



To whom it may concern,

On behalf of Liscarroll Community Council and the entire community we would like to make a submission on the latest draft of the Local Area Plan for Liscarroll village. On examination we believe that Liscarroll should be considered as a 'key village' for the Kanturk/Mallow area. Additionally we would like to make comments on the text as outlined in red italics below.

We would also like to make some general comments which we hope Cork County Council will consider in their future development plans to help preserve and develop rural communities. See end of this document.

13 Liscarroll

13.1 VISION AND CONTEXT

Strategic Context

13.1.1. Liscarroll is a small settlement on the north western periphery of the Mallow Electoral Area, located approximately 10km North West of Buttevant on the R522. The village is located within the North Strategic Area.

While Liscarroll may be located on the periphery of the Mallow Electoral area it is also centrally located within a 10-18km radius of 6 key settlement areas, namely Mallow (17km), Charleville (17km), Kanturk (14km), Newmarket (16km), Buttevant (10km) and Dromcollogher (13km). This central location positions Liscarroll as an ideal location for the following:

- Potential home for young families who may work in different towns,*
- A good choice of secondary schools with Kanturk, Dromcollogher and Buttevant currently enrolling kids from Liscarroll National School. Kanturk and Dromcollogher schools are served with an existing school bus service and it is envisaged that a new bus service will be provided for the recently opened Buttevant Secondary School which is ideally located on the Liscarroll side of the town.*
- Conversely kids with Autism and other special needs living within a 30km radius of Liscarroll are enrolled in Lios Curám ASD unit which is situated at Liscarroll National School. This unit has been designated as a regional centre for Autism.*



13.1.2. The North Strategic Planning Area has historically been associated with declining socio-economic indicators and consequently falling populations. In this context the North and West Cork Strategic Plan (2002) outlines a 20 year strategy that addresses key structural, socio economic and infrastructural issues. In particular it seeks to rebalance the population structure of the area by encouraging a greater proportion of this population to locate in the towns whilst maintaining healthy growth rates in the villages and rural areas. The strategy also seeks to promote a stronger tourism and leisure economy through the protection of the natural and built heritage assets of the area.

We have highlighted this particular statement as we feel it is very applicable to Liscarroll based on its tourism potential, natural built heritage and the community's record of organising events which fall into the leisure economy category and which we hope to organise again in the future. Liscarroll Castle, the Donkey Sanctuary and the O'Sullivan Beara walking route all add to the tourism potential for Liscarroll. With the exception of the Donkey Sanctuary the village is not making the most of this potential and with Cork County Council's (CCC) assistance this could change dramatically.

13.1.3. In the overall strategy of this plan, Liscarroll is designated as a village. The main aims for a village are to encourage and facilitate population growth, and support the retention and improvement of key facilities, including the provision of infrastructure and public transport.

We feel that this current designation is not accurately reflecting Liscarroll's current status as what we believe is a key village. The following headings will demonstrate why CCC should re-examine Liscarroll's designation:

Employment

Current employment levels are quite high with approximately 184 people working locally. See Table 1 for a breakdown of employment in Liscarroll.

Table 1: Employment in Liscarroll

Employment Category	Company/Organisation	No. employed
<i>Animal welfare/Tourism</i>	<i>The Donkey Sanctuary</i>	<i>63*</i>
<i>Education/Childcare</i>	<i>Liscarroll National School</i>	<i>31 Total</i>
	<i>Lios Curám ASD unit</i>	
	<i>Liscarroll Playschool</i>	
	<i>Teach na nÓige Crèche</i>	<i>10 +3 Part time</i>
	<i>Sunfort Language School</i>	<i>12*</i>
<i>Engineering</i>	<i>Liscarroll Engineering</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Public Houses</i>	<i>O'Briens, Egans and the recently re-opened The Old Walls)</i>	<i>20*</i>
<i>Others</i>	<i>Brosnan Oils, Brosnan Lubricants, Jack O'Brien Fuels, Catherine Cantilon Accountant, Maurice O'Brien Plant hire, Collins Bros, Post Office, Tim Keane Motors, Stokes Bros, Pat Sexton Auto Repairs</i>	<i>30**</i>
	<i>* includes part time staff</i>	
	<i>** numbers increase for seasonal work</i>	



Tourism

Liscarroll village is already seeing large numbers visiting annually. We recently contacted the Donkey Sanctuary to discover that they welcome 50,000 visitors each year and it is their intention to build on this by developing initiatives with other businesses in the area (The Old Walls) in providing a place to eat while visiting the area.

