

Kenmare

Town Centre First Masterplan



Lár Bailte ar dTús
Town Centre First



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Ár dTodhchal
Tualthe
Our Rural
Future



Comhairle Contae Chiarraí
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CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Site & Context
- 3.0 Analysis
- 4.0 Engagement
- 5.0 Masterplan
- 6.0 Implementation

Artist's Impression of Henry Street

Please note: This image is an artist's impression and is intended for illustrative purposes only.



The **Kenmare Town Centre First Masterplan** sets out a framework to guide the town's enhancement and sustainable growth.

Rooted in heritage and framed by nature, Kenmare will evolve as a **thriving town centre** — a great place to live, work and visit, where **community, culture, enterprise and the environment** come together.



Artist's Impression of the Pier

Please note: This image is an artist's impression and is intended for illustrative purposes only.



Artist's Impression of the The Square and the Butter Market
Please note: This image is an artist's impression and is intended for illustrative purposes only.

Foreword

from the Kenmare Town Team

This Masterplan is the product of real teamwork between Kerry County Council, the Kenmare Town Team, and the people of Kenmare. Through workshops and conversations, we've gathered ideas and priorities from across the community to guide the future of our town centre.

Kenmare is one of the towns in Kerry selected to prepare a Town Centre First Plan. It's a great opportunity to build on our heritage, natural setting, and strong community spirit, while tackling the challenges we face and planning for a more sustainable future.

The plan sets out projects that will support local business, improve our streets and public spaces, and make life better for residents and visitors alike. As a Town Team, we are committed to working with the Council, local groups, and funding partners to bring these ideas to life, ensuring Kenmare continues to thrive as a vibrant, welcoming town for generations to come.

Kenmare Town Team

01

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Masterplan

Kerry County Council appointed Purser, supported by a multi-disciplinary team (see Section 1.7), to prepare a Town Centre Masterplan for Kenmare, Co. Kerry.

The purpose of the Masterplan is to guide the future development of Kenmare and deliver meaningful, place-based change - making it a more attractive town in which to live, work, visit, and do business.

Kenmare plays a key role in south-east Kerry as a gateway to the Iveragh and Beara peninsulas. Located on the Ring of Kerry, the town is a well-established tourism destination with strong links to surrounding towns and also benefits from accessibility to West Cork and Cork City. It has also been identified as a town with significant potential to grow as a hub for business, retail and tourism.

This Masterplan sets out a clear vision, strategy and commitment to the sustainable and coordinated development of the town. It has been shaped by an integrated design approach — combining urban design, transport planning, conservation and landscape architecture — and is informed by national, regional and local policy, alongside current best practice.

1.2 Context

The Government's Town Centre First Policy (February 2022) is a landmark cross-government initiative aimed at addressing vacancy, tackling dereliction, and revitalising town centres across Ireland. It promotes a

holistic, place-based approach to rural development that puts the needs of communities at the heart of decision-making.

Town Centre First – A Policy Approach for Irish Towns sets out a new framework where local communities and businesses take a central role in shaping their towns and planning for the future. Recognising that no two towns are the same, the policy acknowledges the need for tailored responses that reflect the distinct challenges and opportunities of each place. Its overarching aim is to support the creation of town centres that are viable, vibrant and attractive — places where people can live, work, visit and access key services, amenities, culture and community life.

This Town Centre First Masterplan for Kenmare presents a unique opportunity to reinvigorate the town centre as the beating heart of the community. It allows for a thorough analysis of Kenmare — to understand what works, identify areas for improvement, and shape a plan that reflects the town's strengths, aspirations and potential.

The structure of this plan aligns with the four key pillars of the Town Centre First policy:

- Collaboration and Communication
- Understanding the Place (Analysis and Appraisal)
- Defining the Place (Objectives and Actions)
- Enabling the Place

Throughout this Masterplan, the emerging themes for Kenmare are clearly linked to these policy pillars — demonstrating how local priorities align with national policy and how Kenmare can lead the way in sustainable, community-led regeneration.



Figure 1.1: Map of Kenmare
Masterplan Focus Area

1.3 Project Objectives

The Town Centre First policy calls for places to be shaped by the people who live there - embracing opportunities presented by digital innovation, climate action and demographic change. Its goal is to create town centres that are viable, vibrant and attractive, serving not only as economic hubs but also as places of culture, social life and community.

This Masterplan for Kenmare responds directly to that vision. It reflects the priorities identified through local engagement and aligns them with practical, place-based actions to revitalise the town centre.

The aim is to ensure Kenmare has the right strategies and projects in place to meet local needs, enhance public space, upgrade key amenities and support the town's long-term vitality for residents, businesses and visitors alike. To achieve this, the following objectives have been set:

- **Address Key Challenges** - Tackle vacancy, traffic pressure, limited youth and community facilities, and spatial disconnect between key areas of the town.
- **Reimagine the Use of Space** - Use design to transform the public realm - making it safer, greener, and more welcoming for everyone.
- **Enable Community-Driven Change** - Provide a clear framework and suite of projects to support local action, partnerships and co-delivery.
- **Upgrade Amenities for All** - Enhance the quality, accessibility and functionality of existing public infrastructure so it works harder for the community.

1.4 Kenmare Town Team

The success of this Masterplan is rooted in strong local collaboration. The Kenmare Town Team, formed in December 2024, brings together 11 local residents, business owners, Elected Members and community representatives, supported by the Town Regeneration Officer and Kerry County Council's multi-disciplinary Team.

The team emerged from an initial stakeholder workshop involving groups such as the GAA, schools, youth, heritage, and elected members. Since then, it has acted as a steering group, shaping priorities, reviewing emerging ideas, and helping develop a practical action plan for implementation.

1.5 Approach

1.5.1 Double-Diamond Design Methodology

The methodology for the project is informed by the established double-diamond design methodology (see Fig 1.2) as developed by the UK Design Council in 2005. The Double-Diamond methodology is a four-stage innovation process which captures the divergent and convergent nature of design, and offers flexibility to designers, allowing the model to fit the specific needs of a project. As well as highlighting the design process, the Design Council's framework for innovation also includes the key principles and design methods that designers and non-designers need to use, and sets out the ideal working culture required, to achieve significant and long-lasting positive change. Typically, the four phases are:

- **Discover phase (divergent):** exploration of brief and hypothesis, contextual research and definition of project participants or communities.
- **Define phase (convergent):** designing and conducting engagement and feasibility studies.
- **Develop phase (divergent):** development of a number of ideas through co-creation and design ideation processes.
- **Deliver phase (convergent):** selection of ideas to take forward and delivery of outputs in the form of prototypes, services ideas or guidance.

Importantly, this is not a linear process as the arrows on the diagram show. The two diamonds indicate that a divergent and convergent creation process happens twice; once to define the problem (and in this case provide preliminary options – i.e. Stage 1) and once to create the solution (i.e. provide for design development and the preparation of a Masterplan – i.e. Stage 2).

The Double-Diamond framework structured the preparation of the Kenmare Town Centre First Masterplan. It began with broad exploration and definition of key challenges, followed by idea generation, testing, and refinement. This process ensured that the Masterplan is evidence-based, collaborative, and creative, providing a clear framework to guide Kenmare's future development and sustainable growth.

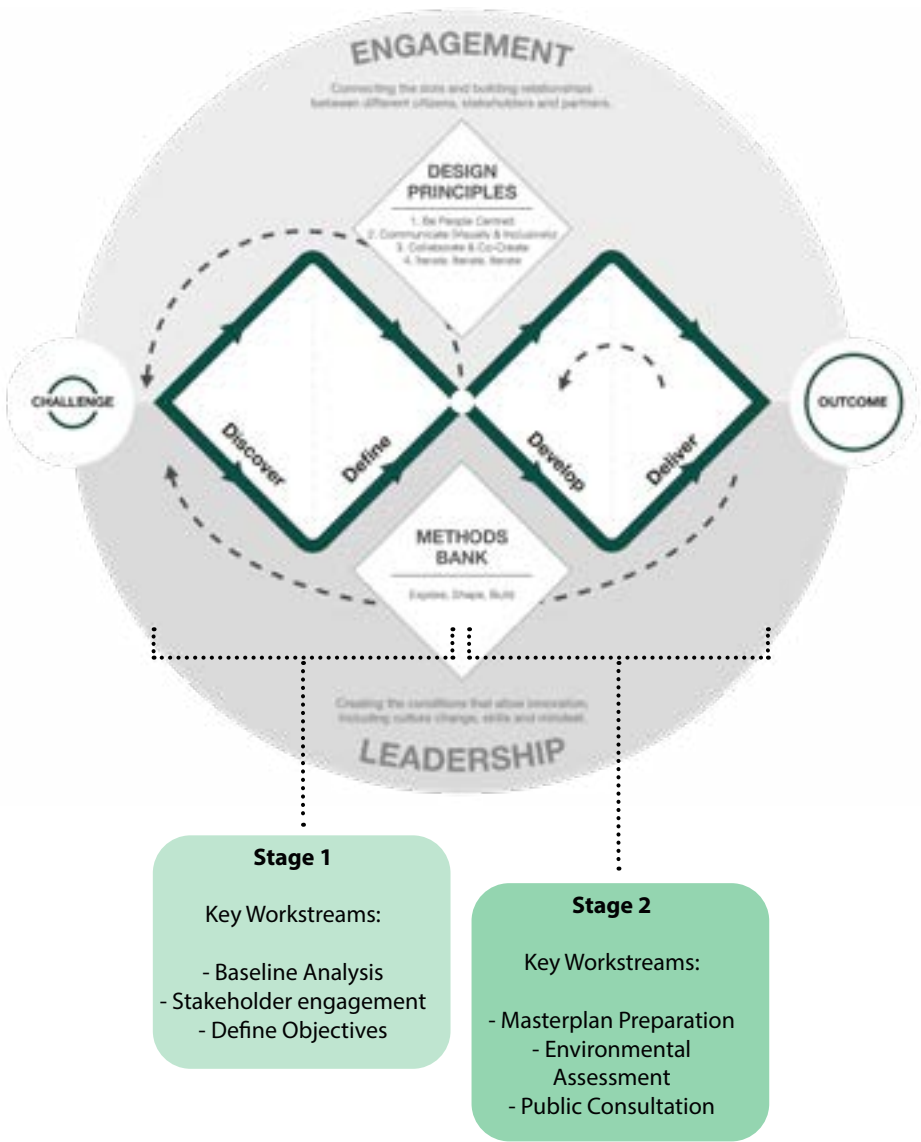


Figure 1.2: Design Council's Double Diamond Approach annotated by Purser.

1.6 Multi-Disciplinary Team

The Kenmare Town Centre First Masterplan is ambitious, place-sensitive and community-focused. It has been developed through an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach that combines urban design, planning, transport, landscape architecture and public engagement.

Recognising the complexity and opportunity of revitalising Kenmare's town centre, Kerry County Council appointed a specialist team led by Purser, supported by the Council's Town Regeneration Officer. The core team included:

- Purser – Lead consultant providing planning, urban design, landscape architecture, and engagement expertise.
- Hegsons – Transport planning and civil engineering.
- Mesh Architects – Conservation architecture.
- DCON Safety Consultants – Project Supervisor Design Process (PSDP).
- Contributors from Kerry County Council Multi-Disciplinary Team

This collaborative approach ensured the masterplan addressed both the immediate priorities of the community and the long-term needs of the town.

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Figure 1.3: Aerial Image of Kenmare

1.8 Producing the Masterplan

Working closely with the Town Team and community is a vital component of the plan process. The programme comprised of six key stages. Taking account of feedback received from the local community, it identifies opportunities for improvements by proposing strategies and projects in the short, medium and long term. Kerry County Council, in collaboration with the Town Team and other stakeholders, will use the plan to implement improvements and seek funding to deliver positive change.



02

THE TOWN

2.0 The Town

2.1 Description of the Town

Kenmare is located in south Kerry at the junction of the Beara and Iveragh Peninsulas, close to the County Cork border. Its strategic position on both the Ring of Kerry and Ring of Beara routes makes it an important service and visitor hub for the wider region. Tourism plays a significant role in the local economy, with hospitality, retail, food, and craft businesses forming a substantial part of the town’s commercial base.

The town is served by the N70 and N71 national routes. The N70 forms part of the Ring of Kerry, while the N71 connects Kenmare with Killarney to the north and Cork City to the east. Kenmare is approximately 58km south of Kerry Airport, which provides regular connections to Dublin, the UK and Germany, with additional seasonal destinations. Killarney, the second largest town in County Kerry, lies approximately 32km to the north via the N71 (Moll’s Gap) or 42km via the N22 and R569.

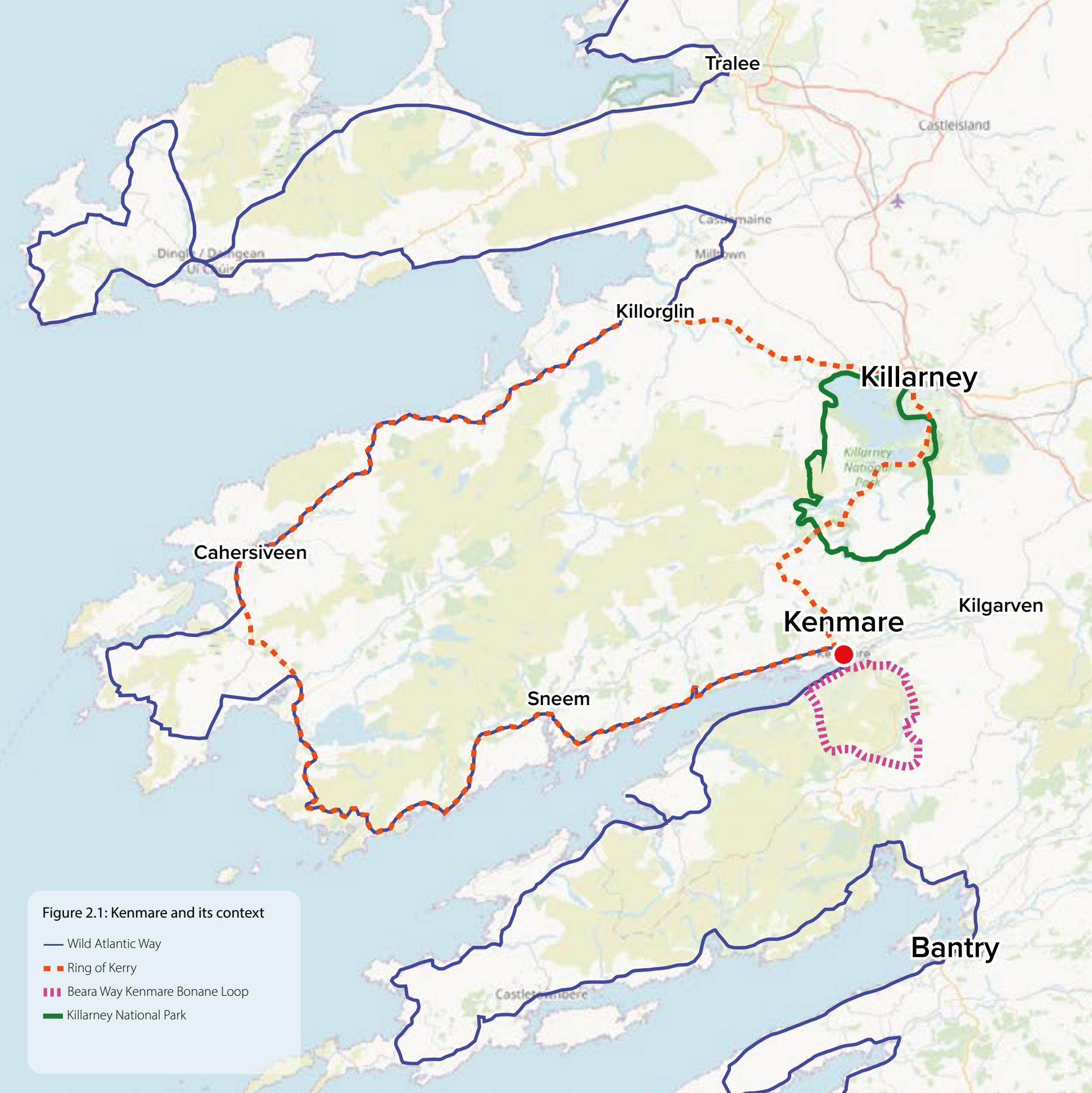
Public transport is provided by two Bus Éireann services linking Kenmare to Cork and Killarney, supplemented by seven TFI Local Link routes serving the surrounding rural hinterland.

