

# Submission to Draft Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029

## Lands at St. Flannan's College, Clonroadmore, Ennis

Killaloe Diocesan Trust

Issue: A

Customer Project Number: 2856

Customer Document Number:

## Document Sign Off

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Issue A

File No: 2856

CURRENT ISSUE					
Issue No: A	Date: 27.03 2022	Reason for issue: Submission			
Sign Off	Originator	Checker	Reviewer	Approver	Customer Approval (if required)
Print Name	Mandy Coleman	Paddy Coleman		Mandy Coleman	
Signature	<b>Authorised Electronically</b>				
Date	27.03.22	27.03.22		27.03.22	

PREVIOUS ISSUES							
Issue No	Date	Originator	Checker	Reviewer	Approver	Customer	Reason for issue



## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

P. Coleman & Associates, Architects, Engineers and Planning Consultants, 5 Bank Place, Ennis, Co. Clare, make this submission on behalf of Killaloe Diocesan Trust (our Client), in respect of lands at St. Flannan's College, Clonroadmore, Ennis (subject land).

Our Client is taking a logical approach towards the planning and development of Ennis. Such an approach is key to ensuring that suitable lands are developed in the most efficient and sustainable manner feasible, to meet known housing shortages, to meet the aims and objectives of national and regional policy and guidance and to meet the residential requirements of a growing population as identified in the Core Strategy for Clare.

We respectfully request that the Planning Authority take account of this submission.

The submission will be outlined as follows:-

### **Section 2: Subject Site**

This section provides a description of the site and its context.

### **Section 3: Planning Policy Framework**

This section outlines the proposed national and regional planning policies guiding the Draft Plan and current zoning for the subject site.

### **Section 4: Zoning Objective of the Draft Plan**

This section outlines the proposed land use zoning for the subject site as defined in the Draft Plan.

### **Section 5: Requested Amendments**

This section sets out the case for the proposed amendments as proposed by our Client.

### **Section 6: Conclusion**

This section summarises the submission request.

## **2. SUBJECT SITE**

### **2.1 The Site**

The subject site lies within the St. Flannan's College landholding within Ennis town. Refer to Figures 1 and 2 below showing full extent of the subject site which measures approximately 0.75 hectares. Access to the subject site is through the St Flannan's College main entrance.

The subject site is vacant land which is within the St. Flannans' College complex. The land is bound to the south by Clonroadmore. To the west by the existing Inis Carrig Housing estate. The lands to the north and east also form part of the St. Flannan's College complex. There are mature trees running along the southern and western boundaries with a low stone wall delineating the southern boundary.



Figure 1 – Site Location Map – Subject Lands outlined in Red



Figure 2 – Aerial Image of Subject Site outlined in Red.

## 2.2 Site Context

The subject site benefits from good access to amenities within easy walking distance. The subject land is connected to the town of Ennis by footpath. Figure 3 below shows at 1km and 2km. radius centres from the centre of the subject site, that parks, shops, proposed neighbourhood centre, primary schools, secondary school are all located within 1 and 2km. of the subject site. The subject site is centrally located within the Clonroadmore Neighbourhood as defined in the Development Plan – See Figure 8 below.