Liscarroll Castle is the third largest castle of its kind in Ireland and is a significant heritage asset in the community which could be developed and promoted as a tourist destination. Liscarroll has always been a significant site and has witnessed key moments and events in Irish history most notably the Battle of Liscarroll (part of the confederate war in the 17th century) and more recently a very active area during the War of Independence and the subsequent Civil War. We are confident that by developing and promoting the castle and village history, the visitor numbers would greatly increase as a more substantial tourist package would be on offer.

The O'Sullivan Beara route also passes through the village and again this is another great draw for visitors which could certainly be expanded and developed further by providing more amenities/facilities for those passing through.

Historically Liscarroll Community has a decent track record of running events which have attracted large visitor numbers. The local Point to Point committee runs an annual Point to Point race meet which brings large visitor numbers (c.3500 people), albeit only once a year. For the past 2 years the Community Council have run a welcome home festival for the local diaspora and have secured funding from CCC through the Gathering initiative.

In 1996 and 1997 we ran a battle re-enactment and living history tours centred on the castle which we hope to repeat in the future. We have also run an International Cross Country event in the early nineties which attracted entries from all over the world including Olympic athletes and large visitor numbers.

Sunfort Language School located to the North East of the village caters for approximately 600 international kids annually.

We feel that in comparison to many other villages in the North Cork area, Liscarroll has more to offer tourists and has great potential for growth.

Education/Childcare

As noted earlier Liscarroll is very fortunate to have a superb national school which is constantly growing and they have very recently opened another classroom extension. Student enrolment numbers for this year are up to 162 with projected numbers for 2016-2107 school year at 174¹. It is our understanding that the school plans further extensions in the near future to add to the recent classroom extension.

¹ School numbers have been confirmed by Principal of Liscarroll National School, January 2016



Lios Curám autism and special needs unit located in the National School is bringing kids from many other villages and towns of North Cork and East Limerick including Newtown, Newcastlewest, Dromina, Charleville, Kanturk, Kilbrin, Churchtown, Dromcollogher and Freemount. A school bus service is provided for these kids also.

One of the key challenges facing the school at the moment is car parking and available land for further development.

Teach na nÓige, the local Community Childcare facility is run by another local voluntary committee and similar to the National School has grown rapidly in the last few years with approx. 78 kids using the facility weekly. The crèche also provides a bus service between to and from the national school.

Infrastructure

As already noted in the plan the wastewater treatment plant has enough spare capacity to cater for future residential housing.

Local Context

13.1.4. Liscarroll is a picturesque village in a primarily rural setting. The village rises steeply to the north. Replace with *Rises steeply to the east. (the lands to the north of the village are lowest and flattest part of village, hence the flood plain noted on the area map)*. The land surrounding the village is generally undulating and consists of rock outcrops, which limit the development potential of the area. *This statement is at odds with the statement in 13.3.4 and 13.4.3. While there are rock outcrops evident in the village this is mainly concentrated at the east of the village and does not impact on development land elsewhere in the village*

13.1.5. The village has a fairly compact core centred on the main street to the east of the settlement. The main street contains an attractive traditional building stock. However there are a number of brownfield / infill sites awaiting redevelopment and a number of vacant properties awaiting refurbishment. *See the general comments at the end which we believe could greatly improve on developing this village and other areas.*

13.2 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Population and Housing

13.2.1. The population of Liscarroll village declined by 8.2% in the period 1996 to 2002 and then remained stagnant in the four years to 2006. In the period since 2006 a number of new dwellings have been constructed in the village which should have a positive impact on the population.

The timing of the comments process could be improved as communities are trying to make a case based on outdated information and as it happens just before the next census is due to take place. Would it be better to time this process just after census results are made available to the public.