Kenmare is located at the head of Kenmare Bay, where the River Roughty flows into the sea. The River Finnihy enters the town from the northeast, passing near the secondary school and Holy Cross Church before continuing south-westwards toward the bay. These waterways contribute significantly to the character, landscape setting and ecological value of the town.

With a population of 2,566 (Census 2022), Kenmare is the fourth largest urban centre in County Kerry. The town provides a range of local shops, services and community facilities that meet day-to-day needs of residents

and the wider rural catchment. The masterplan provides an opportunity to manage planned growth, enhance public facilities, and ensure that the quality of the built and natural environment supports the needs of a growing population.

Kenmare benefits from two significant natural amenity areas to the south of the town centre—Reenagross Park and the recently opened Peninsula Park. The town also supports a strong network of sports clubs, including Gaelic football, soccer, basketball and rowing, as well as an 18-hole golf course.



2.2 Historical Context

Settlement within the Kenmare area dates back to Neolithic times. This early occupation is evidenced by archaeological features such as the stone circle located at the western edge of the town. Cromwell’s Bridge, a distinctive single-arch structure crossing the River Finnihy, is another notable historic landmark. Although its construction date is uncertain, its name derives from the Irish croiméal (moustache), referring to its arched form rather than any association with Oliver Cromwell.

An earlier settlement, now referred to as Kenmare Old, was established in 1670 by Sir William Petty, who had been granted the lands by Oliver Cromwell as payment for completing the Down Survey in 1656. The location of the present-day town was historically known as Needen (An Neidín). The name was later changed to Kenmare, from the Irish Ceann Mara, meaning “head of the sea”.

Modern Kenmare was developed in 1775 as one of Ireland’s first planned towns by the 1st Marquess of Lansdowne, William Petty-Fitzmaurice. The Marquess directed that the town’s two principal streets intersect at an angle, forming a distinctive ‘X-shaped’ street plan with a triangular marketplace. This planned layout remains a defining element of Kenmare’s urban character, reinforced by the later development of Shelbourne Street, which completes the largest of the town’s triangular blocks.

During the 18th century, Kenmare’s economy developed around local industries including fisheries, quarrying, and a buttery. Conditions in the decades following the Great Famine were difficult, with significant emigration and poverty recorded on the Lansdowne Estate, as detailed in Gerard J. Lyne’s *The Lansdowne Estate in Kerry under W.S. Trench 1849–72*.

The Poor Clare Sisters arrived in 1861 at the invitation of Archdeacon Fr. John O’Sullivan, who had earlier established a lace-making school on Shelbourne Street. The Sisters took over and expanded this industry in 1864, founding the Kenmare Convent Lace School. Kenmare lace soon gained international recognition for its quality and intricate craftsmanship. Its legacy continues to form an important part of the town’s cultural and tourism identity. The Sisters also established a school in 1862, and their educational role continues today, with the original convent building forming part of Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine.

Many of Kenmare’s landmark buildings—including the courthouse, library, schoolhouse, market house and Holy Cross Church—were constructed during the 19th century. Both the Poor Clare convent and Holy Cross Church were designed by the noted architect Charles Hansom, known for his ecclesiastical and collegiate work.

The 19th and early 20th centuries also brought improvements in transport and connectivity. The Kenmare Suspension Bridge, completed in 1841, provided a direct road link between Kenmare and Bantry. The original structure was replaced in the early 1930s by the bridge that stands today. Kenmare railway station opened in 1893 as the terminus of a branch of the Great Southern and Western Railway’s Mallow–Tralee line. Both the branch and station closed in 1960.

The closure of the railway marked a wider economic shift, with Kenmare evolving into the service and tourism-based town that characterises its economy today. The distinctive planned layout, 19th-century architecture, and landscape setting at the head of Kenmare Bay contribute significantly to the historic character and identity of the town



Figure 2.2: 1st Marquess of Lansdowne (William Petty-Fitzmaurice)



Figure 2.3: Image of The Park Hotel, Kenmare



Figure 2.4: Photo of the Nuns who worked on the lace designs at the Convent of the Poor Clares

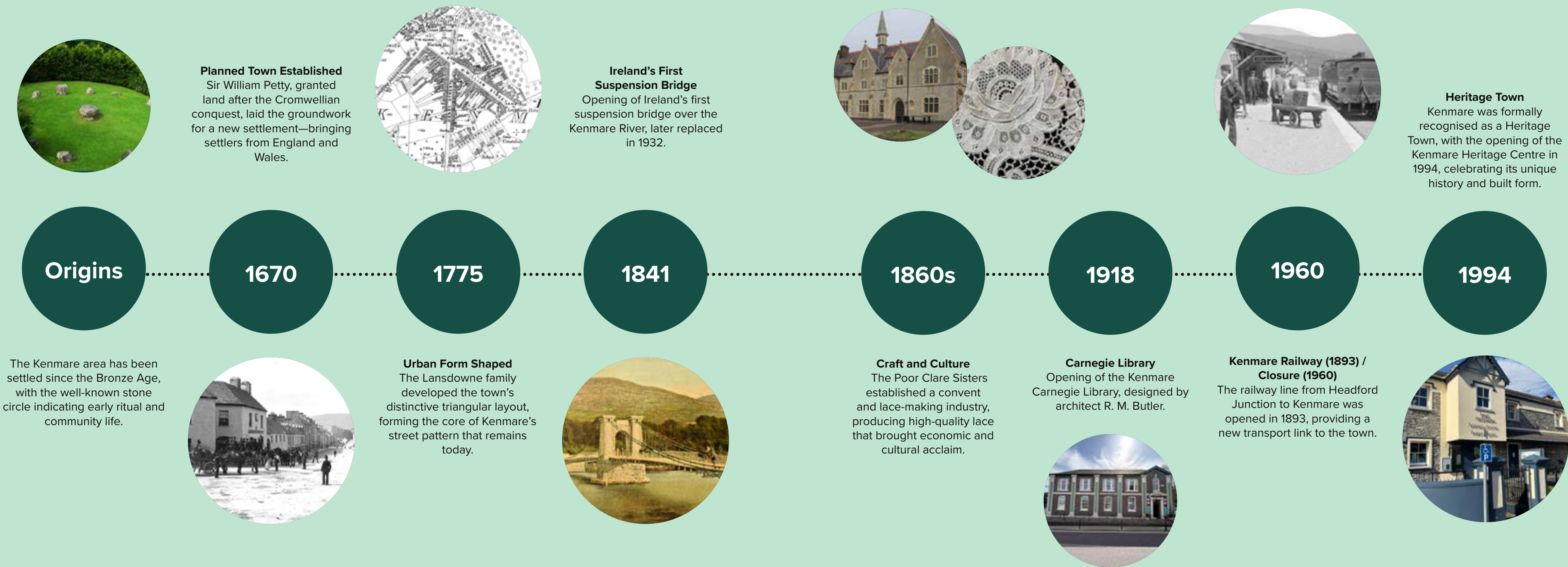


Figure 2.5: Image of Ireland’s first suspension bridge, Kenmare



Figure 2.6: Image of Kenmare during Famine Times

The Story of Kenmare



03

ANALYSIS

3.1 Policy Context

Kenmare Town Centre Masterplan has been developed within the national, regional and local policy context and therefore aligns with these planning policy documents. The key policy documents are set out below. The Plan is an evidence based, non-statutory document and does not form part of public policy. The plan has been developed in collaboration with the Kenmare local community, the Town Team, Elected Representatives and all other stakeholders.

It is intended that the strategy for development and key proposals as set in the Plan, will enable Kerry County Council in collaboration with the Kenmare Town Team, to leverage funding in order to implement the key actions for delivery as set out in Section 5 of the Plan.

The Kenmare Municipal District Local Area Plan 2024-2030 (LAP) has been reviewed as part of this Masterplan to confirm that the masterplan aligns with the objectives set out within the LAP. As part of the background work various reports and studies have also been reviewed to gain a deeper understanding of the town and inform any future proposals.

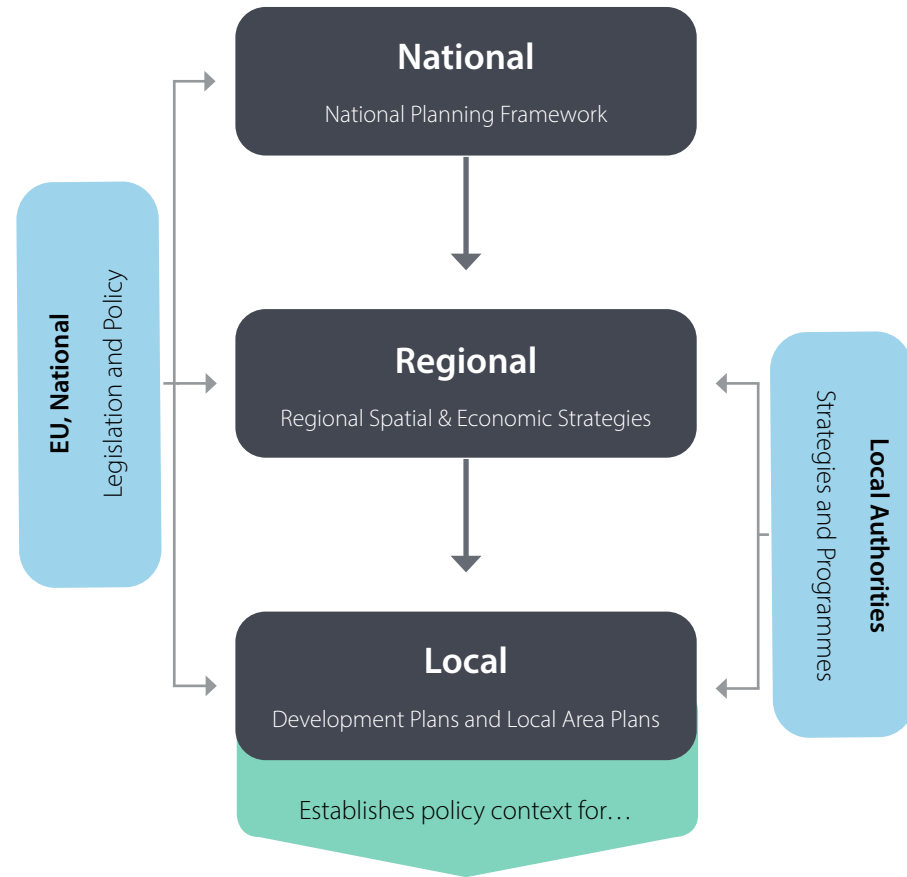
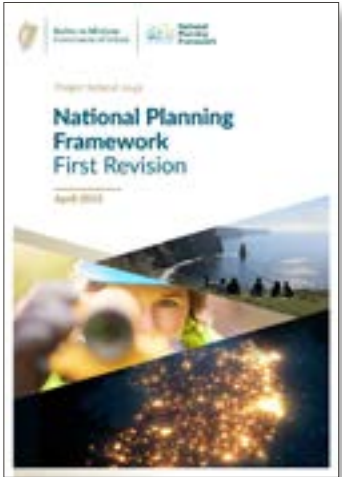


Figure 3.21: Planning Policy Hierarchy in Ireland.

3.1.1 National Planning Framework

The Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework (NPF) First Revision – April 2025 is the Government’s strategic plan to guide public and private investment, while protecting and enhancing Ireland’s environment. It sets out a spatial strategy that prioritises compact growth, revitalised urban centres, sustainable rural development, and resilient communities — all supported by targeted infrastructure, housing, climate action, and regional investment.



These objectives are pursued through ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs), designed to ensure that the benefits of growth and development are shared fairly across the country.

The revised NPF 2025, approved by both Houses of the Oireachtas, replaces the original 2018 version and now directly shapes Government policy, helping accelerate housing delivery and strategic infrastructure investment.

In Kerry, the NPF supports strategic regional development through the Atlantic Economic Corridor, enhancing access and investment across the western seaboard. Kerry Airport plays a key role in supporting connectivity, enterprise, and tourism, underpinning the county’s contribution to balanced national growth and sustainable rural economies. Targeted investment in town centres, local employment, and public transport will help ensure communities remain vibrant, well-connected, and economically resilient.

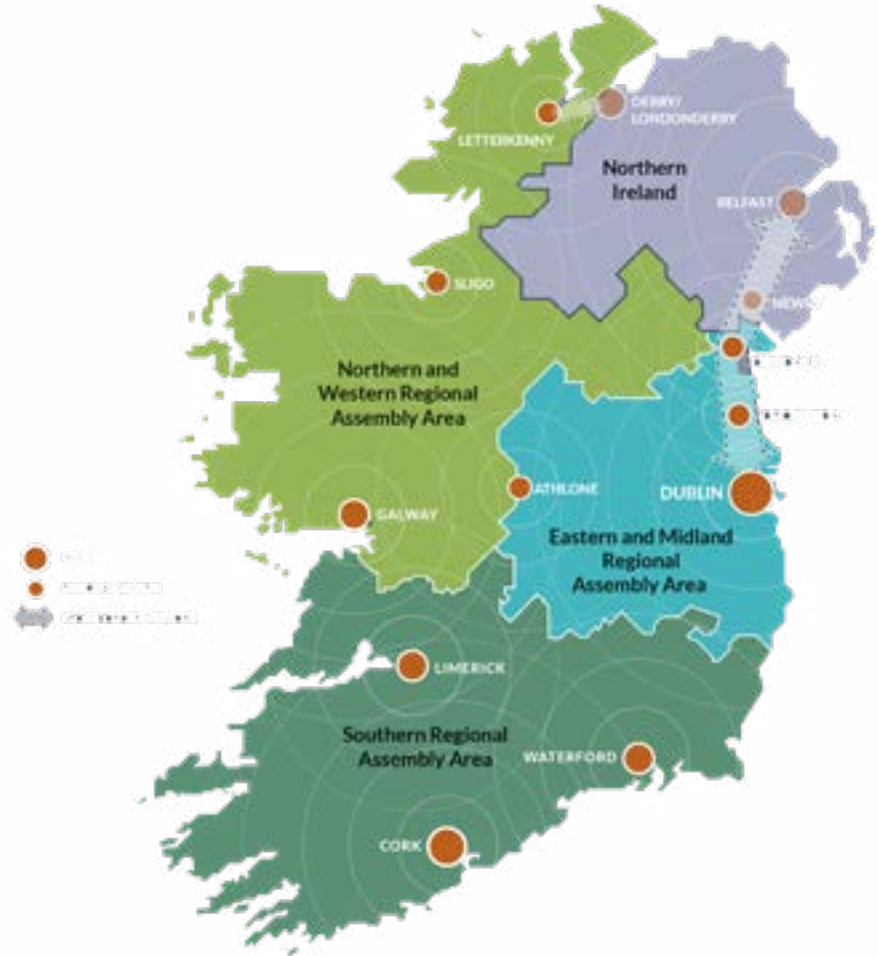


Figure 3.1: Diagram extracted from page 17 of the National Planning Framework, April 2025.

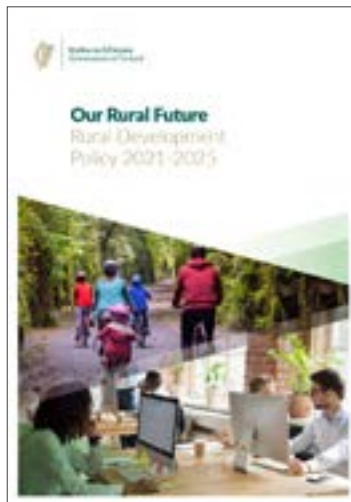
3.1.2 Town Centre First – A Policy Approach for Irish Towns

The Town Centre First policy (2022) complements a wide range of government policies affecting towns and is central to Our Rural Future. Its core aim is to “create town centres that are viable, vibrant and attractive places to live, work and visit, while serving as the social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community.” It empowers towns to shape their own future through a tailored plan and aligns with National Strategic Outcomes including Compact Growth, Strengthened Rural Economies, Sustainable Mobility, Enhanced Amenities, and the Low Carbon Transition.