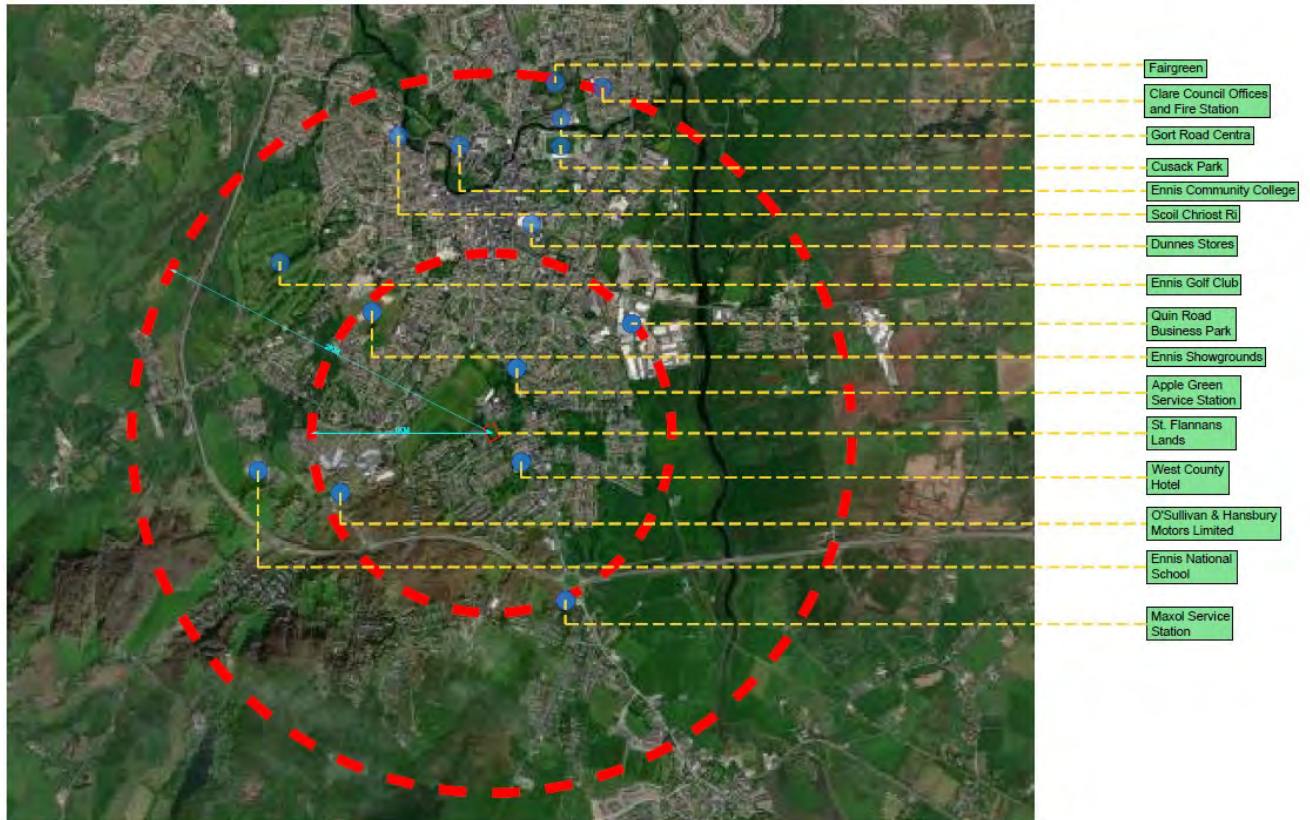


Figure 3 – Map showing amenities and uses with 1km and 2km radius

## 3.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

The following section outlines the key national, regional and local planning policies which support the proposed amendments to the proposed zoning for this landholding.

### 3.1 National Planning Context

#### 3.1.1 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) entitled 'Ireland 2040' is a framework to guide public and private development and investment in Ireland, providing a long-term and place-based aspect to public policy and investment, and aiming to coordinate sectoral areas such as housing, jobs, transport, education, health, environment, energy and communications, into an overall coherent strategy.



A key focus of the NPF is the need for compact growth. Under the concept of ‘Compact Growth’, which underpins much of the Strategy, the NPF is:

*“Targeting a greater proportion (40%) of future housing development to happen within and close to existing built-up areas. Making better use of under-utilised land, including ‘infill’ and ‘brownfield’ and publicly owned sites together with higher housing and jobs densities, better serviced by existing facilities and public transport”.*

More balanced growth also means more concentrated growth. There are five cities in Ireland today in terms of population size (>50,000 people): Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford. The NPF targets these five cities for 50% of overall national growth between them, with Ireland’s large and smaller towns, villages and rural areas accommodating the other 50% of growth.

The NPF also supports making better use of under-utilised land and buildings, including ‘infill’, ‘brownfield’ and publicly owned sites and vacant and under-occupied buildings, with higher housing and jobs densities, better serviced by existing facilities and public transport. This ‘compact growth’ strategy is designed to counter the prevailing situation whereby the fastest growing areas are at the edges of and outside the cities and towns. This results in:

- A constant process of infrastructure and services catch-up in building new roads, new schools, services and amenities and a struggle to bring jobs and homes together, meaning that there are remarkably high levels of car dependence and that it is difficult to provide good public transport;
- A gradual process of run-down of city and town centre and established suburban areas as jobs, retail and housing move out, leaving behind declining school enrolments, empty buildings and a lack of sufficient people to create strong and vibrant places, both day and night;
- Most development takes the form of greenfield sprawl that extends the physical footprint of urban areas, and when it is the principal form of development, this works against the creation of attractive, liveable, high quality urban places in which people are increasingly wishing to live, work and invest.

The various policies in the NPF are structured under National Policy Objectives (NPOs). The key NPO’s of relevance to this submission are as follows:-

*National Policy Objective 3a* seeks to deliver at least 40% of all new homes nationally, within the built-up footprint of existing settlements.

*National Policy Objective 3c* is to deliver at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements other than the five cities and their suburbs, within their existing built-up footprints;

*National Policy Objective 6* relating to increased residential population and employment in urban areas;



*National Policy Objective 11* which favours development that can encourage more people to live and work in existing settlements;

*National Policy Objective 27* which prioritises walking and cycling accessibility to existing and proposed development;

*National Policy Objective 33* relating to provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development;

*National Policy Objective 35* relating to increased residential density in settlements.

### **3.1.2 Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines**

There are various Ministerial Guidelines in respect of residential development with the most relevant to the proposed development outlined below:-

- Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (May 2009),
- Adopted Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2007),
- Draft Ministerial Guidelines on Development Plans for Planning Authorities (2021)

#### *3.1.2.1 Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (May 2009),*

The role of the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Development in Urban Areas is to ensure the sustainable delivery of new development throughout the country. The Guidelines focus on the provision of sustainable residential development, including the promotion of layouts that:-

- Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport, and minimise the need to use cars;
- Are easy to access for all users and to find one's way around;
- Promote the efficient use of land and of energy, and minimise greenhouse gas emissions;
- Provide a mix of land uses to minimise transport demand.