Clarification is required as to the population numbers quoted. Are these numbers limited to the area within the development boundary on CCC's map or as per census returns for the village? On examination of the OSI Geohive mapping system the population of Liscarroll village is 261² in 2011 and encompasses a larger plan area extending to Rockspring/Coolbane townlands. The figure quoted on the CSO website is 230³ for the 2011 census return.

While we do not have updated population figures for the village we do know that the two recently developed estates are at or close to full occupation. Additionally the enrolment numbers at the crèche and national school are very good indicators for a population increase since the last plan was developed.

13.2.2. Geo-directory data confirms a very moderate increase in the number of housing units in the village increasing from approximately 111 in 2005 to 119 in 2010.

There has been 15 No. new housing units completed and handed over since 2010 at the development near the school and up at Ard an Chaisleáin.

13.2.3. Some small scale infill residential development has taken place within the development boundary close to the core of the village resulting in an increase in the building stock of the village. A recent housing development at the northeast of the village remains unfinished and there are a number of vacant units but these are likely to be sold in the short term.

The development close to the school and up by the crèche have both since been completed and are fully occupied. Liscarroll is fortunate from the point of view that it did not fall victim to the property bubble and has no ghost estates. There are lands where planning has previously been granted and if properly developed with realistic phasing, the increase in population would greatly enhance the village in a sustainable manner.

CCC have noted on their website that the road leading to estate and crèche to the east of the village will soon benefit from public lighting improvements something which is greatly needed as some of the residents are elderly and also parents with kids use the footpath during winter months which currently creates road safety concerns.

Infrastructure and Community Facilities

13.2.4. Liscarroll enjoys good road based transport connections. The village is located on the R522 regional road, which provides easy access to the N20 national route at Buttevant and onwards to Mallow, Charleville, Cork and Limerick. Bus Eireann operates a public bus service, which passes through the village from Cork to Charleville. The frequency of the services is limited at present

This service has since discontinued and we feel that the local authority and other government agencies should work with Bus Eireann or private operators in providing a transport link to larger towns or cities.

² See attached reference print from OSI Geohive website

³ See attached reference print from CSO Census Table 5



Through this consultation process we established that there is a rural bus service providing a weekly bus on Thursdays to Mallow town which we are now going to actively promote.

13.2.5. The existing wastewater treatment plant provides secondary treatment with final discharge to the Awbeg River, a protected area as part of the Blackwater Catchment and Candidate Special Area of Conservation. The plant has capacity to accommodate additional development.

As noted above regarding the argument for designation of Liscarroll as a 'key village'. Existing infrastructure has capacity thus will not create any additional strain on council resources.

13.2.6. Liscarroll has access to an adequate water supply from the Allow Regional Water Supply Scheme and this supply shall be upgraded to cater for any large scale development. Water conservation measures shall help in restoring the capacity of this scheme.

This statement is not entirely true. Residents along Sallypark have a very poor supply with water pressure rarely exceeding 0.5 bar. Local council candidates have for a long time been told of these issues and for an equally long time have promised to improve water supply but have yet failed to deliver.

13.2.7. The Surface Water network within the village is limited and any new large scale development will be required to connect to a suitable storm water outfall pipe or directly to a watercourse.

Problems occur at the bottom of the village with blocked shores/gullies which has recently led to flooding of a number of houses.

13.2.8. Parts of Liscarroll have been identified as being at risk of flooding. The areas susceptible to flooding are illustrated on the settlement map. Government Guidelines require, and it is an objective of this plan, that future development is avoided in areas indicated as being at risk of flooding. More detailed information on the approach to flooding and how development proposals in areas at risk of flooding will be assessed is given in Section One of this Plan and within the Guidelines for Planning Authorities 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management,' issued by the Minister of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2009.

Agree and support this policy and would expect the council to apply same to the development boundary of Liscarroll.

Community facilities

13.2.9. The village has a number of community facilities. These include a primary school, a church, a Garda station, a community centre, a crèche, a GAA pitch and clubhouse, a handball court and a town park and recently completed modern playground.