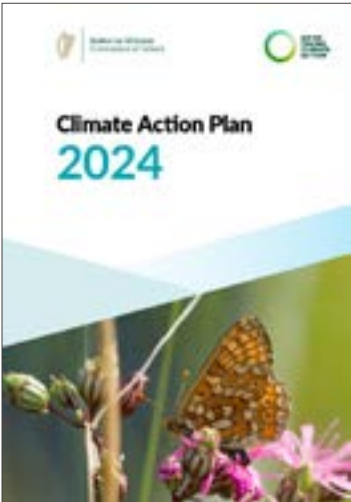
3.1.3 Our Rural Future – Rural Development Policy 2021-2025

Our Rural Future - Rural Development Policy 2021-2025 represents a blueprint for the post-COVID recovery and development of rural Ireland. It contains key commitments that deliver on the government’s aim to support the regeneration, re-population and development of rural towns and villages to contribute to local and national economic recovery, and to enable people to live and work in a high quality environment.



3.1.4 Climate Action Plan 2024

The Climate Action Plan outlines Ireland’s goal of transitioning to a climate-resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable, and climate-neutral economy by 2050. Under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, the State is legally required to achieve this objective by the end of that year. CAP24 supports compact growth and sustainable settlement patterns by promoting mixed-use neighbourhoods with better access to services, amenities, and public transport. CAP21 aligns with town regeneration by supporting retrofitting of housing and business premises, and prioritising brownfield sites to reduce sprawl and enable sustainable, low-carbon development.



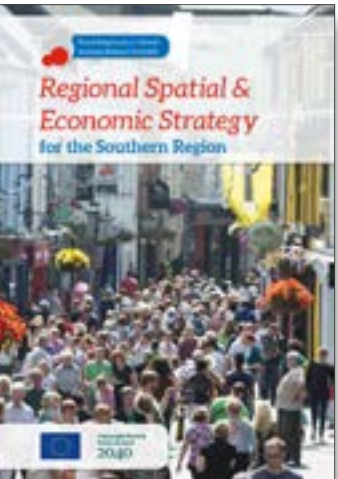
3.1.5 Heritage Ireland 2030

Heritage Ireland 2030 is built around a vision of our heritage being at very centre of discourse, valued by all and cared for and protected for future generations. At the heart of this framework are three themes: communities, leadership and partnerships, reflecting the importance of ongoing collaboration between government and communities, heritage organisations, individuals and local authorities in caring and planning for our shared heritage.



3.1.6 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES) provides a long-term, strategic framework for future physical, economic and social development and seeks to determine at a regional scale how best to achieve National Strategic Outcomes of the NPF and NDP. To this end, the RSES sets out 11 Strategy Statements which are aligned with international, EU and national policy and which in turn set the framework for Development Plans and Local Economic and Community Plans.



Although the RSES does not specifically reference targeted development or investment relating to Kenmare, it acknowledges that:

“There is evidence of significant decline in some smaller towns and villages in the Region. Investment and policy support is urgently needed to bolster and consolidate these vital settlements to arrest the decline and the consequent depletion of the physical fabric and provision of services in these areas”.

Kenmare is highlighted as being a good example of rural innovation in Kerry through the development of the Kenmare Innovation Centre. This highlights the importance of towns like Kenmare being at the heart of innovative rural communities. The RSES states that within the southern region small enterprises employed over 86,000 people, around 24% of the total employed, which is greater than the State share of 19% in this category in 2017.

3.1.7 Kerry County Development Plan 2022-2028

Kerry County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out the policies and objectives that will guide the proper planning and sustainable development within the County over the six year Plan period to 2028 whilst aligning with longer term national and regional objectives.

Kerry County Development Plan seeks to protect and enhance the unique identity and character of the towns and villages within the County as well as improve the quality of life and well-being. In line with the Town Centre First approach, Kerry County Council will follow the principles of compact growth and mixed use development. The Council will also have a particular focus on the following issues:

- Tackling vacancy, dereliction, and underutilisation of properties/land
- Encouraging a balance between employment and population growth
- Reversing the stagnation or decline of many smaller settlements, by identifying and establishing new roles and functions and enhancement of local infrastructure and amenities
- Addressing the legacy of rapid unplanned growth/edge of town growth, by facilitating amenities and services catch-up

Within the County Development Plan's settlement strategy, Kenmare is designated as one of eight regional towns. Regional towns are described as:

“Towns which provide a housing, employment, or service function serving a local region within the county. The category is broad and ranges from large commuter towns to more peripheral towns”.

Many of these regional towns have important connections to key towns which are located within the Key towns and have an important role in Inter-Urban Networks. These towns have been targeted to assist with driving regional development and the wider economic development of the whole



county of Kerry. The network of regional and key towns will create centres of scale with a critical mass of population and employment that will allow them to compete and grow to fulfil their potential, thus encouraging wider economic growth.

The County Development Plan sets out an overarching objective within Chapter 6 – Sustainable Communities that states it is an objective of the Council to:

“Develop and support vibrant sustainable communities in Kerry where people can live, work, and enjoy access to a wide range of community, health, educational facilities, and amenities, suitable to all ages and needs, in both urban and rural areas, thereby supporting and enhanced quality of life for all people.”

Variation No. 1 to the Kerry CDP 2022–2028 provides countywide guidance on rainwater management (S1.4) and climate action and biodiversity (S1.5). Of particular relevance to Kenmare are measures for biodiversity enhancement, including opportunities for swift nesting bricks/boxes and improved ecological connectivity for lesser horseshoe bats, with part of the study area overlapping a potential core sustenance zone identified in the Kenmare River SAC Conservation Objectives.

3.1.8 Kenmare Municipal District Local Area Plan 2024-2030

The Kenmare Municipal District Local Area Plan 2024-2030 was formally adopted by the Elected Members of the Kenmare Municipal District of Kerry County Council on April 12th, 2024, came into effect on May 24th 2024. The purpose of the LAP is to guide future plan led coordinated sustainable and equitable development within the towns and villages of the area.



The Local Area Plan's strategic vision is as follows:

“To develop the area's settlements as a network of attractive, liveable towns and villages with sustainable levels of population, employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity which encourage a high quality of life and well-being and support a sustainable synergy with the rural countryside.”

A development strategy for each settlement appropriate to its size and infrastructure capacity has been developed with adequately zoned lands identified for future development uses. Emphasis is on the growth of the main settlements of Cahersiveen, Kenmare and Killorglin, and to a lesser extent Sneem and Waterville, as the principal locations for future investment in housing, employment, infrastructure, social and community facilities. (Development in Kenmare is subject to the construction of upgraded wastewater treatment facilities).

The long-term vision for Kenmare is to enhance its position as a tourist destination and historic town that is competitive nationally and internationally in attracting investment, talent, enterprise and visitors.

The LAP notes that Kenmare benefits from having a compact and vibrant town centre. *The Plan has a strong focus on strengthening the offering within the town centre in order to deliver the vision for Kenmare. The two town centre objectives state:*

KENMED-KE-1: Sustainably plan for and facilitate the continued regeneration and renewal of the Town Centre's streets, public realm spaces, including squares, parks, nodes, walkways and greenways in order to revitalise it as a prosperous, vibrant, attractive location in which to live, work, learn and visit.

KENMED-KE-2: Facilitate town centre works and implement public realm enhancement works at appropriate locations.

Kenmare Town Centre, as a Regional Town, is the main location for local retail, specialised shopping and services and leisure, such as dining and entertainment.

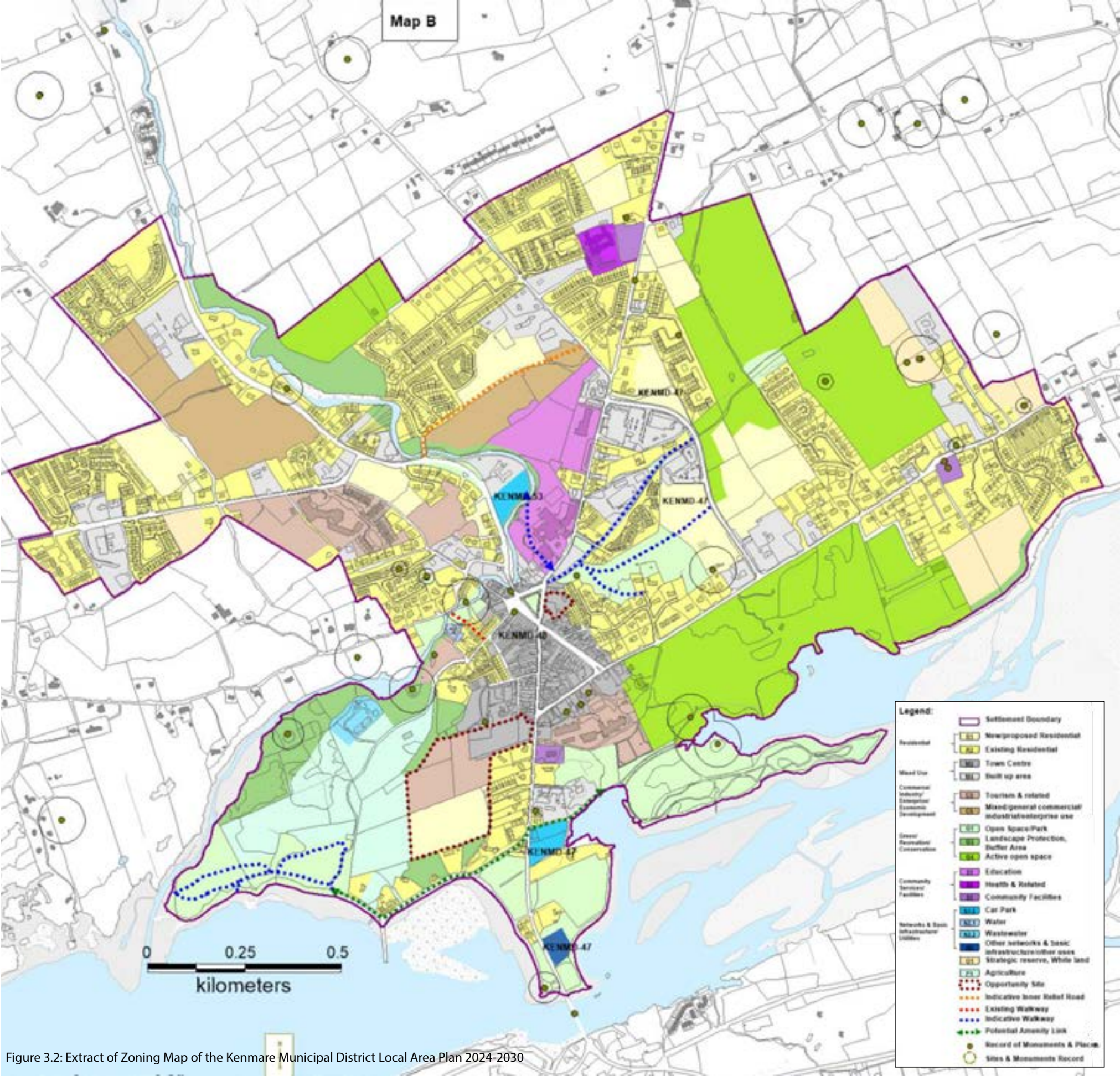


Figure 3.2: Extract of Zoning Map of the Kenmare Municipal District Local Area Plan 2024-2030

3.1.9 Kerry Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

The Kerry Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) is the six-year integrated framework guiding County Kerry’s economic, social, and cultural development. Originally covering 2016–2022, it was crafted by the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and the Economic, Enterprise & Community Strategic Policy Committee, in consultation with key community stakeholders and businesses.

The LECP (2023–2029) was adopted in May 2025, featuring updated priorities aligned with contemporary challenges. These include climate adaptation, digital transformation, support for remote working and SMEs, strengthening of town centres, rural connectivity, and sustainable tourism — all central to Kenmare’s strategic interests .

Key themes emerging from the consultation materials include:

- Urban renewal and vibrant town centres, with targeted actions to revitalise smaller towns such as Kenmare
- Enhanced rural connectivity, underpinned by active travel, digital infrastructure, and access to services.
- Economic diversification, promoting enterprise hubs, artisan and digital skills, and resilience in the local tourism economy.

As a principal service town in South Kerry, Kenmare is well positioned to benefit from the LECP’s objective to support balanced regional growth. The town’s potential for SME development, remote working, sustainable tourism, and community infrastructure aligns strongly with the Plan’s aims. Specific reference is made to supporting towns in response to population decline, service retention, and renewal of public spaces — all of which are key focus areas of the Kenmare Masterplan

3.1.10 West Cork and Kenmare Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP)

DEDPs are five-year strategies collaboratively developed by Fáilte Ireland, the tourism industry, communities and other agencies. Kenmare is currently part of the West Cork and Kenmare DEDP which was launched in 2023 and will be moving to the new South Kerry DEDP with the consultations commencing in 2026 and publication in 2027.

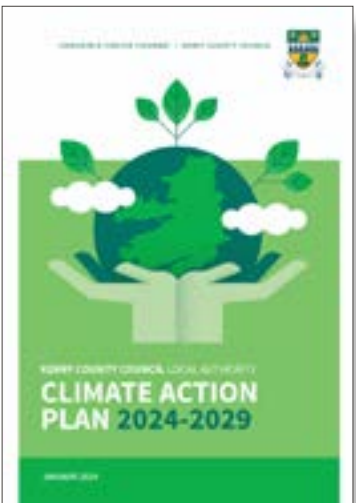
The DEDP will be reflective of the actions in this Masterplan and will support Kenmare to leverage it’s strategic location on the Wild Atlantic Way between the Iveragh and Beara peninsulas. It will help Kenmare to optimise it’s key assets of high quality accommodation, local food provenance, idyllic outdoor adventure setting between the mountains and the sea and, local designers and craftspeople.



3.1.11 Kerry County Council Climate Action Plan 2024–2029

Kerry County Council’s LACAP sets out a five-year strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase energy efficiency, and build climate resilience across the county. The plan targets a 51% reduction in emissions and a 50% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030, in line with national policy.

The plan is structured around five strategic goals:



- Built Environment & Transport – decarbonising buildings and transport networks.
- Natural Environment & Green Infrastructure – enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- Sustainability & Resource Management – promoting the circular economy and resource efficiency.
- Community Resilience & Transition – enabling a just transition through education, engagement, and capacity-building.
- Governance & Leadership – integrating climate action into all Council operations and decision-making.

The plan includes a designated Decarbonising Zone in the Dingle/Corca Dhuibhne Peninsula, serving as a pilot for place-based climate solutions.

The LACAP is evidence-led and was informed by a baseline emissions inventory, climate risk assessment, and extensive stakeholder engagement. Its implementation will be tracked through specific actions and key performance indicators.

3.1.12 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a global framework for achieving sustainable development across social, economic, and environmental dimensions by 2030. Ireland is committed to delivering these goals through national and local policy, and they inform the development of strategies such as the National Planning Framework, RSES, and LECPs.

The Kenmare Masterplan contributes to the achievement of a number of SDGs, including:

- Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being – through enhanced active travel and recreational opportunities.
- Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth – by supporting local

enterprise, tourism, and town centre vitality.

- Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities – through investment in public realm, sustainable mobility, and community infrastructure.
- Goal 13: Climate Action – through active travel networks, green infrastructure, and flood resilience measures.

Through its focus on sustainable development, inclusive placemaking, and climate resilience, the Kenmare Masterplan aligns with Ireland’s wider commitments under the SDGs.



3.2 Socio Economic Analysis

The study area comprises the area as defined in the Kenmare Municipal District Local Area Plan 2024-2030. For the purposes of gathering data from the Central Statistics Office (CSO), the electoral division of Kenmare has been used for the statistics set out below regarding the town of Kenmare.

3.2.1 Population

Kenmare Electoral Division had a population of 3,520 persons as recorded in the 2022 Census. This represents an increase of 393 persons (12.5%) over the intercensal six-year period since the 2016 Census, when the population stood at 3,127. By comparison, the population of County Kerry increased to 156,458 in 2022, representing a 5.9% rise since 2016. Population growth in Kenmare therefore exceeds both the county rate (5.9%) and the national rate (8.2%) over the same period.

In terms of age structure, 24.9% of Kenmare’s population was aged between 0 and 19 years, while those aged 20–34 accounted for 15.2%. The age group 35–64 represents the largest cohort, comprising 41.5% of the population, closely matching the equivalent figure for County Kerry (42%). Persons aged 65 years and older accounted for 18.4% of the population. Overall, the age profile of Kenmare is broadly consistent with that of the wider county.

Single persons accounted for the majority (52%) of all persons living in Kenmare in 2022. Those recorded as married represented 35% of the population. Persons who were identified as either separated or divorced comprised 7% of residents, marginally higher than the county figure of 5%. Within the Kenmare area, widowed persons accounted for 5% of the population, with women forming 76% of that total. Trends in marital status within Kenmare are therefore generally in line with those observed across County Kerry.