#### *3.1.2.2 Adopted Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2007)*

These Guidelines on Development Plans are the adopted guidelines that are currently in place until such time as the current guidelines which are in draft form are adopted.

The Adopted Guidelines advise that development plans should anticipate future needs on an objective basis (Overview on Page 3) with needs driven assessments of future development requirements including the amount of land that needs to be zoned for particular purposes. It is stated that zoning that is not responsive to or justifiable by reference to reasonable needs, or that substantially exceeds such needs is not consistent with established principles of proper planning and sustainable development.



Part 4.4 refers to the mandatory objective of zoning land. It is stated in Section 10(2)(2) of the 2000 Act, as amended, mandates a development plan to include objectives for:-

*‘the zoning of land for the use solely or primarily of particular areas for particular purposes (whether residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, as open space or otherwise, or a mixture of these uses) and to such extent as the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, in the opinion of the planning authority, requires to be indicated’.*

Section 4.4 also states that development plans perform an important task in setting out the framework within which the development needs of the economy, and society in general, can be responded to while maintaining, and where possible, improving the environment.

It is further stated in section 4.5 that *‘following the approach set out, a development plan should ensure that enough land will be available to meet anticipated development requirements and will be developed in a sequential and co-ordinated manner. This will avoid, for example, a situation where housing estates are built beyond the outer edges of existing built-up areas while intervening lands lie undeveloped resulting in deficiencies in terms of footpaths, lighting, drainage or adequate roads infrastructure’.* The suitability of these lands and the availability of infrastructure is identified and assessed below.

Crucially in the context of this submission, in addition to the above, when considering the suitability of specific land for development, within the process of preparing zoning objectives in making a development plan, the members are restricted to considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which the development plan relates, statutory obligations and Government policy. Matters typically relevant to *‘the proper planning and sustainable development’* of an area, inter alia, include:

- Need
- Policy Context
- Capacity of Water, Drainage and Roads Infrastructure
- Supporting Infrastructure and Facilities
- Physical Suitability
- Sequential Approach
- Environmental and Heritage policy, including conservation of habitats and other sensitive areas.

### *3.1.2.3 Draft Ministerial Guidelines on Development Plans for Planning Authorities (2021)*

Section 1.5 of the draft Guidelines states that the development plan is now at the heart of a plan-led system whereby public capital investment programmes and priorities are aligned to support the adopted development strategy. The reverse is also set out later in the draft guidelines. This principle has been established through Project Ireland 2040 comprising both the NPF as the State’s national spatial development strategy and the National Development Plan (NDP) as the capital investment is intended to ensure a co-ordinated approach to investment in public infrastructure in a way that ties in with national and local spatial priorities. The development plan must therefore reflect and respond to programmed significant national infrastructural investment by the State.



Section 1.7 identifies Guiding Principles for the production of development plans including the following:-

- A vision for the area;
- Stakeholder engagement;
- A strategic balanced approach;
- The integration of sustainable development and climate change priorities;
- The structured management of change;

### **3.2 Regional Planning Context**

The Southern Regional Assembly published the '*Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region*' (RSES) on 31<sup>st</sup>. January, 2020. It is a 12-year, strategy development framework providing for the future physical, economic, and social development of the Southern Region. It includes Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASPs) to guide the future development of the Regions three main cities and metropolitan areas, Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford and strategies for Key Towns including Ennis Town. It seeks to achieve balanced regional development and full implementation of Project Ireland 2040 – NPF.

Fourteen '*Key Town's*, including Ennis, are identified in the RSES. They each play a critical roll in underpinning the RSES and ensuring a consolidated spread of growth beyond the cities of the sub-regional level.

Six of the Key Towns have a very significant population scale, Kilkenny City, Ennis, Carlow, Tralee, Wexford and Clonmel. The RSES states:-

*“These Key Towns are self-sustaining regional drivers and have a comparable structure to the five regional growth centres identified in the NPF. Given their considerable scope for growth, it is envisaged that local authorities should plan for population growth of more than 30% by 2040”.*

Accordingly, Regional Policy Objective 11 refers growth in the Key Towns, including Ennis, as follows:-

*“a. Local Authorities are supported in targeting growth of more than 30% for each Key Town subject to capacity analysis and sustainable criteria under Section 3.3 A Tailored Approach, RPO 3 Local Authority Core Strategies and the sustainable requirements under the following sub sections of RPO 11 Key Towns The appropriate level of growth is to be determined by the Core Strategy of Development Plans”.*

### 3.3 Local Planning Context

The subject land is located within the functional area of Clare County Council and the relevant policy document is the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (CCDP).

According to the Settlement Strategy, the Settlement Plan Policy Objective for Ennis is to ensure that Ennis, designed as a Hub town in the National Spatial Strategy (now superseded) as the county town at the top of the settlement hierarchy;

- a) is a driver of economic and regional prosperity by harnessing its strategic location strong urban structure, retail service and accommodation base as well as its competitive advantages,
- b) a vibrant culturally rich town with a revitalised town centre strong economic growth balanced with enhanced social inclusion sustainable neighbourhoods and a high level of environmental quality ensuring an excellent quality of life is achieved and
- c) a local area plan for Ennis and its Environs during the lifetime of the CCDP.