Please add to the list above the following additional facilities: post office, ASD unit, doctors surgery in the community centre, 1st responders group with defibrillators at the community centre and school, fuel depot with 24 hour diesel and kerosene, a grocery shop and a language school for international students.



Please note the community has provided all these facilities with only limited support from CCC. We feel that CCC need to actively engage with the community in providing modern facilities that will cater for the needs of our growing clubs especially the athletic and handball clubs who rely on indoor facilities which are not fit for purpose (community centre) or are too small or in need of refurbishment (handball alley).

13.2.10. Liscarroll National School (Scoil Naomh Iosaf) is a coeducational school with an enrolment of approximately 115 children and was extended and refurbished in 2006 and now includes special needs classrooms. The school serves as a regional centre for Autism.

Enrolment now up to 162 pupils and growing thus adding to case for better local facilities i.e. playing surface or indoor facility which could serve the school and other clubs. The community understands its role in championing any cause for new facilities but we need more active support from CCC and government agencies in providing for these facilities.

13.2.11. The GAA grounds are located to the east of the village core and in close proximity to the community centre which has also recently been extended and refurbished. The Liscarroll Athletics Club is another active club in the area with a large membership.

Currently we understand from the 4 clubs (GAA, juvenile club, AC and ladies football) that the GAA grounds are at capacity and the clubs are struggling to manage all their needs through the year with just one field.

We are fortunate to have a newly established Foroige group to add to the four clubs listed above and the following: The community council, Harrier Club, Social Satellite Group, Handball Club, Community Care, Parents Association, IFA, Point to Point committee and 1st responders group.

13.2.12. A bring centre is located in the village which currently includes containers for glass bottles/jars and beverage cans.

Removed some years ago due to problems with littering. The site next to the community centre was too isolated and removed from the village. The community council would welcome meeting with CCC to identify another location for a bring centre.

Employment and Economic Activity

See our case for designation of Liscarroll as a 'key village'

13.2.13. Agricultural related business is the key economic activity of Liscarroll. Agricultural activity attracts commercial business to the village from the surrounding hinterland and therefore is fundamental to its economic development.

13.2.14. The Donkey Sanctuary is located to the east of the village and attracts visitors to the locality.
50,000 visitors annually⁴.

⁴ Figure confirmed by the Donkey Sanctuary



13.2.15. Liscarroll village has become an attractive location as a tourist destination and should be packaged as part of a wider North Cork tourism Trail. Liscarroll Castle is a magnificent and well-preserved resource.

13.2.16. It is important to prevent any development in close proximity to the castle that would interfere with its potential as a recreational facility. This plan includes proposals to retain lands surrounding the castle and incorporating the earthworks associated with Liscarroll ~~Fort~~ *Castle* as an area of open space. The area in front of the castle would benefit from landscaping and the development of some parking facilities. The lack of tourist sign posting for the castle, both within the village and along the N20 at Buttevant needs to be addressed.

We would like to think that tourist signposting would be something that CCC would take responsibility for and provide in addition to the welcome signs erected by the community council some years ago.

Since July 2012 Liscarroll Community Council through Tim Brosnan has been communicating with CCC regarding the garage located on the site of the South East tower of Liscarroll Castle. We are very disappointed in the lack of response received to date and every promise of progress has failed to materialise. The castle is key to this village and CCC are hampering its development or potential by dragging its feet with the transfer of lands. We would love to see this garage demolished as it would open up the area in front of the castle and potentially allow for rebuilding the tower and possibly providing some car parking.⁵

Environment and Heritage

13.2.17. There are two structures within the village that are entered in the Record of Protected Structures, namely, Liscarroll Castle (in ruins) and St. Joseph's Catholic Church.

13.2.18. As detailed in the Draft Landscape Strategy 2008, Liscarroll is located within the Landscape Character Type known as Fertile Plain with Mooreland Ridge which is an area of the County where the landscape is deemed to be of very high value (scenic landscapes with the highest natural and cultural quality including areas of conservation value of national importance), very high sensitivity (extra vulnerable landscape likely to be fragile and susceptible to change) and of County importance.