3.2.2 Housing

The most common household type recorded for Kenmare was ‘One Person’ households forming 34% of all households within the Kenmare area. This is higher than county level with ‘One Person’ households only forming 28% of the households. The remaining categories were broadly in line with the composition of households within County Kerry. Two and Three/Four Person households formed 26% and 32% of the households within Kenmare.

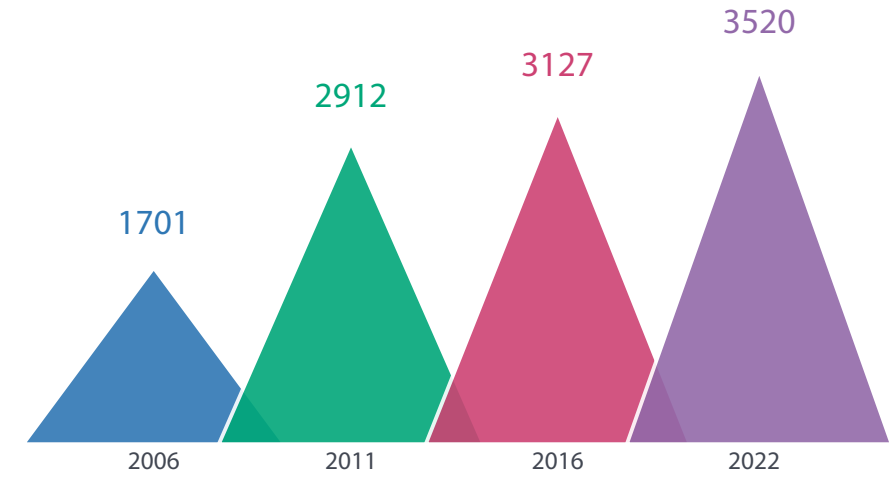
Cumulatively 60% of the households in Kenmare had no more than two persons. Larger households which consisted of 5+ persons only comprised 8% of the population in Kenmare, slightly below 11% found within County Kerry.

The most common household type recorded for Kenmare was ‘Single’ with over one quarter of all households (33%) falling within this category. This is marginally above the county average of 28%. Those in the ‘Married with Child’ category represented the second largest household type with 24%. This is in line with the composition of households within County Kerry albeit at county level ‘Married with Child’ sits at a higher percentage of 28% than Kenmare which is only 24%.

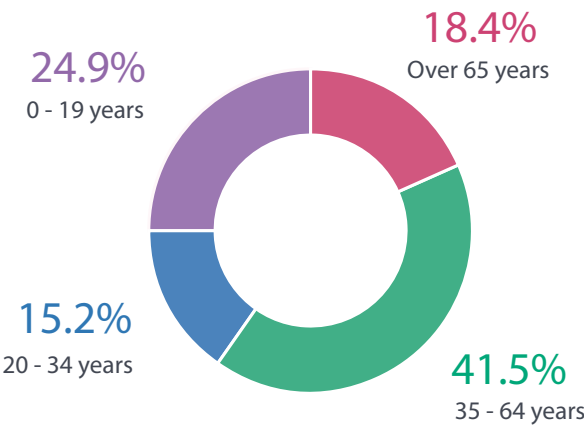
Households within the ‘Cohabiting with children’ and ‘One Parent (Mother) with child’ categories form 6% and 8% of the population of Kenmare. This is in line with county trends of 4% and 8% respectively.

In terms of housing tenure, 17% of private households in Kenmare were ‘Owned with a Mortgage or Loan’. Houses that were ‘Owned Outright’ accounted for 38%. Having regard to rented accommodation, 24% of households were rented from a ‘Private Landlord’ with 12% of Kenmare’s households being ‘Rented from a Local Authority’ and a further 3% rented

Population



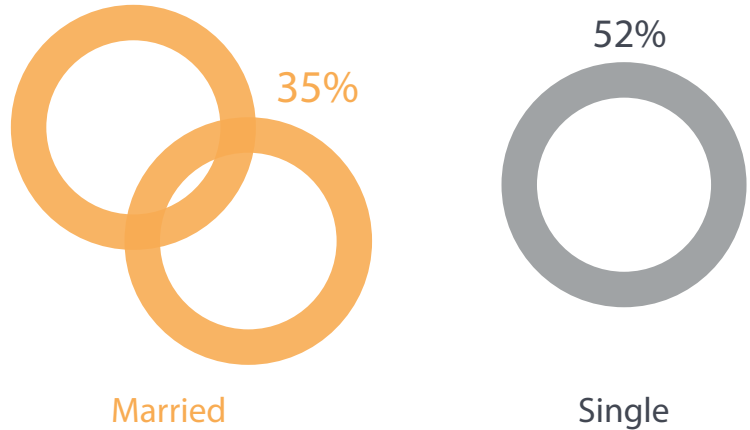
Age Breakdown



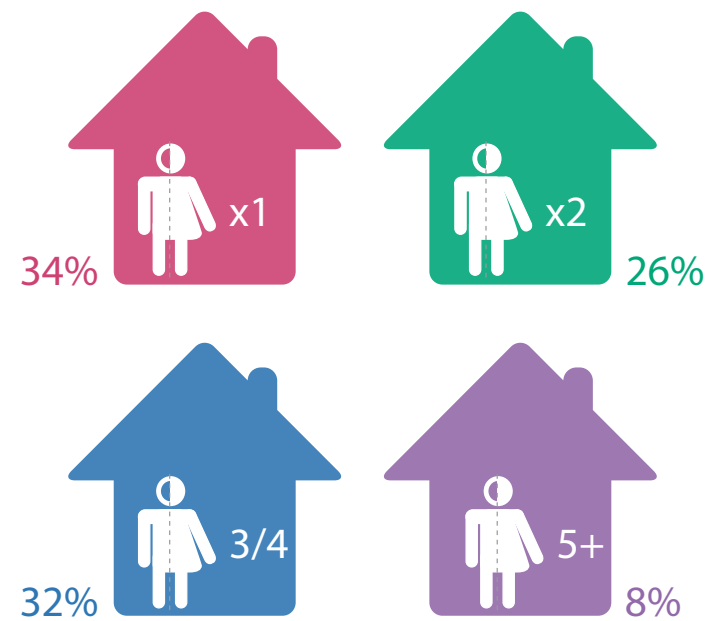
Nationality

Irish	74%
Other European Countries	8%
Poland	5%
United Kingdom	5%
Rest of the World	4%
Not Stated	3%
India	0.7%

Marital Status



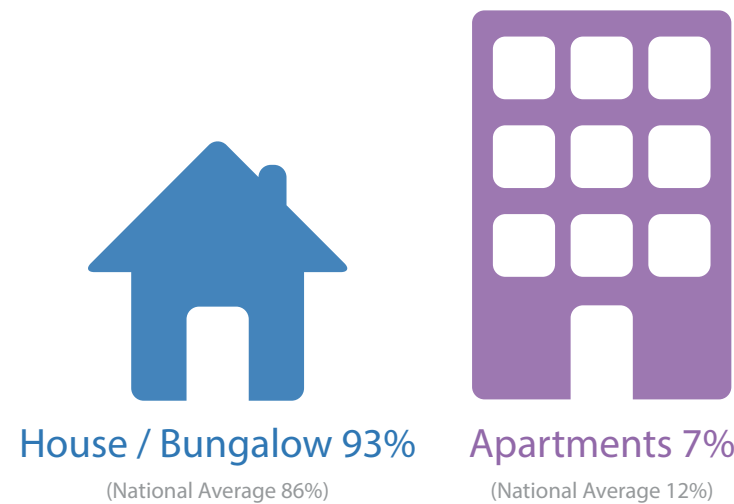
Persons per Household



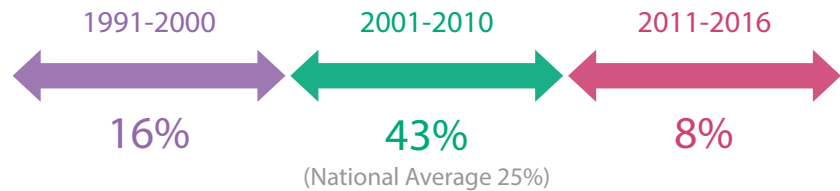
Household Occupation By Type

	Kenmare	Nationally
Mortgage	17%	29%
No Mortgage	38%	37%
Renting	39%	28%
Free Rent / Not Stated	6%	6%

Type of Housing Occupied



Age of Housing Stock



from a voluntary/co-operative housing body. In total, 55% of Kenmare's households had ownership of their property.

In relation to Kenmare's housing stock, 50% of the town's households live in properties that were constructed from the year 2001 onwards. The number of houses constructed post 2011 dropped dramatically to 102. New housing stock is classified as being constructed from the year 1991 onwards, and in that regard 66% of households in Kenmare were living in a property that was considered 'new' stock. Older housing stock built prior to the year 1960 (inclusive of 1960) represented 13% of households.

As recorded by the 2022 Census data, 62% of dwellings in Kenmare were occupied with 1.5% falling into the 'Temporarily Absent' category. 'Other Vacant Dwellings' accounted for 11% of the total housing stock in the town. 'Unoccupied Holiday Homes' represented almost a quarter of the dwellings in Kenmare. This is above the county average for Kerry which had 12% 'Unoccupied Holiday Homes' at the time of the census. The number of 'Unoccupied Holiday Homes' is also well above the state level which was 3% at the time of the census.

The vacancy rate of 11% within Kenmare is in line with the wider county. However the occupancy rate for the town of Kenmare is lower than county level which sits at 76% and state level which is 87%.

3.2.3 Education and Employment

For persons aged 15 years and above, a total of 21% of Kenmare residents had attained an 'Upper Secondary' level of education. In relation to Third Level education, 11% of residents had achieved an 'Ordinary/Bachelor's Degree', with 12% of residents achieving an Honours bachelor degree, professional qualification or both. This category was the second highest following 'Upper Secondary' Level. 10% of the population of Kenmare had achieved a postgraduate degree.

At county level a total of 19% of residents have attained an 'Upper Secondary' level of education, with the second largest group attaining

'Lower Secondary' level of education. 20% of the population within County Kerry had achieved either an 'Honours Bachelors/Professional Qualification' or an 'Ordinary Bachelors/National Diploma'.

For persons aged 15 years and above, 53% of Kenmare's workforce population were recorded as being 'At Work' with 4% being 'Unemployed' both long and short term. 'Students' accounted for 9%. Those persons who have retired amounted to 20%, which is the second largest group. A total of 5% of the town's workforce were unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability. The categories at county level broadly follow those seen within the Kenmare area with 53% of the population recorded as being 'At Work', while 19% of the population are retired. Similar levels of unemployment (both long and short term) were recorded at county level, while 'Students' accounted for 10% of the population.

Residents of Kenmare held a wide range of occupations. The 'Other' category was the highest employer with 32% of the population recording this as their occupation. The second highest category fell under Commerce and Trade at 18%, followed by Professional services. Within the County of Kerry 'Professional Services' was the highest employer at 24% while 'Other' and 'Commerce and Trade' groups were 21%. In both areas 'Transport and Communications' and 'Public Administration' were the lowest employment categories.

It is important to consider the social class of those in employment in Kenmare. 'Non-manual' was the largest group in Kenmare with 39%. The next two largest groups consisted of 'Employers and Managers' and 'All others gainfully occupied and unknown' both with 13%. 'Manual skilled' or 'Semi-Skilled' combined made up 20% of the workforce. The smallest group consisted of 'Agricultural workers' with just 1.2%.

In terms of transport modes used for commuting trips (to work, school and/or college and childcare), the dominant mode in Kenmare was the 'Private Car' (accounting for both car driver and car passenger), which represented a figure of 58% of journeys. The second most popular means of travel was 'On Foot' with 17% of journeys undertaken by this mode. Sustainable modes i.e. cycling, bus, train etc. accounted for 4% of all journeys made. Since the 2016

Census the Covid-19 pandemic has altered commuting patterns with many people working from home some or all of the time. Within Kenmare this accounts for 8% of residents.

At state level the dominant mode was also car (driver and passenger) at 58%, followed by 15% for cycling, bus, train etc. and ‘On Foot’ at 14% of journeys undertaken. As a rural county Kerry had similar levels of statistics for transport modes uses to commute to work, school, college and childcare. Overall the use of cars still dominates as the most common mode of transport.

For commuting journeys undertaken to work, school/college, over half (57%) of journeys were under 15 minutes, while 13% of trips had a duration of between 15 to 30 minutes. A small percentage (6%) had a journey of one hour and more. In terms of car ownership, over three quarters (80%) of all households in Kenmare had ownership of up to 2 cars with 13% of households having no access to a car.

The vacancy rate of 11% within Kenmare is in line with the wider county. However the occupancy rate for the town of Kenmare is lower than county level which sits at 76% and state level which is 87%.

3.2.4 Infrastructure and Economic Assets

Kenmare is one of Ireland’s earliest planned towns, designed around two main streets: Henry Street and William Street (now Main Street), forming a cross layout. This has evolved into two triangular forms framed by Shelbourne Street (south) and Park Place (north), around which most services and businesses are located. The N71 national route runs through the town, linking Kenmare to Killarney via Moll’s Gap and to Bantry, Skibbereen, Clonakilty, and Cork City. The R569 connects Kenmare to the N22 route between Killarney and Cork City. The N70 runs to the west.

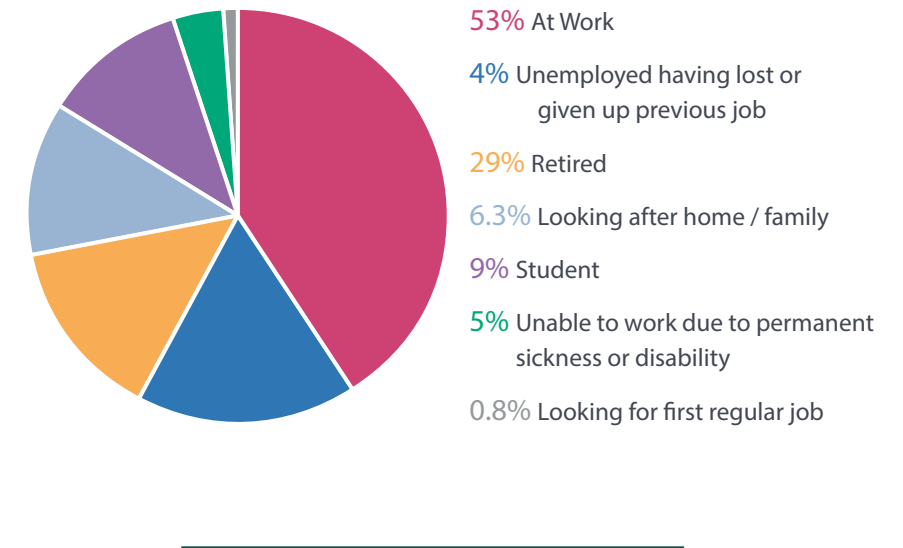
Kenmare is approximately 32km south of Killarney via the N71, or 42km via Kilgarvan and the N22/R569. Around 80% of households in Kenmare have broadband internet access.

The retail core is centred on Main Street, Henry Street, Shelbourne Street and The Square. North of the town are Kilmurry Business and Technology Park and Gortamullen Business Park. Kilmurry hosts businesses including an e-commerce company, a software firm, and the Kenmare Co-Working Hub. Gortamullen includes agricultural services such as Kerry Co-op Mart and Kenmare Veterinary, along with retail businesses like Topline and TyreStop. Kenmare Business Park, on the town’s edge, includes a gym, fire station, cash and carry, and another veterinary practice.

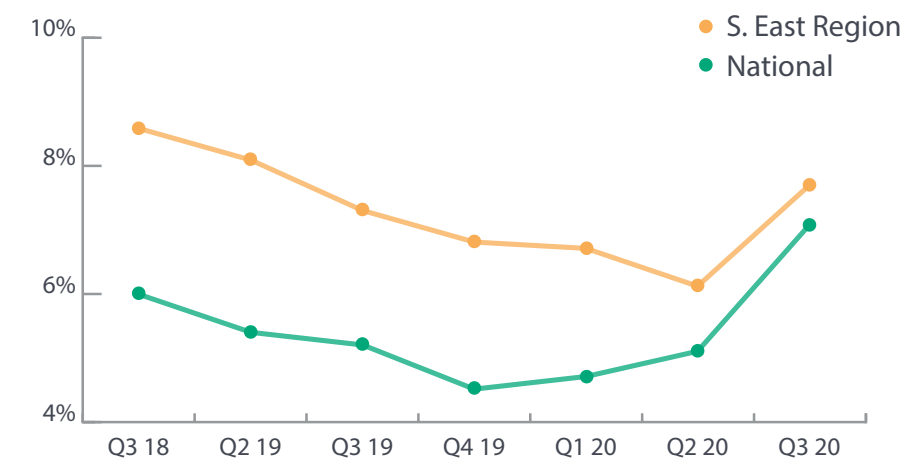
Major retailers Lidl, Aldi and SuperValu are clustered along Pat Scarteen Road on the northeastern edge at Kenmare Shopping Centre, alongside Centra and Daybreak outlets.