#### Section 1.4.1 (Strategic Aims for Housing and Sustainable Neighbourhoods)

The strategic aims Goal 1, (of ten goals to be carried through into the LAP) provides for Housing and Sustainable Neighbourhoods facilitating sustainable and balanced population increases by way of land use zoning, provision for consolidation and range of social and physical infrastructure, encouragement of population growth and community development, and creation of strong vibrant neighbourhoods in the Ennis area with a high quality and mix of housing for all members of the community while achieving sustainable neighbourhoods and improving place making.

Proposals for new residential development must be in accordance with Section 28 Guidelines and be accompanied by a Design Statement. (Section 2.2) Development management standards for urban residential development are set out in Appendix 1.

The Core Strategy illustrates how the vision for the County will be achieved in a manner that is consistent with the guidance, strategies and policies at national and regional level. The Core Strategy includes a settlement hierarchy (Table 2.1). Ennis town, with a population of approximately 25,000, is the largest settlement in County Clare. It is an important residential, service and commercial centre providing significant levels of employment. It is therefore at the top of the Settlement Hierarchy for the County. See Figure 5 below.



Figure 5 – CCDP Core Strategy Map

Source - CCDP

Table 2.4 of the CCDP refers to the Core Strategy Population Targets. It identifies that Ennis has a target population increase over the plan period of 8,137 people and a target increase in the number of households of 3,166. 137.2ha is the total area of residentially zoned land required to 2023 based on a density of 30 units/ha. for residentially zoned land in Ennis.

Other relevant policy objectives from the CCDP are outlined as follows:-

***‘CDP4.2 Development Plan Objective: Facilitating the Housing, Needs of the Population***

*A. To facilitate the housing needs of the existing and future population of County Clare through the management of housing development throughout the County in accordance with the Settlement Strategy’*

***‘CDP4.4 Development Plan Objective: Social and Affordable Housing***

*A. In accordance with the requirements of Section 94(4)(c) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), to reserve 10% of land zoned for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, including ‘low density residential’ for the purpose of meeting social and affordable housing need arising within the County’*



***'CDP4.7 Development Plan Objective: Housing Mix***

- A. *To secure the development of a mix of house types and sizes throughout the County to meet the needs of the likely future population in accordance with the guidance set out in the Housing Strategy and the Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas;*
- B. *To require new housing developments to incorporate a variety of plot sizes to meet the current and future needs of residents;*
- C. *To require the submission of a Statement of Housing Mix with all applications for multiunit residential development in order to facilitate the proper evaluation of the proposal relative to this objective'.*

***'CDP8.8 Development Plan Objective: Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)***

*To implement the requirements and recommendations contained in DMURS in the assessment of development proposals, the preparation of design schemes and their implementation in the development of streets, roads and public realm improvement schemes in the County'.*

***'CDP8.24 Development Plan Objective: Water Supply***

- A. *To ensure that adequate water services will be available to service development prior to the granting of planning permission and to require developers to consult Irish Water regarding available capacity prior to apply for planning permission;*
- B. *The ensure that development proposals comply with the standards and requirements of Irish Water in relation to water and wastewater infrastructure for facilitate the proposed development.*

***'CDP17.1 Development Plan Objective: Achieving Quality in the Public Realm***

- A. *To require both public and private development to make a positive contribution to the public realm;*
- B. *To require proposals for development in excess of 3 residential units or 300m<sup>2</sup> to be accompanied by a design statement demonstrating how the 12 urban design principles set out in the Urban Design Manual (2009) have been addressed. A design statement may be required for smaller developments in instances where the proposed development is situated in a key location in the town or village'.*

### **3.2.2 Zoning**

As per the Ennis Settlement Plan outlined in Volume 3a of the CCDP - Ennis Municipal District Plan the subject site is zoned as 'Community' with the following stated zoning objective

*'Community' zoning objective states as follows:-*

*"The development of lands for community uses shall be taken to include the use of lands for community, civic, health services, public or educational uses including the provision of schools, community halls, healthcare facilities and any other facility that is intended to provide some form of community service. Public or private delivery is not a factor in this case".*

