programme are to implement the (World Health Organisation) WHO values and principles of Age Friendly Cities and Communities. The process will recognise the diversity of citizens as they age, encourage healthy active ageing, promote inclusion and participation, create safe accessible environments and ensure that the views and opinions of older people are valued and recognised in future policy and planning.

The Elderly

CSCP-08 *It is Council policy that residential homes for the elderly and nursing homes for the elderly are located within defined settlement boundaries and are appropriate in scale to the size and scale of the settlement. The provision of new residential homes and nursing homes within the rural countryside is considered only in such cases where it is clearly demonstrated that due to the nature of the services to be provided, a rural location is necessary and that no suitable alternative sites are available within a nearby settlement*

VOLUME 2 SETTLEMENT PLANS

Kilcormac Town Plan - Chapter 1 Introduction and Context

1.1 Introduction - *Kilcormac is located on the N52 at the junction with the R437 approximately 20kms from Tullamore, 16kms from Birr and 15kms from Ferbane. The town acts as a Local Service Town for the surrounding rural hinterland. The Census of 2011 recorded that Kilcormac has a population of 870, an increase of 2.7% on the 2006 population (CSO, 2011).*

2.3 Strategic Aims

Facilitate the Community

There is an existing vibrant community and voluntary sector in Kilcormac Town and this plan will seek to facilitate the provision of new and expansion of existing services and community infrastructure.

Provide for Appropriate Residential Development

This plan aims to ensure that the housing requirements of the people of Kilcormac can be accommodated within the town over its lifetime. Prospective developers of new housing schemes must demonstrate that their project will contribute positively to the overall sustainable development of Kilcormac Town.

Be Consistent with the Policy Hierarchy

The Kilcormac Town plan is part of the Offaly County Development Plan 2014-2020 and is consistent with the Core Strategy in Volume 1. The Midland Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 identify Kilcormac as a Local Service Town in the Central

Development Area. It is a key aim of this plan that the town fulfils its role as a local service town; providing important local level residential, retailing, social and leisure functions and provide appropriate local services to a wider rural hinterland.