Accommodation includes hotels such as the Kenmare Bay Hotel, The Park Hotel, The Lansdowne, and the Sheen Falls Lodge. Numerous smaller hotels and guesthouses are located both centrally and on the town’s outskirts.

Principal Economic Status



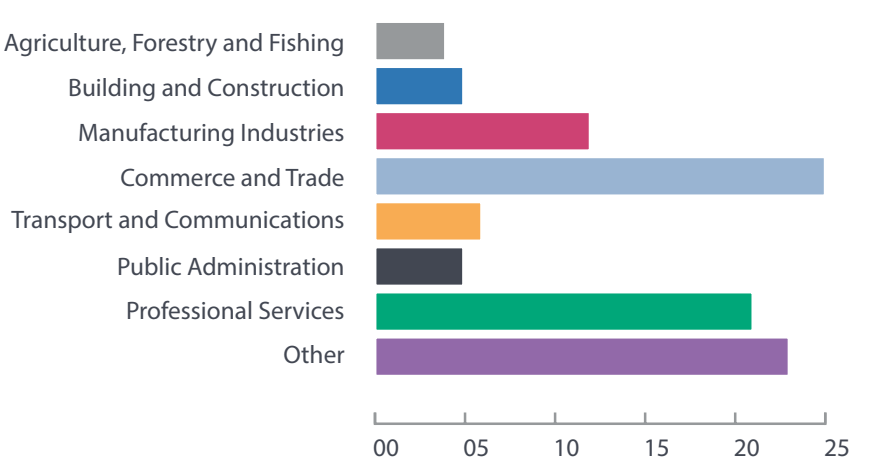
Level of Unemployment



Persons by Socio-Economic Group of Reference

	Kenmare	National
Non-Manual	39%	18%
Manual Skilled	7.2%	9%
Employers and Managers	13%	16%
Semi-skilled	6%	8%
Lower Professionals	4.5%	12%
Unskilled	4.5%	4%
Own Account Workers	5%	5%
Higher Professionals	2%	7%
Farmers	3%	5%
Agricultural Workers	1.2%	1%
Other / Unknown	13%	15%

Persons at Work by Industry



3.3 Physical and Environmental Context

3.3.1 Setting and Landscape Context

Kenmare occupies a striking geographic position at the head of the Kenmare River estuary, enclosed by the rugged Caha Mountains to the south and the towering MacGillycuddy's Reeks to the north. This dramatic 'basket' of mountains and water gives the town a strong sense of identity, enclosure, and visual drama, distinguishing it within both the Kerry landscape and the broader Wild Atlantic Way.

The town's physical form and experience are deeply shaped by its topography. The tidal estuary, Roughty River, and undulating hillsides define Kenmare's edges and approaches, providing spectacular views while simultaneously limiting outward expansion. The landform contributes to a distinctive sense of arrival, with scenic routes such as the N71 and R569 offering layered glimpses of estuary, woodland, and distant peaks.

Kenmare sits at the meeting point of coastal, riverine, and upland landscapes. Its character is defined by native woodlands, granite outcrops, salt marshes, and managed farmland, elements that contribute to a richly varied landscape setting. The surrounding area supports a wide range of habitats including estuarine mudflats, mature oak woodland, and freshwater corridors, many of which are recognised under Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Natural Heritage Area (NHA) designations, highlighting the town's importance in regional biodiversity networks.

This natural setting is also a cultural landscape, one that has shaped, and been shaped by, centuries of human activity. The dramatic terrain and coastal location informed the town's original planned layout and its historical functions in fishing, farming, trade, and tourism. Ancient routeways, stone circles, and field boundaries still evident in the landscape provide a direct connection between Kenmare's natural setting and its long

heritage of settlement and seasonal movement.

Today, this environmental and cultural richness continues to define the town's character, offering both constraints and opportunities for future growth that respects and enhances Kenmare's landscape legacy.



3.3.2 Urban Form

Kenmare is a planned estate town designed in the late 18th century by the Lansdowne Estate. Its urban structure is defined by a distinctive triangular street pattern formed by Main Street, Henry Street and Shelbourne Street. This layout remains the organising framework of the town centre and is one of Kenmare’s most recognisable characteristics.

The town centre is compact and highly walkable, with strong building lines, predominantly two-storey buildings, and continuous street frontages that create a clear urban edge. The Town Square (Fair Green) forms the main civic space, supported by a small number of incidental public areas at key junctions. Reenagross Park and Peninsula Park to the south provide significant natural amenity close to the historic core.

Kenmare’s historic centre has a fine urban grain, with narrow plots fronting the main streets and long plot depths extending to backland areas. This plot pattern is still evident along Main Street and Henry Street and contributes to the town’s compact character. Internal block areas, particularly to the rear of Henry Street, remain a mix of developed and underused land.

Much of the core of Kenmare was constructed in the 18th and 19th centuries. Main Street and the Fair Green date from this period, with development extending southwards along Henry Street. Market Street (Pound Street) also forms part of the early phase of urban development.

During the mid-19th century, additional development emerged beyond the original urban core, including clusters around the convent, the railway station and the Union Workhouse. These remained physically separate until later in the 20th century, when the expanding town integrated these areas.

In modern times, development within the historic core has included infill and backland schemes, particularly in the area including Parnell Place, Davitt’s Place and the Bakery Mews to the rear of Henry Street.

More recent growth has extended the town northwards along Railway Road and eastwards along the Pat Scarteen Road/bypass corridor. The construction of Kenmare Shopping Centre in the early 2000s introduced a secondary retail node, although it functions as ancillary to the traditional commercial core. Contemporary development continues to be concentrated to the north, east and west of the town.

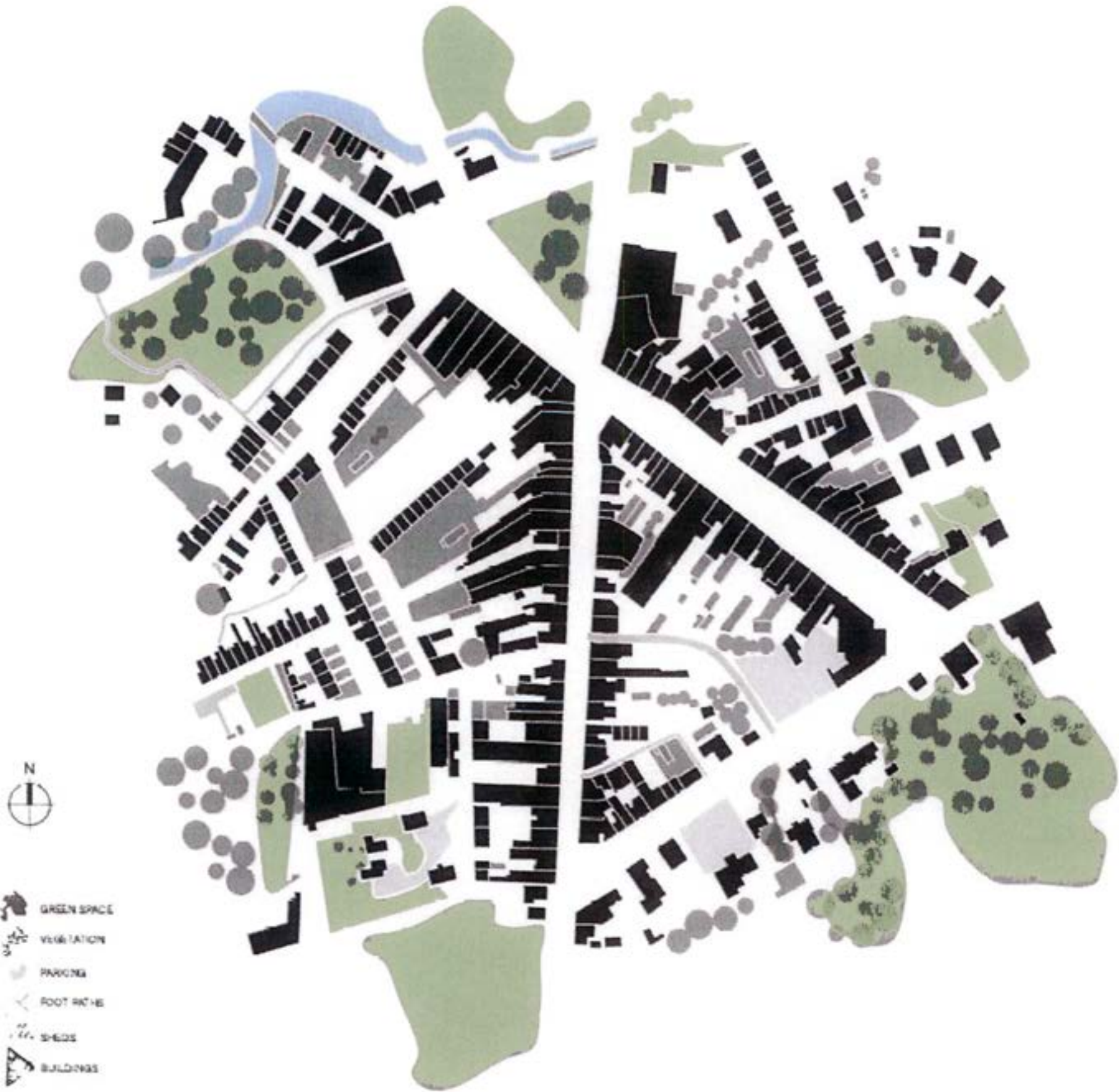


Figure 3.3: Urban Form (Source: Student Work, University College Cork.)

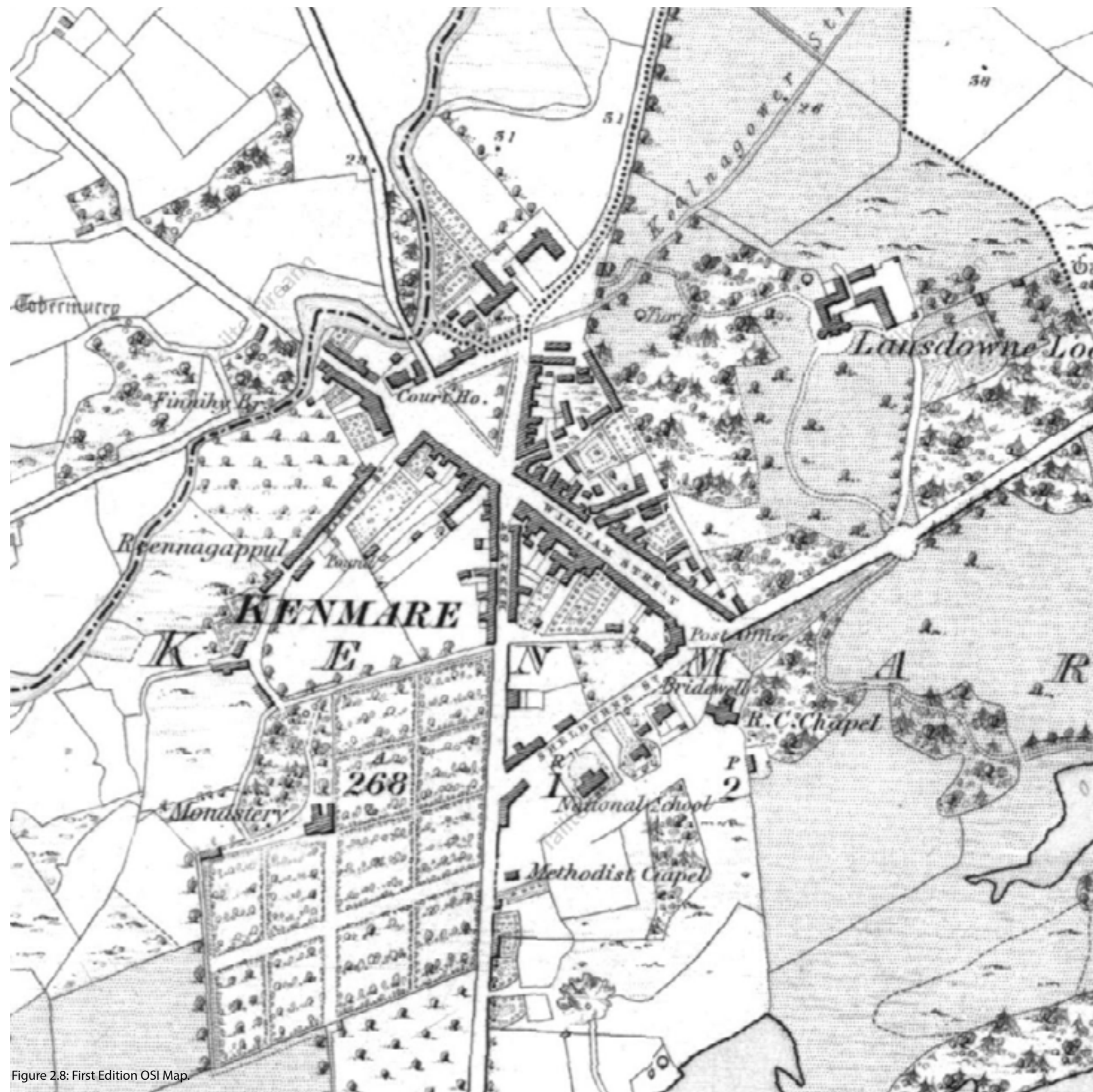


Figure 2.8: First Edition OSI Map.

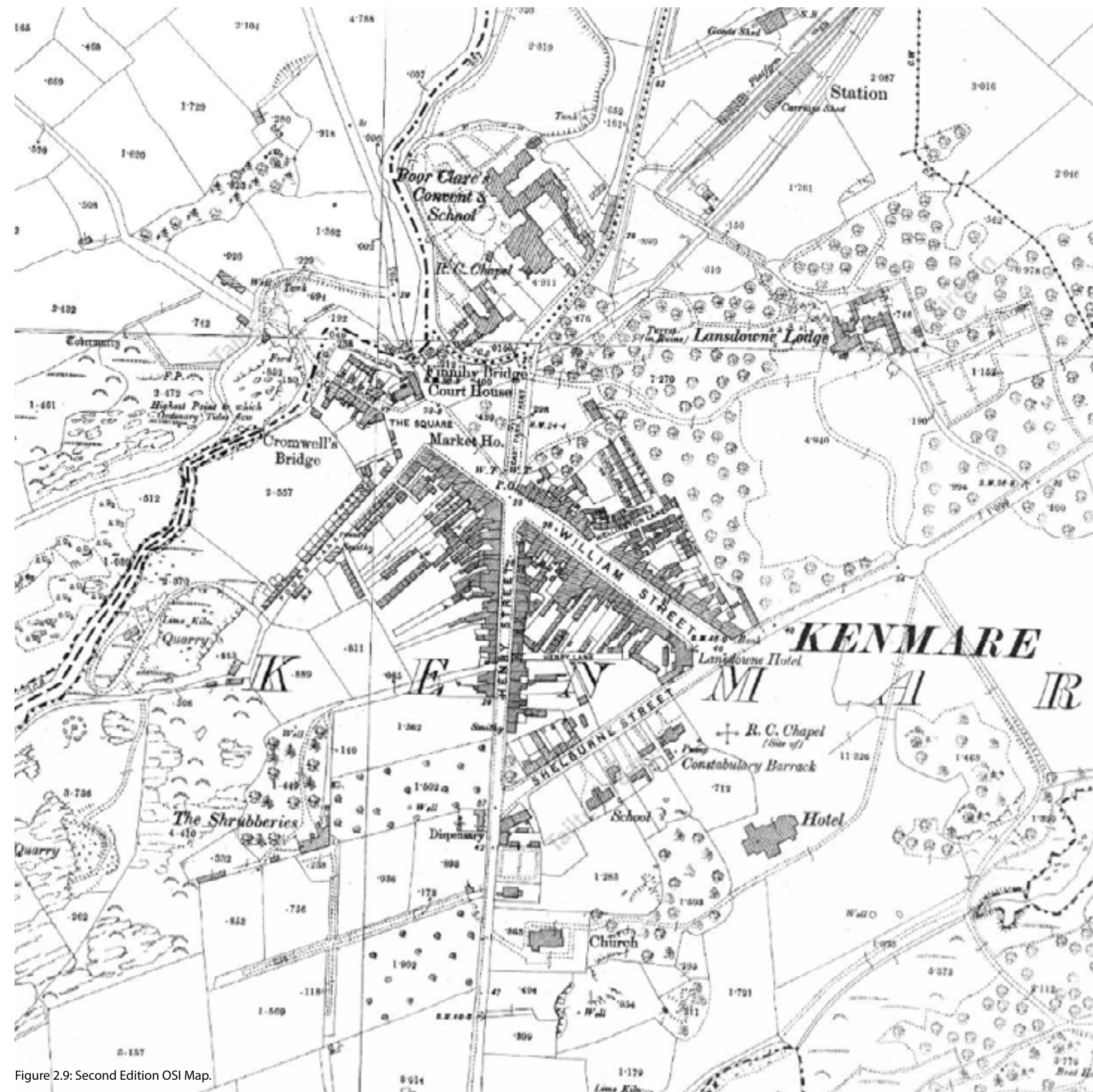


Figure 2.9: Second Edition OSI Map.