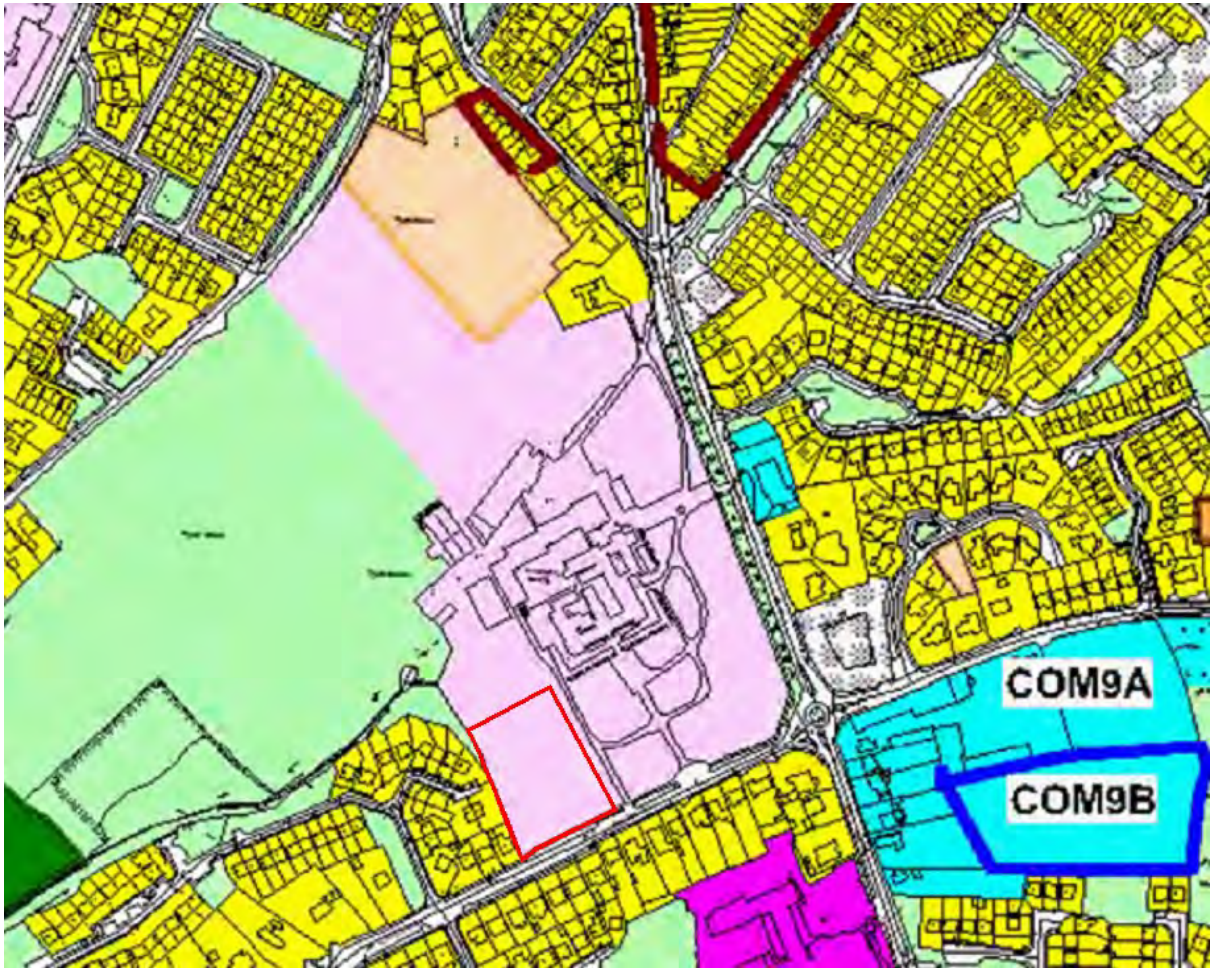
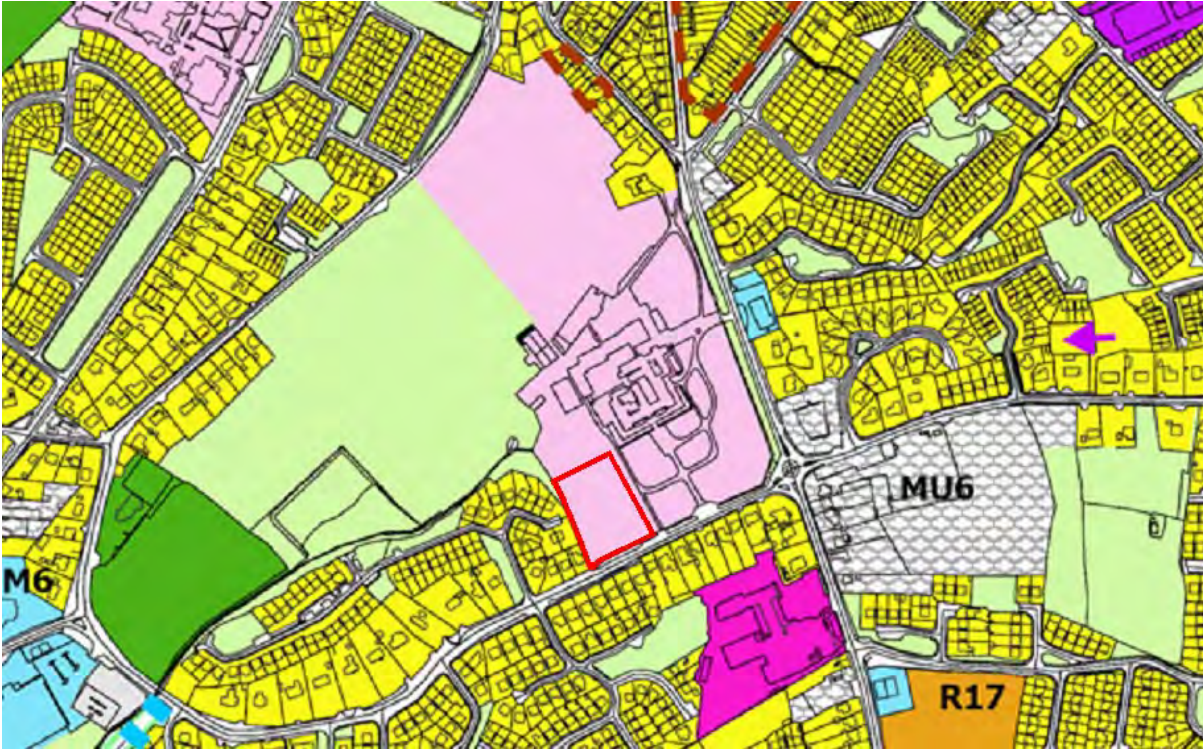