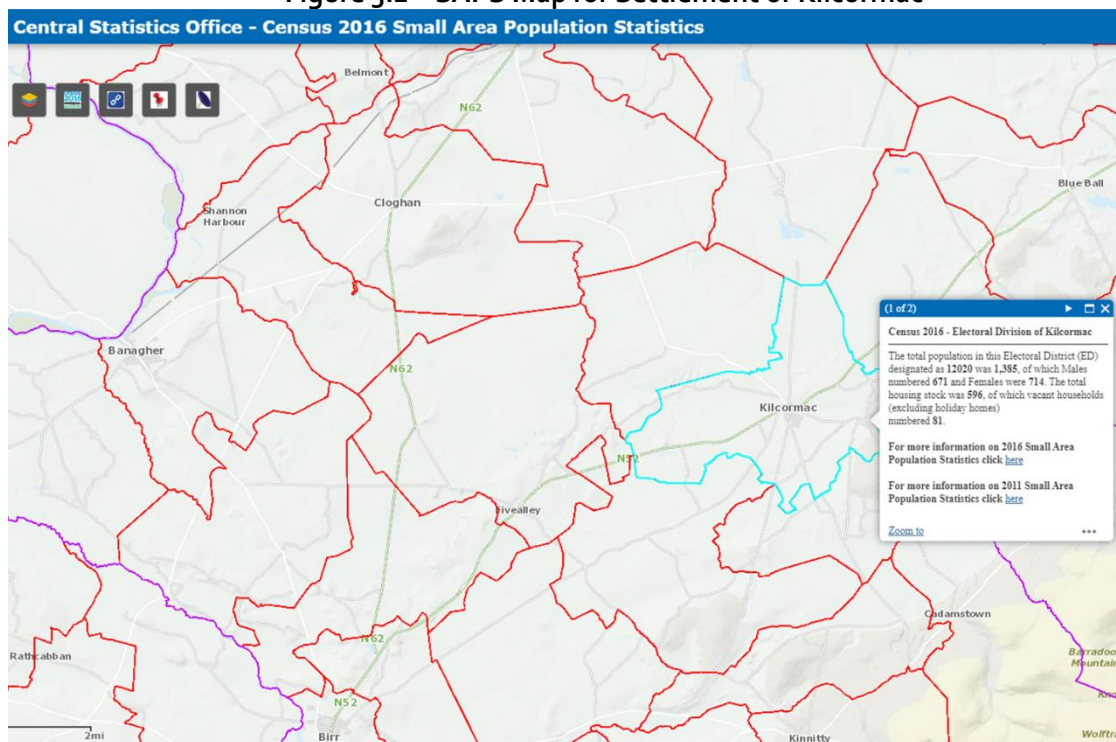
Policies – Kilcormac - Pol-01

It is Council policy that the development of Kilcormac over the lifetime of this plan shall be primarily focused on employment generation, the consolidation of the town centre, the completion of ongoing developments and the provision of community and social services.

Kilcormac - Pol-03

Offaly County Council supports and encourages the appropriate growth of Kilcormac over the plan period and will facilitate such growth where it can be demonstrated that such proposals are consistent with national, regional and local level policy and in line with the sequential approach.

Figure 3.1 – SAPS Map for Settlement of Kilcormac



Source: www.cso.ie

Comment

The above population change statistics and growing ageing population for the settlement of Kilcormac reflects national patterns and predictions for the specific housing requirements of our ageing population. In this regard we draw attention specifically presented in the national policy document and the requirement for '**future proofing**' and advance planning needed in the context of our growing ageing population.

The Issues Paper and the consequent Offaly Draft County Development Plan needs to take account of 'older people' and their growing influence on our spatial planning and housing requirements.

Older people have a range of housing needs relating to access, medical care, security and personal safety amongst other issues. Dwellings and other residential facilities catering specifically for older

people should be located in close proximity to convenience shops facilities and public transport nodes. There is a move away from traditional nursing home care to a 'semi-supported' or 'assisted living' concept which is considered a preferred option for many older people as it enables them to continue to live relatively independently in their own homes.

For those who wish to continue to live independently, it is important that the opportunity exists to trade down or downsize in the area in which they live (for example to a smaller single-storey dwelling or apartment unit). Assessment of housing mix needs to consider this in appropriate developments and locations.

Kilcormac is well located within the national and regional road network and has a strong area of rural influence and where similar cohorts of rural dwellers (an ageing population) in more isolated locations will present a demand to gain access to suitably located and accessible older housing models.

4.0 HIGH LEVEL EVIDENCED BASED DEMAND ISSUES TO BE REFLECTED IN DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The issues raised herein are presented in accordance with national level Ministerial statements to future proof and take account of housing options for an ageing population and therefore the Draft Development Plan should respond to the evidence base herein presented to identify suitable sites within Local Service Towns such as Kilcormac to meet the future housing requirements of an ageing population.

Due to the growth in demand for appropriately scaled developments associated with providing for our aged population, the sites' proximity to the existing infrastructure and readily available community facilities locally, the subject lands represent a sequentially available site for a specific local objective associated with future proofing and planning for required demands for housing our ageing population in association with the *Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and the Department of Health - Housing Options for Our Ageing Population, DHPLG Policy Statement -2019*.

4.1 The Creation of a Specific Local Objective in Development Plans

We acknowledge and support the proposed level of land zoned for residential purposes (including headroom) in the previous 2014-2020 Town Plan. We present that the subject lands are not intended to undermine proposed zoning provisions for residential lands locally and the consolidated approach to same and where the subject lands will present an eminently accessible and suitable site for extending, in particular, the *Housing Options for Our Ageing Population*

Whilst we present that the landowners intentions are to present a 'non-standard' format of housing associated with the ageing of the existing population and as promoted nationally and predicted also locally in consideration of the new DHPLG *Guidelines*, the proposed housing, we respectfully contend, will not undermine the core strategy zoning objectives of the Kilcormac Town Plan or the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027.

If the planning authority, in their consideration of this submission believed this additional zoning would in any way conflict with the core strategy it may come as some relief that the landowner would be accepting of a site specific local objective relating to the provision of housing for an ageing population and as considered necessary in the circumstances.