3.3.3 Heritage

Kenmare is designated as a Heritage Town by Fáilte Ireland in recognition of its planned urban form, architectural quality and concentration of historic buildings. Its historic core is protected through an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) covering Main Street, Henry Street, Shelbourne Street, Market Square, Market Street and Old Bridge Street, reflecting the cohesive character and value of the town centre.

The ACA is defined by strong building lines, consistent two-storey terraces, traditional shopfronts and a varied roofscape that together create a harmonious streetscape. Many buildings date from the 18th and 19th centuries and retain original features including natural slate roofs, sash windows, chimneystacks and painted render façades. This continuity contributes significantly to Kenmare's identity.

Fifty-seven Protected Structures are recorded for the town, spanning civic, religious and commercial buildings, historic bridges, schools, former industrial uses and structures associated with the Lansdowne Estate. Notable examples include Holy Cross Church, the Poor Clare Convent, the former Market House, the Carnegie Library, the former National School and the Lansdowne Arms Hotel. These buildings form key landmarks and illustrate the evolution of the town.

Kenmare's heritage also encompasses important infrastructural and archaeological features. Cromwell's Bridge, an iconic stone arch over the River Finnihy, and the early 20th-century replacement of the 1841 Suspension Bridge reflect the town's long-standing river crossings. The former railway station and goods yard represent Kenmare's industrial heritage. Archaeological sites such as the Neolithic Kenmare Stone Circle highlight the long history of settlement in the valley.

The town's natural setting is likewise central to its heritage. Situated at the head of Kenmare Bay where the Rivers Roughty and Finnihy meet, the town enjoys notable views to the Caha and Dunkerron Mountains. Lands west of the town are designated as a Visually Sensitive Area, emphasising the importance of conserving this wider landscape setting.

Kenmare Lace forms a distinctive and celebrated part of the town's cultural heritage. Developed by the Poor Clare Sisters in the 19th century, the intricate needlepoint and lace applique techniques became internationally renowned, with pieces exhibited and sold across Europe and North America. The tradition remains an important expression of Kenmare's craft heritage, reflected in surviving examples, community collections and the ongoing interest in preserving and interpreting the craft for future generations.

Together, these architectural, archaeological, cultural and landscape elements give Kenmare a rich and layered heritage character, underscoring the importance of sensitive management of change within the ACA and the wider town.



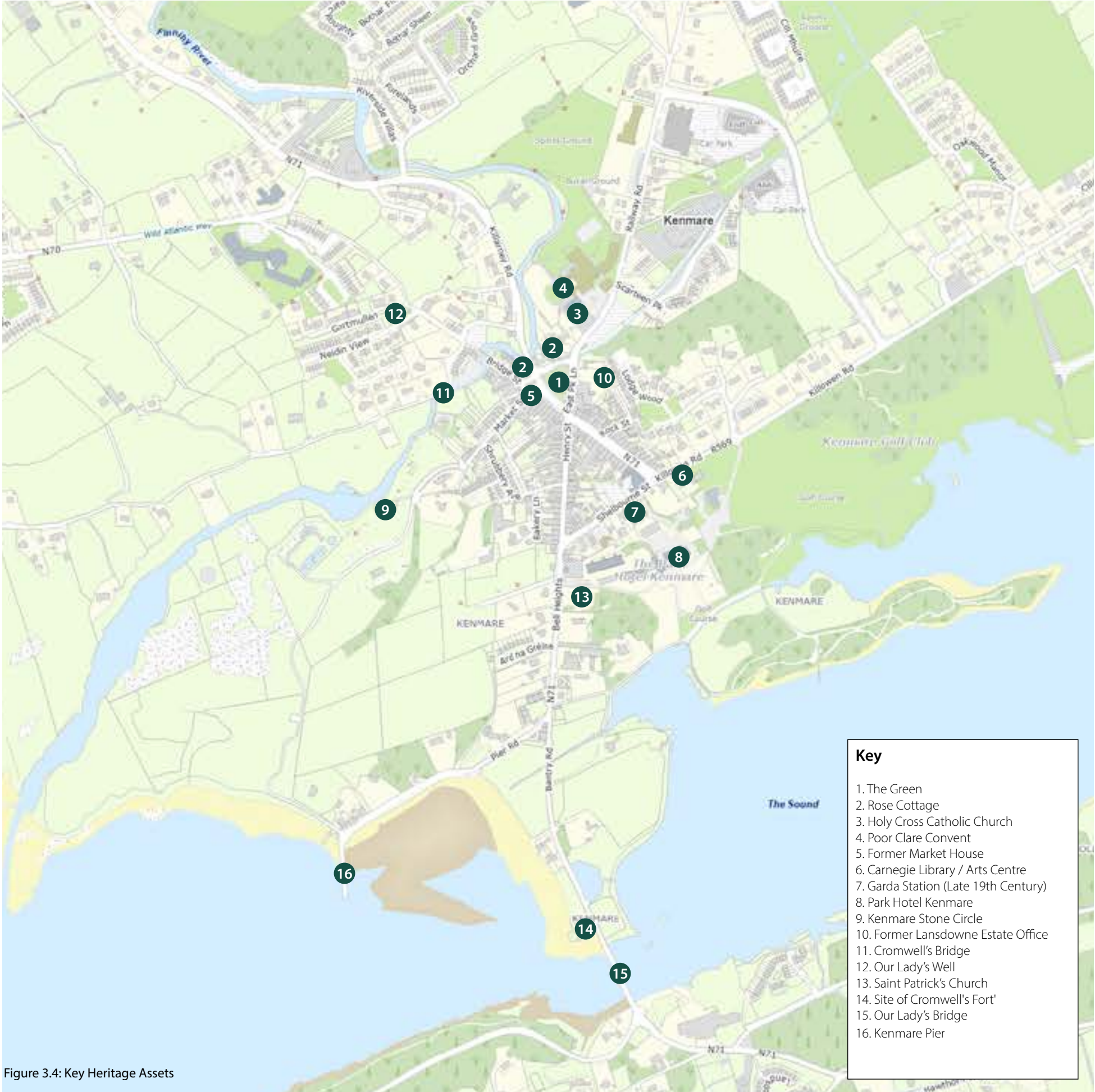


Figure 3.4: Key Heritage Assets



3.3.4 Town Character and Materiality

Kenmare is a town of distinctive charm, shaped by its historic planned form and the quality of its architecture. Despite more recent development at the edges, the town centre has retained a strong and recognisable character that remains closely tied to its 18th- and 19th-century origins.

The meeting point of Main Street, Henry Street and Shelbourne Street forms the heart of the town, creating a memorable 'X'-shaped layout. The triangular Fair Green, laid out in the late 18th century, continues to function as an important civic space and weekly market area, giving life and activity to the town centre.

Two- and three-storey buildings line the main streets, creating a coherent and comfortable scale throughout the core. Many buildings sit proudly on the street edge with narrow frontages, giving rhythm and variety to the streetscape. Paintwork, shopfronts and signage contribute greatly to the town's personality: Henry Street is known for its varied and vibrant colours, while Main Street presents a calmer palette with occasional brighter tones.

Materiality is central to Kenmare's identity. Local sandstone and natural slate appear throughout the town, giving texture, weight and a muted, earthy colour base. Traditional rendered facades, often in vibrant colours and pastels, sit comfortably alongside unrendered stone buildings, which add visual richness and a sense of the town's older layers. Many buildings retain original timber sash windows, fine joinery and decorative shopfront details that together reinforce the town's historic character.

Subtle architectural features such as string courses, painted fascias, stone quoins and simple parapet lines add depth without overwhelming the overall streetscape. The use of natural materials and traditional proportions

ensures that even modest buildings contribute positively to the wider townscape.

Newer development has largely occurred beyond the historic core, helping protect the coherence of the town centre and ensuring that its distinctive character remains legible. The combination of planned layout, consistent building scale and rich material palette gives Kenmare a timeless quality that continues to define its sense of place.



3.3.5 Movement

Kenmare’s movement network is shaped by the convergence of the N70 and N71, which bring regional traffic directly through the town centre. The N71 functions as the principal route, with two compact roundabouts at Main Street/Shelbourne Street and Henry Street/Shelbourne Street regulating movement within the core. Traffic volumes include a mix of local vehicles, heavy goods vehicles, agricultural traffic, buses and tourist coaches, resulting in a busy central environment at peak times.

Main Street operates as a one-way system, with herringbone parking on both sides, creating a narrow carriageway and regular turning movements. On-street parking also occurs along Henry Street, Shelbourne Street and around the Fair Green. Three public car parks—Railway Road, the former Market Place and Springwell Cottages—provide additional capacity, supported by private car parks at the Shopping Centre and Aldi on the edge of town. Competition between short-stay and long-stay users is a notable pressure in the town centre.

Formal footpaths line the majority of streets within Kenmare, providing good basic pedestrian coverage, and most residential areas are linked to the town centre via conventional footpath networks. However, the interface between vehicles and pedestrians is constrained in places, particularly at key junctions and along the primary streets where footpaths narrow or are obstructed by street furniture.

The County Development Plan (2022–2028) identifies several strategic road projects relevant to the wider area, including improvements to the N70, the N71 (Tunnels route) and the Kenmare Relief Road (Phase 2). These projects aim to improve regional connectivity and reduce pressure on the town’s central streets in the long term.

3.3.6 Pedestrian and Cycle Links

Kenmare has limited dedicated cycling infrastructure, with cyclists sharing the carriageway throughout the town centre. The posted 50 km/h speed limit and constrained street widths create a challenging environment for less confident cyclists. Short-stay bicycle parking is provided at the Fair Green near Bank of Ireland, but townwide coverage is limited.

Pedestrian crossings are provided at three key locations:

- a zebra crossing at Quill’s Corner;
- a signal-controlled crossing at the north end of Henry Street; and
- a signal-controlled crossing on Railway Road near St. John’s School and the Shopping Centre.

While these provide important points of safe crossing, their spacing and visibility do not yet create a fully connected or legible pedestrian network, particularly for vulnerable users.

There are currently no formal pedestrian or cycle paths linking Kenmare to its wider rural hinterland, including connections to Kilgarvan or other nearby settlements. Within the town, informal walking routes exist through Reenagross Park and the Peninsula lands, but these are not yet connected into a coherent network of signed or accessible looped walks.

Overall, while Kenmare benefits from a compact and walkable layout, the town lacks a coordinated active travel network. Opportunities exist to improve crossings, widen footpaths, enhance lighting and develop a programme of townwide walking and cycling connections that build on existing assets and strengthen sustainable mobility.



Figure 3.5: Key Approach Routes

3.3.7 Car Parking Survey

A car parking survey was undertaken in Kenmare in mid October 2024 by undergraduate and Masters Students from the Architecture programme (jointly offered by Munster Technological University (MTU) and University College Cork (UCC)). The results of this survey are illustrated in the following diagrams, which were prepared by the students.

The findings indicate that car parking within the town is well utilised throughout the day, with consistently high levels of occupancy recorded across the main streets and public car parks. This highlights both the strong demand for parking in the town centre and the limited capacity to accommodate additional vehicles at peak times.

The survey results provide a valuable evidence base for future planning and management of parking in Kenmare, ensuring that measures to support sustainable transport, ease congestion, and improve the visitor experience are informed by up-to-date local data.



3.3.8 Accessibility

An accessibility audit of Kenmare’s town centre was carried out in 2023, focusing on how the public realm functions for older people, those with dementia, and people with cognitive, sensory and physical impairments. The audit highlighted that while the town benefits from a compact layout and generally good footpath provision, there are a number of barriers to inclusive use. Outdoor dining, merchandise displays and poorly managed parking often obstruct pedestrian routes, while damaged kerbs, ponding and inconsistent surface treatments can reduce safety and confidence for users. Public seating is limited and often not designed to support those who need backrests or armrests, while accessible toilets are scarce, outdated, and poorly located, with no central facility or “Changing Places” provision. Parking is under high demand, with accessible bays not always meeting recommended standards, and on-street spaces regularly oversubscribed. Crossing points are limited and often obscured by parked vehicles, creating difficulties for safe pedestrian movement. Signage and wayfinding are inconsistent, and bus stops lack shelters, seating, lighting and clear timetable information, reducing accessibility to public transport.

Overall, the audit found that Kenmare’s public realm is functional but requires targeted investment to make it more inclusive and age-friendly. Priority actions include better management of footpaths, improved toilet and seating provision, enhanced accessible and age-friendly parking, upgraded bus stops, and improvements to Fair Green Park and other amenity spaces. These measures would not only benefit people with additional needs but also enhance the overall accessibility, safety and attractiveness of the town for residents and visitors alike.

3.3.9 Tourism

Tourism plays a central role in the economic and social life of Kenmare. The town is widely recognised as a key destination on the Ring of Kerry and Ring of Beara touring routes, attracting visitors from Ireland and abroad. Its location, natural setting between the MacGillycuddy’s Reeks, the Beara Peninsula and Kenmare Bay, together with its distinctive streetscape and vibrant cultural offering, make it a focal point for visitors exploring the wider region.

Kenmare benefits from a strong base of hotels, guesthouses, restaurants and artisan shops, as well as a calendar of festivals and events that animate the town throughout the year. These include the Kenmare Food Carnival, Design Kenmare, the Kenmare Halloween Howl, and cycling events associated with the Beara Cycle and wider endurance and touring routes. Regular music sessions, craft fairs and seasonal celebrations also contribute to a lively cultural backdrop that supports the visitor experience and strengthens the town’s reputation as a vibrant destination.

The town centre thrives on the activity generated by visitors, with tourism supporting a wide range of local businesses and employment. Festivals, in particular, bring significant footfall to the streets and public spaces, reinforcing the importance of a high-quality, accessible and welcoming town centre environment.

As such, tourism is not only a driver of the local economy but also central to the identity and character of Kenmare. The Masterplan recognises the importance of sustaining and enhancing this role by ensuring that the town remains an attractive, welcoming and accessible destination for future generations of residents and visitors alike.



3.3.10 Land Use & Vacancy

Students from the BSc (Honours) Degree in Architecture and the Master of Architecture (MArch) programme (jointly offered by Munster Technological University (MTU) and University College Cork (UCC) through the Cork Centre for Architectural Education) carried out a two-day mapping exercise in Kenmare in mid October 2024.

The survey showed that Kenmare’s core is primarily retail and hospitality at ground floor level, with residential use above, mostly guesthouses and short-term lets. The retail and commercial activity remains concentrated on Henry Street and Main Street. Traditional ‘living above the shop’ has largely declined, with residential use now more common on side streets.

Main Street features a mix of retail, health, beauty, and galleries, while Henry Street is focused on retail and hospitality, creating a vibrant daytime and evening economy.

The survey concentrated on the three main streets. However, there are additional hubs at Pat Scarteen Road (Kenmare Shopping Centre, Lidl, Aldi), and Railway Road (secondary school, primary school, family resource centre). Industrial and business parks are located on the town’s outskirts.