13.2.19. There are no natural heritage designations in the vicinity of the village.

13.3 Problems and Opportunities

13.3.1. In recent years, there has been little residential development in the village of Liscarroll and that which has occurred has been primarily infill in nature. Two housing estates have been permitted, one with 54 units to the west of the village which has yet to be developed, and one with 17 units at the eastern end of the village where ten of the units have been built but remain vacant.

⁵ Evidence of correspondence available from Tim Brosnan at tim@liscarroll.ie or from the property section of CCC



13.3.2. In view of the need to prioritise growth to the higher order settlements of this electoral area, and in particular to strengthen the town of Buttevant located just 10km to the south east, it is considered that there is limited scope for growth in Liscarroll over the lifetime of this plan and that such growth should focus on catering for the organic growth of the village and its immediate hinterland rather than catering for commuter type housing.

We strongly disagree with this statement. We feel that there is great potential for growth in the village as shown in our comments above. We need CCC to actively engage with the people of Liscarroll to help develop Liscarroll.

13.3.3. There is a great potential in Liscarroll for tourist activity. The Donkey Sanctuary located 11km to the north-east is widely known and has attracted visitors to the area since the 1980's.

13.3.4. In this Plan the development boundary has been reduced as appropriate relative to that contained in the 2005 Plan having regard to the flood risk areas identified to the south of the village core. Ample land remains to cater for future growth and facilitate some choice of location within the village. *See 13.1.4*

13.4 Planning Proposals

13.4.1. Over the lifetime of this plan it is envisaged that development in the range of 15 additional houses could be accommodated within the village, primarily through the completion of the unfinished estate at the eastern side of the village (7 units remain to be built) and through the provision of individual single dwellings.

Estates noted have since been completed. See general comments below for other development initiatives.

13.4.2. While the opportunity remains to develop the 54 unit estate to the west of the village it is considered that such development would be out of scale with the character and grain of Liscarroll and would not be in keeping with current Ministerial policy on the scale of development in villages.

Liscarroll has the capacity and infrastructure to cater for a development of this size and we do not agree with the assessment made. We have a superb national school, we are located near 3 secondary school towns currently serving Liscarroll with a bus service and we have a state of the art crèche and active sports clubs.

A nursing home would be very welcome as it would allow our older generations stay in the village and near their homes. What is required is proper phasing of the development.

13.4.3. The village development boundary defined in this plan contains a generous supply of land. Not all of the land within the boundary will be required for development over the lifetime of this plan. *See 13.1.4*

13.4.4. Outside the development boundary, the land forms part of the open countryside. Here, the objectives of the Cork County Development Plan 2009 prevail, which seek to prevent sprawl and to ensure a clear distinction between built-up areas and the open countryside.



GENERAL COMMENTS

1. CCC should remove rates from commercial premises in small rural communities like Liscarroll. Rates add significant costs to small shops which are essential for small communities. Removing rates gives small business a better chance to survive and create employment.
2. Incentives through grants for refurbishment of the older housing stock in the village would greatly help in encouraging people to buy up these older properties which are no longer suitable for the needs of young families in modern society. Additionally it would great reduce the pressure on CCC to grant planning for one off houses outside development boundaries.
3. CCC have in the past made large capital investments in other areas namely the purchase of Mallow Castle and provision of a new swimming pool at Dunmanway. Could CCC consider making a similar investment in Liscarroll?
4. Similar initiatives like the urban renewal schemes being implemented in city centre locations in Dublin and Limerick could be scaled to suit small rural towns and villages.

This submission has been endorsed and supported by the following groups in the village and at a community meeting organised specifically for this purpose.

The Community Council

Liscarroll National School & Lios Curám ASD unit

The Donkey Sanctuary

Teach na nÓige crèche

Liscarroll Athletic Club

Ladies Football Club

Foróige Club

1st Responders Group

Point to Point Committee

The Handball Club

Liscarroll GAA

Social Satellite Group

For any follow up questions or other required information CCC can contact Tim Brosnan of Liscarroll Community Council in this regard at Brosnan_tim@hotmail.com or eolas@liscarroll.ie