The concept and approach to retirement development is consistent with current government policy on retirement accommodation and we wish to support the strong policy objectives that will necessarily be reflected and contained in the Draft County Development Plan to support same. In advancing the aforementioned strategy for housing of an ageing population as now prepared the Minister of the Elderly Jim Daly and Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Damien English, stated:

Purpose built retirement villages would be built around local amenities to ensure residents have a social outlet through access to community services. The strategy is aimed at giving older people, especially those living in rural isolation, the option of moving to a community setting where they can live independently rather than in nursing homes.

It is hoped the strategy would ease the burden on both the health service and the nursing home sector which has come under intense strain due to the country's ageing demographic.

In order to overcome any potential conflict with the core strategy we respectfully suggest a Specific Local Objective which would allow for the specific development of retirement accommodation. We respectfully submit that an SLO would properly reflect the intentions of the 'non-standard' housing elements of the proposed residential development. This opportunity for essential 'community infrastructure' related residential development would encompass residential care combined with assisted and independent living. We respectfully submit that the presence of a 'specific local objective' will restrict subject sites supply of 'standard housing' and ensure that the proposed development does not undermine the projections and objectives of the Development Plan Core Strategy.

The Draft Offaly County Development Plan needs to take account of 'older people' and their growing influence on our spatial planning and housing requirements. We suggest Plan and Site-Specific Plan objectives such as, follows:

Older people have a range of housing needs relating to access, medical care, security and personal safety amongst other issues. Dwellings and other residential facilities catering specifically for older people should be located in close proximity to convenience shops facilities and public transport nodes. There is a move away from traditional nursing home care to a 'semi-supported' or 'assisted living' concept which is considered a preferred option for many older people as it enables them to continue to live relatively independently in their own homes.

For those who wish to continue to live independently, it is important that the opportunity exists to trade down or downsize in the area in which they live (for example to a smaller single-storey dwelling or apartment unit). Assessment of housing mix needs to consider this in appropriate developments and locations.

Kilcormac is well located within the spatial planning of County Offaly a good local, regional and national road network and has a strong area of rural influence and where similar cohorts of rural dwellers (an ageing population) in more isolated locations will present a demand to gain access to suitably located and accessible 'aged' housing models.

This plan objective is also aimed at giving older people, especially those living in rural isolation, the option of moving to a community setting where they can live independently rather than in nursing homes.

5.0 CONCLUSION - PROPOSED SPECIFIC LOCAL OBJECTIVES FOR AN AGEING POPULATION

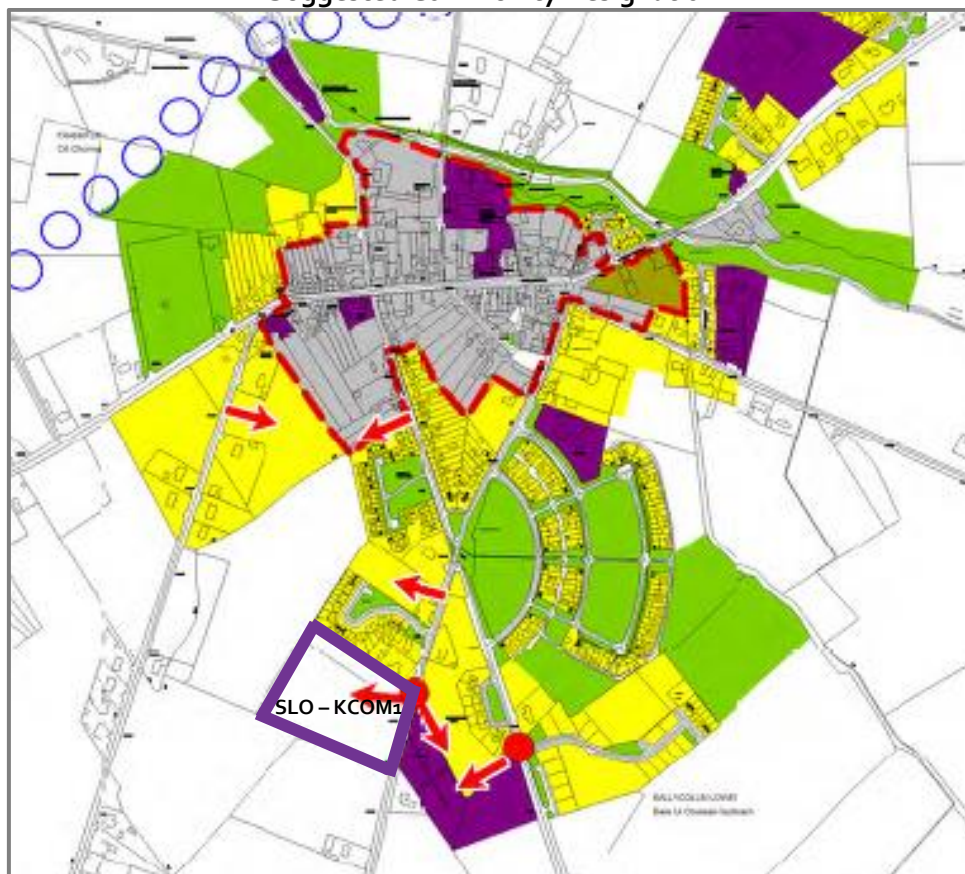
The subject site is currently unzoned and due to the growth in demand for appropriately scaled developments associated with providing for our aged population, the sites' proximity to the existing infrastructure and readily available community facilities locally, the subject lands represent a sequentially available site for a specific local objective associated with future proofing and planning for required demands for housing our ageing population in association with the *Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and the Department of Health - Housing Options for Our Ageing Population, DHPLG Policy Statement -2019*.