Kerry County Council has confirmed that the current vacancy rate in Kenmare is approximately 11%. The majority of vacant properties are mixed-use buildings, typically with commercial ground floor uses and residential accommodation above. A notable proportion of these are large floor-area properties. It is also observed that a significant number of buildings are tourism-oriented businesses, and as such, vacancy levels are likely to be somewhat higher during the off-peak, non-tourist season

3.3.11 Digital Town Blueprint

A Digital Town Blueprint (DTB) Audit was conducted by Dublin City University (DCU) as part of the Town Centre First initiative to understand the current digital readiness of Kenmare. The Town Centre First policy recognises that successful places utilise digital technology to enhance the experience of living and working in towns, enabling greater choices in terms of location and lifestyle, and integrate digital technology into daily commercial and social life. Digital technology can improve the quality and accessibility of services, and can be used to address challenges faced by our towns, providing them with new roles in the digital economy.

The Digital Town Blueprint was designed to help towns:

- Understand their current digital town readiness and digital competitiveness;
- Compare their town against Irish and international benchmarks;
- Stimulate stakeholder engagement on digitalisation.

Each ‘Town Centre First’ town was assessed against key criteria, including infrastructure for connectivity, digital business, digital public services, digital education, digital civil society, and digital tourism.

In 2021, Kenmare was selected as part of the .IE Digital Town Programme, which supports towns across Ireland in embracing digital transformation. Kenmare, along with other towns, received funding and strategic support to develop a Digital Town Blueprint aimed at enhancing its digital infrastructure, supporting local businesses, and improving community engagement through technology.

In February 2025, DCU in collaboration with Kerry County Council designed and delivered a vision workshop with the Kenmare Town Team. This workshop and the subsequent report were carried out as part of the Town Centre First programme to gather further insight into the local community and also to provide a collective vision and guidance for the Town Team to take forward during the process.

The primary goal of the workshop was to gather local insights through participatory activities that would guide the development of the town team as a group.

As a result of the exercises carried out as part of the workshop, the core vision of an economically sustainable town that retains and enhances the existing character of Kenmare was brought into focus.

The Town Team envisioned a vibrant town centre which is commercially diverse and attractive to both visitors and locals all year round. It was recognised that tourism would remain as a cornerstone of the economy within Kenmare. However, it must be supplemented by alternative economies to ensure that the town does not become seasonal and there are multiple economic opportunities within the town.



3.3.12 Community and Sports Facilities

Sport, recreation and community life play a central role in Kenmare, with a wide range of facilities and organisations serving both the town and its wider rural catchment. The town is home to multiple long-established sports clubs, voluntary groups, youth organisations and cultural bodies, supported by high-quality facilities and an active community network. Alongside GAA, soccer, rowing, diving, athletics and golf, Kenmare also has an active basketball club and a growing number of fitness, wellness and outdoor pursuit groups, reflecting the community’s diverse interests.

Kenmare GAA Club, established in 1888, is one of Kerry’s oldest dual football and hurling clubs, supporting extensive adult and under-age participation. Inter Kenmare FC, founded in 1985, continues to be a major sporting organisation within the town, benefitting from two full-sized pitches, a clubhouse and a new all-weather floodlit pitch opened in 2024. The town also supports an active rowing club, a thriving basketball club, a diving club based at the pier, Kenmare Athletic Club, Kenmare Golf Club, a Taekwondo club, a cycling group and a number of walking, hiking and outdoor recreation groups. These clubs contribute to a vibrant year-round sporting culture, ensuring opportunities for participation for children, teenagers, adults and older residents.

Kenmare also benefits from a strong network of community organisations and social groups. Facilities include a public playground beside the Kenmare Shopping Centre, a public library and the Carnegie Arts Centre at St. John’s, which provides theatre, film, arts programming and community events. Heritage is celebrated through the town’s walking trail and interpretive plaque network, which highlight cultural landmarks and notable local figures. The pier area continues to be an important hub for water-based recreation, supporting rowing, diving, swimming, boating and seasonal

maritime activities.

Education and early years provision is well established. St. John’s National School, Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine (secondary school) and the Kenmare Further Education and Training Centre offer a full range of primary, secondary and adult learning opportunities. Early years services include Bright Sparks Montessori in the town and Little Angels Crèche in Kilmurry, both serving an extensive local catchment. The Kenmare Family Resource Centre on Railway Road provides family support, youth programmes and community outreach. The Taobh Linn Centre, also located on Railway Road, offers meals, social activities and supports for older citizens, playing a central role in promoting positive ageing and social inclusion. Other active community groups include the Kenmare Tidy Towns Committee, Men’s Shed, various residents’ associations, youth music and drama groups, and multiple volunteer-led environmental, cultural and wellbeing initiatives.

Kenmare’s public open spaces remain a defining feature of community life. Reenagross Park provides woodland and riverside walks within easy reach of the town centre, while Peninsula Park offers a scenic walking route and a gateway to wider natural landscapes. Together with the town’s playgrounds, riverfront spaces and school facilities used for community sport, these parks and open spaces support recreation, nature access, and health and wellbeing for residents and visitors of all ages.

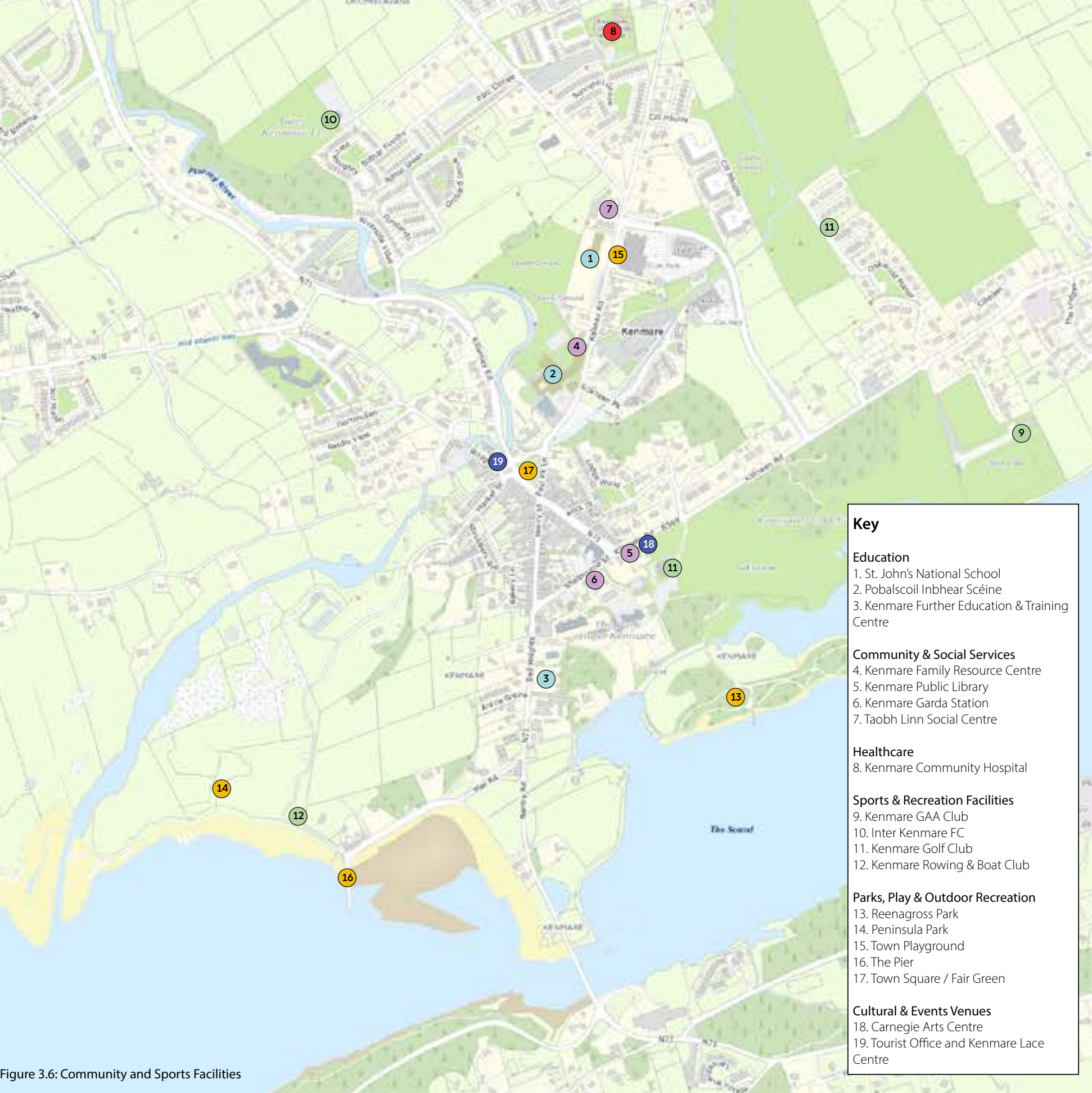


Figure 3.6: Community and Sports Facilities

3.3.13 Vacant and Underutilised Land

Several sites in and around Kenmare display vacancy or underuse, including former commercial buildings, older industrial plots, surface car parks and publicly owned lands. These form part of the town's baseline condition and present potential for future regeneration.

Individual sites are not identified, as it would be inappropriate for the Masterplan to prioritise or appear to promote specific landholdings. Any future development will be guided through the statutory planning process.

Instead, the Masterplan focuses on creating the conditions for renewal. Project 21 seeks to enable the future unlocking of strategic, vacant and underutilised lands—without specifying any particular sites—so that regeneration can occur in a fair, coordinated and plan-led manner.

3.3.14 Environmental

A Flood Relief Scheme is proposed for Kenmare and is currently at Stage 1 (Scheme Development and Preliminary). The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the Kerry County Development Plan 2022–2028 identifies extensive areas of the town within Flood Zone A, with additional lands falling within Flood Zone B. Flood risk therefore remains a key consideration for projects in the town centre and for any development proximate to the rivers. Ayesa (formerly Byrne Looby) has been appointed to develop appropriate flood-risk mitigation measures, with the scheme progressing through design. It will provide enhanced protection for residents and businesses and will require detailed design, environmental assessment and planning documentation. Completion is targeted for 2031.

Kenmare lies on the northern shore of the Kenmare River, a designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The River Finnihy, forming much of the town's western edge, also forms part of this SAC as far as Cromwell's Bridge. These environmental designations require that all future projects consider potential effects on protected habitats and species.

3.3.15 Infrastructure

Water Supply

Kenmare currently faces significant constraints on its drinking water supply, which is the main obstacle to further development. Uisce Éireann is investigating a new source, with groundwater exploration due to begin in Q3 2025 and results expected by Q4 2025 to inform delivery timelines for additional capacity. Until this is secured, the unlocking of new development opportunities will remain restricted.

Wastewater Treatment

An upgrade of the Kenmare Wastewater Treatment Plant is well advanced, including a new pumping station, increased stormwater handling and overflow screening, and expanded treatment capacity. Construction is over 70% complete, with early commissioning already underway.

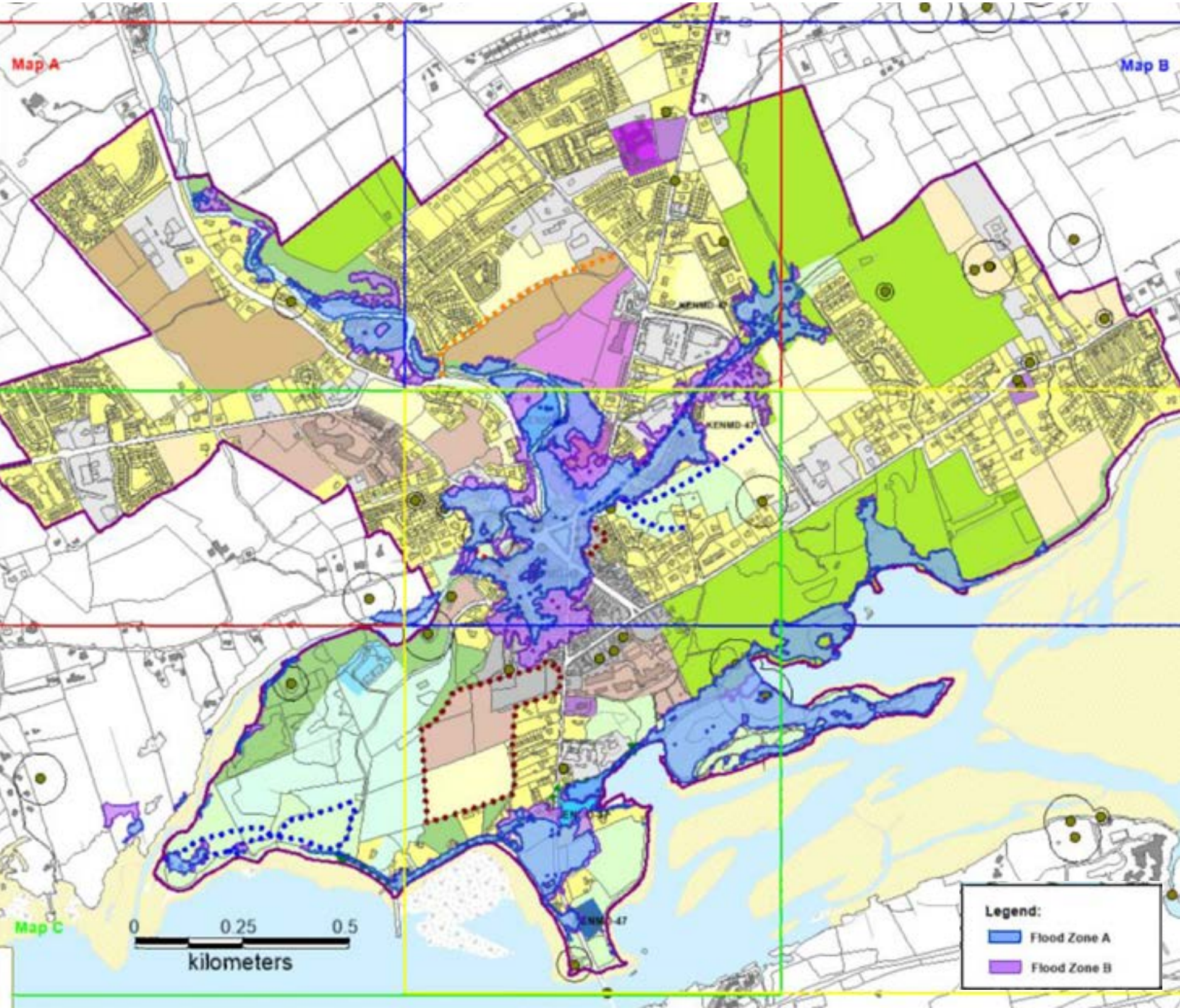


Figure 3.7: Extract of Figure 3.38: Flood Risk Zones of the Kenmare Municipal District Local Area Plan 2024–2030

04

ENGAGEMENT

4.0 Engagement

4.1 Introduction

Community engagement has been central to shaping the Kenmare Town Centre First Masterplan. Grounded in the principle that good design must be inclusive and locally informed, the engagement process aimed to ensure that residents and stakeholders had meaningful opportunities to shape the vision, objectives and projects for their town. The co-design process included public consultation, targeted stakeholder engagement, a townwide survey (2024), and school outreach, culminating in the Draft Kenmare Town Centre First Masterplan and a high-attendance public event.

4.2 Overview of Engagement Activities

A multi-stage strategy guided engagement. The following activities generated a broad base of community insight, which directly influenced the structure and content of the masterplan:

- **Digital Engagement (2024):** Online survey and social media campaigns gathered early insights on community priorities and project ideas.
- **Town Team & Local Stakeholder Collaboration:** Ongoing input from a representative cross-section of local stakeholders including the town team, local groups and Elected Representatives.
- **Public Workshop (April 2025):** A structured, in-person event attended by over 110 people.
- **School Engagement (May 2025):** Age-appropriate visioning exercises completed by local primary and secondary students.
- **Follow-up Feedback:** Further submissions online and via email.
-

4.3 Public Workshop & Key Exercises

The public workshop was held on 2 April 2025 at the Kenmare Bay Hotel from 6:30 to 8:30pm. The venue was chosen for its central location and ability to accommodate a large, collaborative audience.

To encourage broad participation, the event was promoted across multiple channels: local newspapers and radio, social media (via Kerry County Council and community groups), posters and flyers around town, and notifications from the Kenmare Chamber Alliance and other networks

Approximately 110 attendees took part, representing residents, businesses, community groups, Elected Representatives and local stakeholders.