Figure 6: Current Zoning of Subject Site - Community

Source: Volume 3a Ennis Municipal District Plan – Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023

#### 4.0 DRAFT CLARE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023-2029

The Draft Plan proposes no change to the 'Community' zoning on the subject - see Figure 7 below.



**Figure 7: Proposed Zoning of St. Flannan's College**

**Source: Volume 3a Ennis Municipal District Plan – Draft Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029**

The subject land is included in the Clonroadmore Neighbourhood as shown in Figure 8 below.

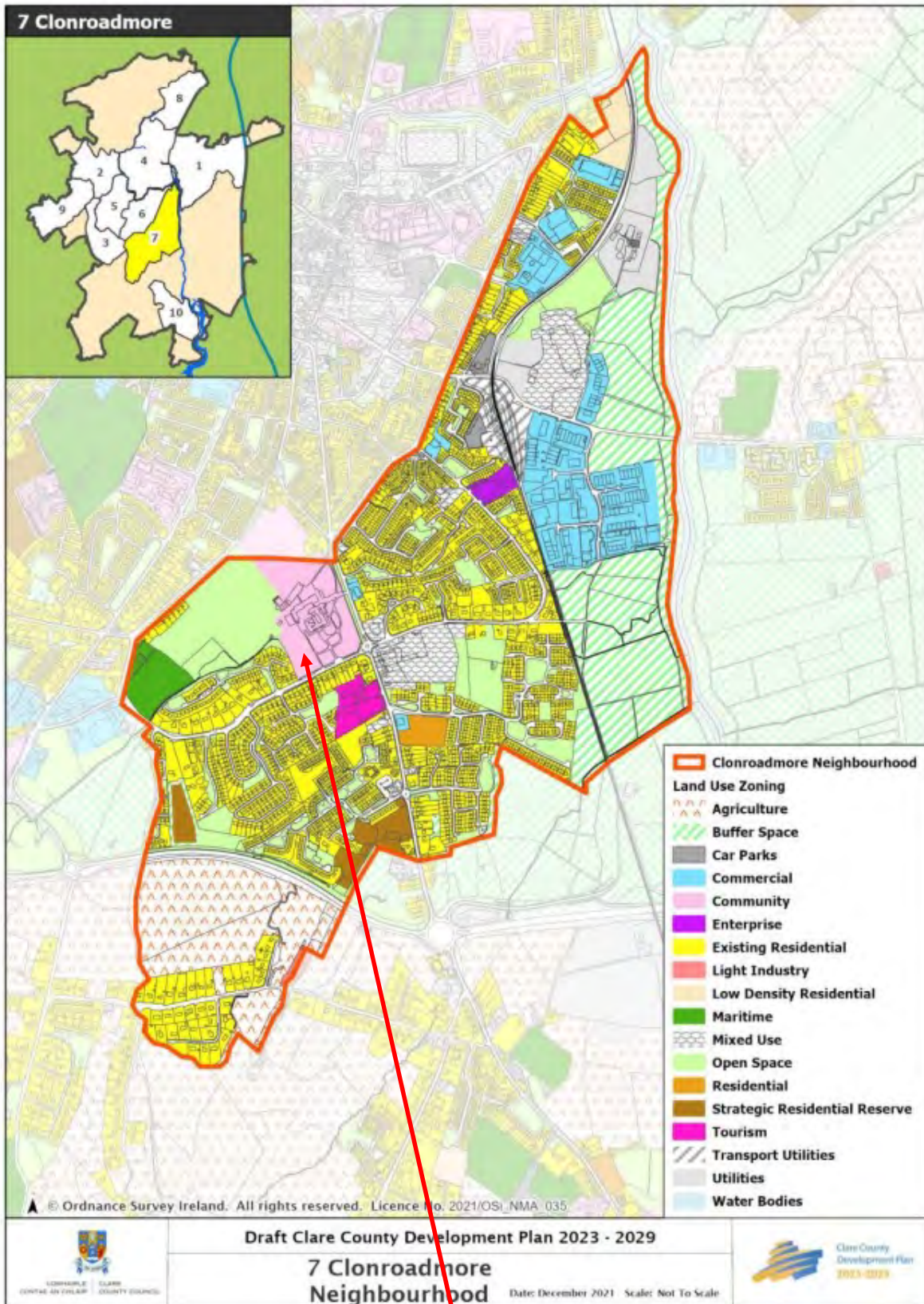
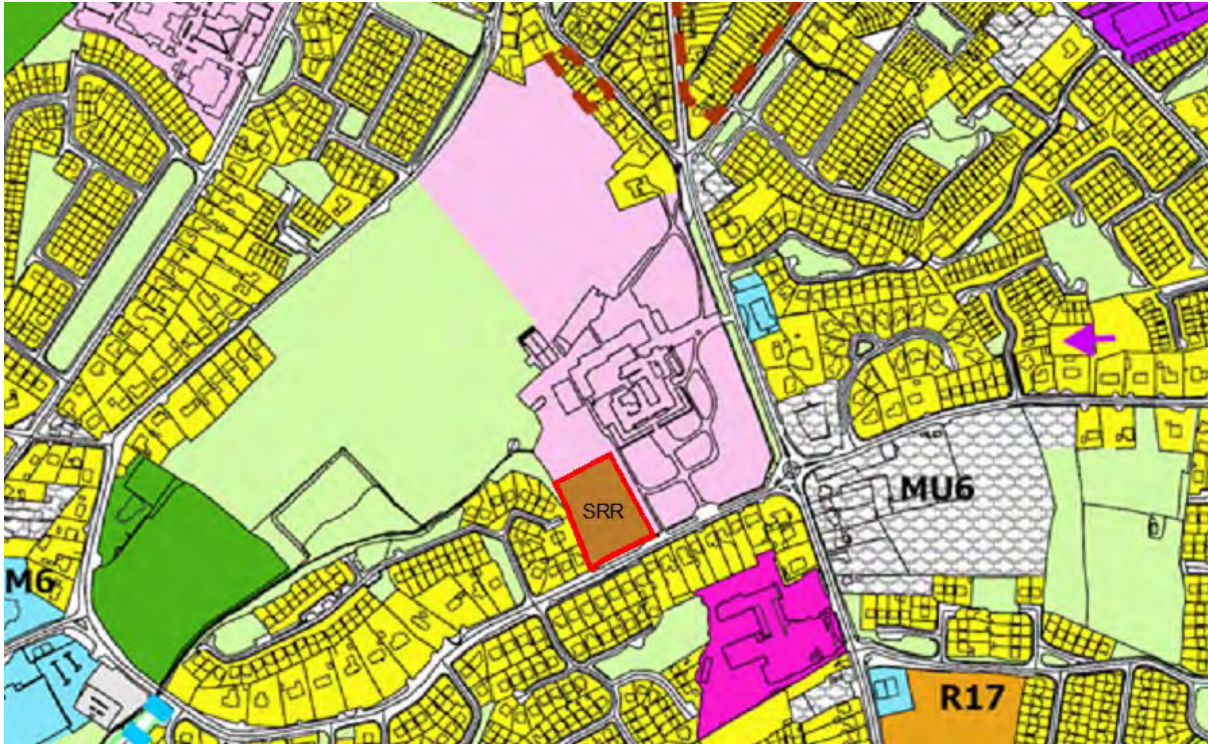