In this regard we present the opportunity for a community zoning provision to underline the lands availability for needs and spatial land use demands to accommodate housing need for our ageing population. The underlying zoning can be combined with a suggested county Development Plan and Local Area Plan Objective to protect against speculative private residential development.

Population statistics and elderly care accommodation statistics demonstrate that Kilcormac is underprovided for in terms of these facilities. The development of a retirement village incorporating residential care on the subject site has the potential to make a significant contribution to local employment both in terms of the creation of construction phase jobs and operational phase jobs.

The site is strategically located in proximity to the village centre of Kilcormac, the rural environs to facilitate those living in rural isolation, the option of moving to a community setting where they can live independently rather than in nursing homes, to allow residents to engage with local services while still availing of good residential amenity and a pleasant environment on the edge of the settlement.

Suggested Community Designation



Source: Kilcormac Town Plan Map 2014-2020 annotated by The Planning Partnership

In considering the issues raised by national demands for housing options for our ageing population sites such as those in the ownership of our Clients can present an evidence based and 'plan-led' approach to align with the spatial, social and economic objectives associated with the development of Kilcormac. We contend that the concept of residential accommodation for an ageing population in the form of a retirement village incorporating 'independent and assisted living accommodation' delivers economic and social benefits to the network of towns and villages within the Offaly County Settlement Hierarchy.

To ensure the plan-led development of future sites in Offaly (as could include or incorporate the subject lands), site-specific local objectives could be introduced, as follows:

SLO KCOM₁ – HOUSING OUR AGEING POPULATION

Older people have a range of housing needs relating to access, medical care, security and personal safety amongst other issues. Dwellings and other residential facilities catering specifically for older people should be located in close proximity to convenience shops facilities and public transport nodes. There is a move away from traditional nursing home care to a 'semi-supported' or 'assisted living' concept which is considered a preferred option for many older people as it enables them to continue to live relatively independently in their own homes.

For those who wish to continue to live independently, it is important that the opportunity exists to trade down or downsize in the area in which they live (for example to a smaller single-storey dwelling or apartment unit). Assessment of housing mix needs to consider this in appropriate developments and locations.

Kilcormac is well located within the spatial planning of County Offaly a good local, regional and national road network and has a strong area of rural influence and where similar cohorts of rural dwellers (an ageing population) in more isolated locations will present a demand to gain access to suitably located and accessible 'aged' housing models.

This plan objective is also aimed at giving older people, especially those living in rural isolation, the option of moving to a community setting where they can live independently rather than in nursing homes.

We look forward to your consideration of this **issues-based** submission and trust if there are any outstanding items you might refer back to ourselves.

Yours sincerely



Mark Brindley
Principal
The Planning Partnership