Figure 8: Clonroadmore Neighbourhood - Subject Site

Source: Volume 10b(i) Strategic Environmental Assessment – Environmental Report Appendices Draft Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029

## 5.0 REQUESTED AMENDMENT

Our Client is seeking the rezoning of the subject site from 'Community' to 'Strategic Residential Reserve' as outlined in Figure 9 below.



**Figure 9 Requested Amendments change from 'Community' to 'Strategic Residential Reserve'**

The 'Strategic Residential Reserve' zoning objective states as follows:-

*"It is acknowledged that not all lands within the settlement boundaries of the serviced settlements will be required to 2029. In these cases, some lands have been included as a strategic residential reserve, where they comprise infill or contiguous sites or have a planning history of residential use and can form part of the long-term sequential expansion of the settlement were considered appropriate.*

*In addition to protecting these lands for the long-term expansion of these settlements, consideration may be given to the development of some of the strategic residential reserve before the end of the current plan period where the Planning Authority is satisfied that the development of zoned land is progressing faster than expected and a shortage of available lands may arise or residential zoned land may not be delivered as expected and a shortage may arise during the plan period.*





*The development of such lands will only be considered from the beginning of year four of the Plan (April 2027) in order to give an opportunity for zoned land to be brought forward for development, and where it can be clearly demonstrated to the satisfaction of the planning authority that a zoned parcel of land will not be brought forward for development due to infrastructural or other demonstrable constraints during the remaining period of the Plan. It will also be a requirement that the proposed strategic residential reserve lands can be serviced and offer a reasonable substitute in terms of being delivered within the lifetime of the plan and are sequential development with good connectivity and access to services and amenity*

There are a number of material considerations put forward for consideration by our Client which, it is submitted, will need to be considered by the Planning Authority for the requested change as outlined in Figure 9.

### **5.2 Need for ‘Residential’ use**

Under the current CCDP part of the St. Flannan’s landholding is zoned as ‘Low Density Residential’ which is proposed to be rezoned in the Draft Plan to ‘Community’. This site is subject to a proposal for a HSE Nursing Home and a Planning Application for this development will be lodged very shortly. The change to ‘Community’ use of this parcel of land will facilitate the principle of the nursing home proposal on this land.

There is now no part of the landholding zoned for ‘Residential’ use. Our Client is seeking to have an area zoned for ‘Residential’ use which could provide for housing for elderly priests in the future. This proposal will not be developed in the short term and therefore our Client is requesting that the subject site be zoned for ‘Strategic Residential Reserve’ in the Draft Plan.

### **5.3 Delivery of Residential Development.**

The recently published Draft Development Plan Guidelines clearly state that the “*planning authorities should approach the development plan with a clear focus on the delivery of expected development outcomes*”.

While our Client is not intent on developing the subject site in the short term it is important that the subject site form part of a long-term strategic land reserve for future development.

#### 5.4 Planning for Compact Growth

The NPF seeks to achieve more compact and sustainable growth through consolidation, a greater share of future development within the existing built footprint of settlements, to include new homes, businesses and amenities. The NPF sets national targets for brownfield/infill housing development in settlements (30%) to support the regeneration of existing urban areas. NPF compact growth objectives together with Town Centres first principals are focused on the reuse of previously developed buildings and land and building up 'infill' sites, especially those that are centrally located in settlements at all scales.

In accordance with at 'Methodology for a Tiered Approach to Landuse Zoning' as set out in the Draft Plan, the subject site can be classified as potential Tier 1 Zoned Land. This means that the site has all the infrastructure necessary to ensure that residential development can be applied for and constructed in the short term. Refer to Figure 10 below which shows the subject site well served in terms of infrastructure including road and footpath access, lighting, drainage connectivity and water supply all available and all of which have capacity to accommodate development. Provision of a future 'Residential' use on the subject site would facilitate utilization of serviced land within the existing settlement boundary without the need for settlement expansion.

Utility	Availability	Distance from Site
Surface Water	Yes	Onsite Disposal
Wastewater	Yes	Available
Broadband (Wired & Wireless)	Yes	Available
Electricity	Yes	Available
Water	Yes	Available
Public Lighting	Yes	Available
Footpath/Cycle Track	Yes	Available

**Figure 10 – Existing Infrastructure at the subject site.**

The development plan process has a strategic role to play in facilitating new development and investment in settlements so that it can support the provision of new homes in areas of greatest housing demand as well as people living closer to employment, recreational opportunities and other services. The proposed development will deliver on the strategic role of the plan, providing housing within the settlement boundary of Ennis in proximity to employment, recreational opportunities and other services in the medium-long term.



Zoning the subject site for future residential purposes will ensure that any future development reflects the compact growth and town centre first agenda, which is also a key dynamic in addressing climate change, through reducing dependence on car-based transport, the extent of green-field land consumption and costly and inefficient infrastructure provision and use. In this instance, the development plan is provided with an opportunity to deliver a framework for development, which ensures a close correlation between facilitating housing on land with infrastructural capacity whilst also ensuring that a substantial element of future growth contributes to the regeneration of Ennis town centre.

### **5.5 Sequential Approach to Development**

The NPF strategy incorporates National Strategic Objectives which seek to tackle the damaging and inefficient pattern of urban sprawl through favouring compact forms of development that focus on consolidating the footprint of our existing settlements with new development. The location of zoned lands and sites within the settlement must be consistent with sequential development patterns, town centre first principles, proximity to services and facilities and the need to reduce carbon emissions.

SPPR DPG 7 of the Draft Development Plan Guidelines state that,

*“Planning authorities shall adopt a sequential approach when zoning lands for development, whereby the most spatially centrally located development sites in settlements are prioritized for development first, with more spatially peripherally located development sites being zoned subsequently”.*

The sequential approach as set out in the DoEHLG Development Plan Guidelines specifies that zoning shall extend outwards from the centre of an urban area, with undeveloped lands closest to the core and public transport routes being given preference, encouraging infill opportunities, and that areas to be zoned shall be contiguous to existing zoned development lands and that any exception must be clearly justified in the written statement of the development plan.

It is submitted to the Planning Authority that zoning the subject site for future residential use would inherently comply with the sequential approach to development and ensure compliance with SPPR DPG 7 of the Draft Development Plan Guidelines.

Provision for a future ‘Residential’ use on the subject site would represent a sequential approach to development which would form a natural continuation of development under the sequential development principle in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and the provisions of the recently published Draft Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (SPPR DPG 7).

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

On behalf of our Client, we request that the subject site outlined in red in Figure 9 be rezoned from 'Community' to 'Strategic Residential Reserve' in the Draft Plan.

The future development of the subject site for this use would inherently comply with the overarching policies and NPOs of the NPF to encourage 'compact growth' and to accommodate part of the population increase projected for Ennis in appropriate locations. The subject site is ideally situated in close proximity to Ennis town centre. The site is serviced and close to the established urban social infrastructure of the town. The principal zoning of the subject site for Residential use will contribute to the realisation of NPF objectives in relation to population growth.

In principle, providing for future residential development on the subject site is considered highly acceptable and to be encouraged in view of the strategic policy for Ennis as the County town at the top of the county's settlement hierarchy and a "Key Town" which is within the Limerick-Shannon-Ennis triangle, the economic engine of the Mid West.

It is submitted that the adopting of the requested 'Strategic Residential Reserve' zoning objective on the subject site is therefore in accordance with the requirements of national, regional and local Policy.

Our Client requests that this submission be considered in the preparation of the Draft Plan.