Workshop Structure

Following a short introductory presentation by Purser and the Town Regeneration Officer, participants engaged in a series of group-based, interactive exercises at tables of around 10 people:

- **Exercise 1 – SCOT Analysis:** Participants assessed the town’s Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats, marking observations on large maps and structured templates to spatially anchor their input.
- **Exercise 2 – Vision for Kenmare:** Groups discussed long-term aspirations, defined key themes and ranked their top five priorities.
- **Exercise 3 – Quick Wins & Big Ideas:** Participants identified both short-term actions and longer-term transformative projects, along with intended beneficiaries (e.g. residents, tourists, businesses).



Additional Feedback Channels

To capture wider input, attendees could also contribute via: anonymous feedback boxes; open-ended comment forms on each table; online submissions to the Kenmare Town Centre First website and a dedicated email address.

These additional channels helped ensure that ideas not captured during the main exercises were still recorded and considered.

4.3.1 Exercise 1

The first workshop exercise focused on identifying Kenmare’s existing qualities and challenges using a SCOT (Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Threats) framework. Participants worked in groups to complete structured templates and annotate large-format maps, linking their insights to specific locations across the town.

The analysis revealed a shared appreciation of Kenmare’s strengths, particularly its scenic natural setting, compact walkable layout, strong tourism appeal, and distinctive built heritage. The town’s community spirit and welcoming atmosphere were also widely praised.

At the same time, participants identified a range of challenges, including traffic congestion, parking pressures, underutilised public spaces, and a lack of amenities for young people. The seasonal nature of the economy and housing affordability were also raised.

Opportunities highlighted included the redevelopment of the pier, greenway creation along the former railway line, restoration of the Butter

Figure 4.1: Exercise Board for Exercise 1.



Market, and greater use of digital tools for marketing and events. Enhancing linkages between the town centre, parks, and waterfront was a recurring spatial priority.

Threats centred around vacancy and dereliction, the dominance of car traffic in the town centre, and the risk of Kenmare losing its distinctive character if future development is not managed sensitively.

The SCOT exercise provided a grounded, place-specific understanding of what matters most to the community and helped shape the themes and projects that followed.

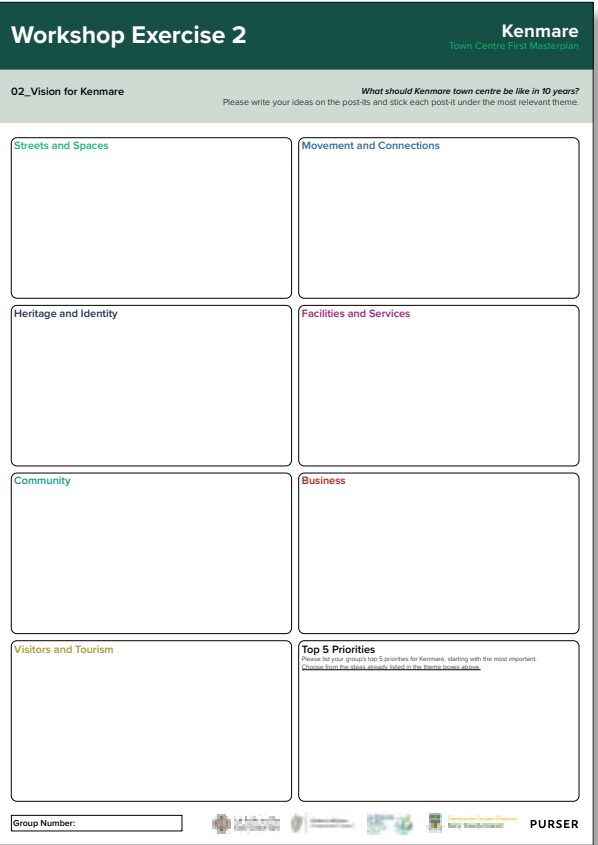
4.3.2 Exercise 2

In the second exercise, participants were asked to develop a shared vision for Kenmare’s future and identify their Top 5 priorities for the town centre. Through facilitated group discussion, attendees were encouraged to think beyond short-term fixes and consider long-term aspirations for the town’s development, character and functionality.

A consistent set of priorities emerged across the workshop groups, highlighting both pressing local concerns and common community ambitions:

- **Pedestrianisation & Public Realm Enhancements** – There was strong consensus around reducing car dominance in the town centre, particularly on Henry Street, and enhancing the pedestrian environment with improved footpaths, lighting, seating, greenery and signage.
- **Development of a Community Centre** – Many attendees called for a multi-purpose space that could serve social, cultural, recreational and intergenerational needs—supporting everything from sports to events and informal gathering.
- **Youth Facilities & Engagement** – A notable gap identified was the lack of dedicated facilities and activities for young people. Suggestions included youth centres, non-sporting amenities, and safer social spaces.
- **Traffic & Parking Improvements** – Persistent congestion, inadequate parking layouts, and unsafe crossings were flagged as barriers to accessibility and enjoyment. There was broad support for relocating parking, advancing the relief road, and improving circulation.

Figure 4.2: Exercise Board for Exercise 2.



- **Greenways & Connectivity** – Participants supported the development of active travel infrastructure including walking loops, greenways and cycle paths—especially connections to the pier, Reenagross, and residential areas.

Geographic areas repeatedly highlighted included Henry Street (pedestrianisation focus), Main Street (accessibility and vacancy), the Pier and Peninsula (untapped potential), and outer roads and backlands (connectivity and dereliction). These spatial insights will directly inform the masterplan’s proposed interventions and implementation priorities.



4.3.3 Exercise 3 – Quick Wins and Big Ideas

The third exercise invited participants to think strategically and creatively about Kenmare’s future by identifying both short-term actions (“Quick Wins”) and long-term transformative initiatives (“Big Ideas”). These responses provided insight into what the community sees as achievable within the near future, as well as their boldest ambitions for the town.

Quick Wins included:

- Upgrading the public toilets on Railway Road to meet inclusive design standards.
- Enhancing the streetscape with planting and minor improvements.
- Improve car parking arrangements in the town centre.
- Improving pedestrian links between the town centre, pier and peninsula lands.

These ideas reflect a desire for visible, achievable improvements that would have an immediate impact on quality of life, accessibility and civic pride.

Big Ideas put forward by participants included:

- Redeveloping the pier as a community asset with improved amenities.
- Creating a greenway along the old railway line, linking key areas of the town.
- Exploring alternative local industries to reduce reliance on tourism.
- Pedestrianising parts of the town centre to reinforce Kenmare’s walkable, people-first identity.
- Assessment of Butter Market as a cultural or community venue.

Figure 4.3: Exercise Board for Exercise 3.

Workshop Exercise 3 Kenmare

03_Quick Wins & Big Ideas Brainstorm at least up to five “quick wins” and “big ideas” for Kenmare’s town centre. For each idea, agree on who the primary beneficiaries would be (e.g. Locals, Tourists / Visitors, businesses, or other groups (e.g., people with disabilities, cyclists, remote workers)).

	Quick Win	Who does it benefit?
‘Quick Wins’	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
	4.	
	5.	
	Big Idea	Who does it benefit?
‘Big Ideas’	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
	4.	
	5.	

Group Number:

Let's build a better future together Kenmare Town Council Kenmare Harbour **PURSER**

Across both categories, five key themes emerged: public realm, culture and heritage, sustainable transport, community infrastructure, and economic development. Together, these ideas have helped shape the 30 priority projects set out in the masterplan and reinforce the importance of combining deliverability with ambition.

4.3.3 Schools Engagement

As part of the community-led approach to the Kenmare Town Centre First Masterplan, engagement packs were distributed to local primary and secondary schools to ensure the perspectives of younger residents were captured. Each school received an introductory letter and two age-appropriate exercises with instructions.

Primary students completed:

- **Exercise 1** – My Ideal Town, where pupils illustrated or described their vision for Kenmare.
- **Exercise 2** – Town Feelings, where they expressed one thing they liked, disliked, and wished for in the town.

Secondary students completed:

- **Exercise 1** – SCOT Analysis (Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Threats)
- **Exercise 2** – Vision Mapping, where students marked areas for improvement and listed five ideas to enhance the town

Across both age groups, a number of consistent themes emerged:

- **Cinema:** The most requested amenity, highlighting a lack of entertainment options for young people
- **Youth Facilities:** Calls for a youth centre, café, and inclusive non-sporting activities
- **Retail:** Desire for more age-relevant shops to reduce reliance on travel to larger towns
- **Recreation:** Interest in additional sports infrastructure including courts, pools, and gyms
- **Accessibility & Parking:** Issues with pedestrian safety and parking were raised, especially around the town centre

The feedback underlined the need for youth-focused spaces, accessible recreation, and a more vibrant, inclusive town centre. This input has directly informed the development of several key projects in the masterplan.

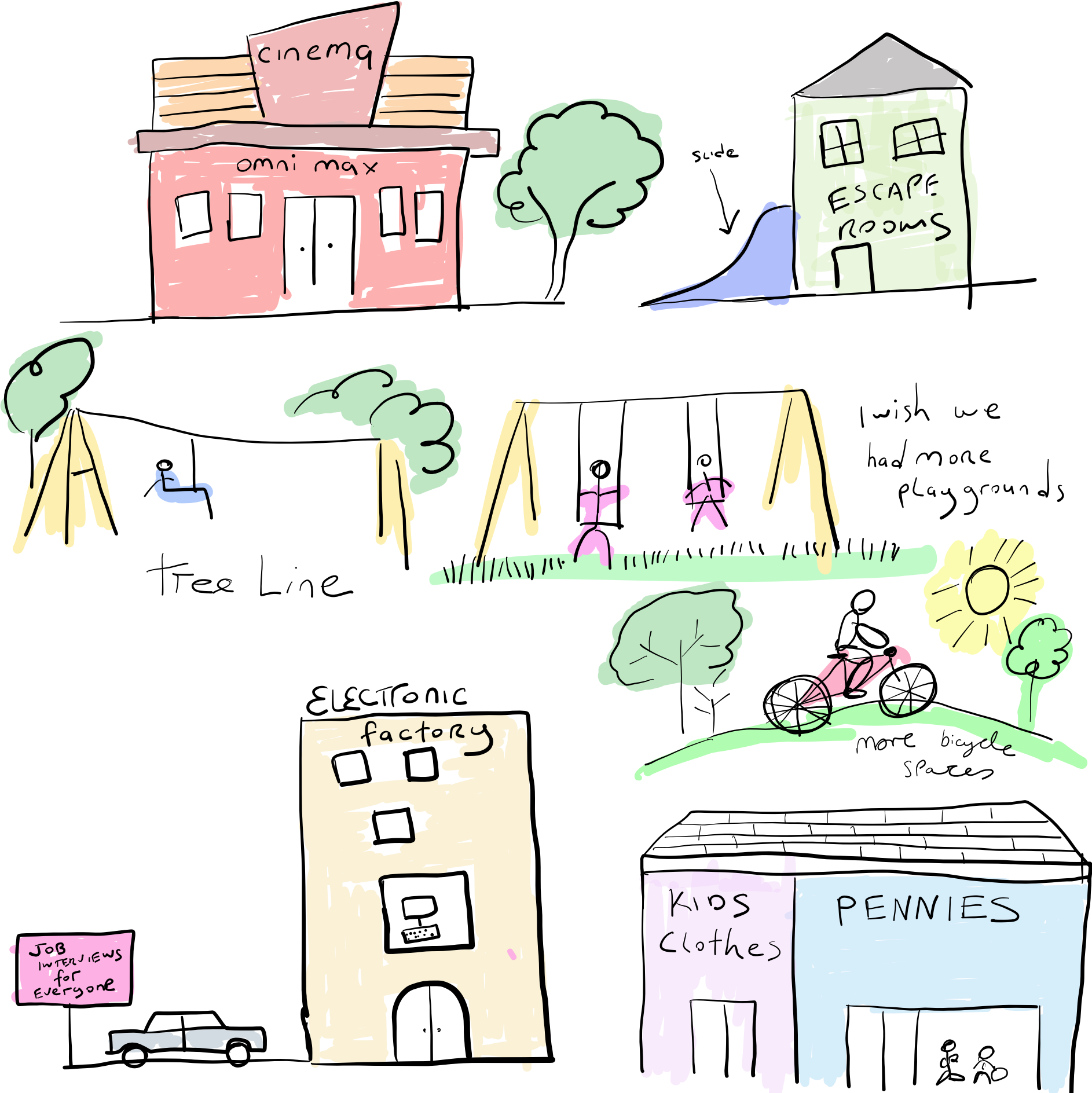


Figure 4.4: Schools Engagement.

WHO TOOK PART?

110

people attended the public workshop

2

schools participated in the youth engagement



- 110 people at public workshop (2 April 2025)
- Engagement with primary & secondary schools
- Over 400 respondents to earlier town survey
- Ongoing feedback via website & email

KEY THEMES



Community Infrastructure

- Strong call for a multi-use Community Centre (Buttermarket suggested)
- Safe spaces for youth, Men's & Women's Sheds, event space



Public Realm & Pedestrianisation

- Enhanced Public Realm
- Wider footpaths, seating, lighting, trees
- Concerns about accessibility, deliveries
-



Green Connections & Mobility

- New walking loops, pier link, greenways
- Complete bypass, improve traffic flow
- Better parking enforcement and relocation



Sustainability & Environment

- Biodiversity corridors, protect Kenmare Bay SAC
- Green energy and zero-waste tourism
- Flood risk and environmental protection



Balanced Economy

- Reduce reliance on tourism
- SME support, remote working hubs
- Repurpose vacant buildings (housing, enterprise, arts)

KEY STATEMENTS



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

What Young People Said

Top Student Requests:

- Cinema
- Youth-oriented shops
- Youth spaces – cafés, social spots
- Sports infrastructure
- Safer crossings and more parking

WHERE FEEDBACK FOCUSED



- Henry Street – pedestrianisation, streetscape
- Town Centre Core – shopfronts, accessibility, dereliction
- Pier & Peninsula – amenities, connections, tourism potential
- Bypass & Outer Routes – traffic, coach and campervan parking
- Backlands & Side Streets – permeability, redevelopment opportunities

QUICK WINS

Public toilet upgrade

New seating & planters

Improve car parking arrangements

01

02

03

Greenway

Redevelopment of pier

Assessment of Butter Market

01

02

03

BIG IDEAS

4.4 Stage 2 Engagement (Draft Masterplan Consultation)

The second stage of engagement focused on the publication of the Draft Kenmare Town Centre First Masterplan and provided the community with a clear opportunity to formally review and comment on its proposals. The Draft Masterplan was placed on public display from 10–31 October 2025, with submissions accepted through the Kerry County Council consultation portal, by email, by post, and at an in-person public event.

A drop-in engagement session was held on 21 October 2025 at the Kenmare Bay Hotel. The event enabled attendees to meet the design team, review presentation boards and provide written feedback. Strong participation and constructive discussion demonstrated a high level of local interest in the future of the town centre.

During the consultation period, feedback was received from residents, community organisations, cultural groups, sports clubs, accessibility advocates, businesses, landowners and statutory bodies. This resulted in a substantial and well-rounded evidence base consisting of feedback forms, portal submissions and detailed written correspondence.

Clear themes emerged from Stage 2 engagement. Respondents expressed strong support for the overall direction of the Masterplan and its focus on improving public spaces, movement and heritage. Parking, circulation and key junctions—particularly around the Square—were frequently raised. Many submissions emphasised the need for improved pedestrian safety, upgraded footpaths, clearer crossings and measures to support accessible movement for all ages and abilities. The pier and peninsula were identified as important recreational assets, with strong support for improved facilities, lighting and safer connections.

Comments also highlighted the importance of addressing vacancy and building condition on Main Street, supporting living over the shop and encouraging sensitive renewal of historic structures. Community groups noted opportunities to broaden the baseline mapping to capture additional local facilities and amenities. Submissions also reinforced the importance of planning for enhanced community space, including a versatile community centre and improved youth facilities. Heritage-led improvements, updated data, clearer mapping and stronger project sequencing were also recommended.

The feedback received directly informed the refinement of the Masterplan, resulting in updates to mapping, project descriptions, accessibility measures, community facility audits, heritage content and project scopes. The final Masterplan therefore reflects the priorities expressed during Stage 2 engagement and provides a coordinated, locally informed strategy for the future development of Kenmare.



WHO TOOK PART?

65
people attended the drop-in event

- **23** feedback forms submitted
- **12** written submissions
- **4** online portal submissions

KEY STATEMENTS

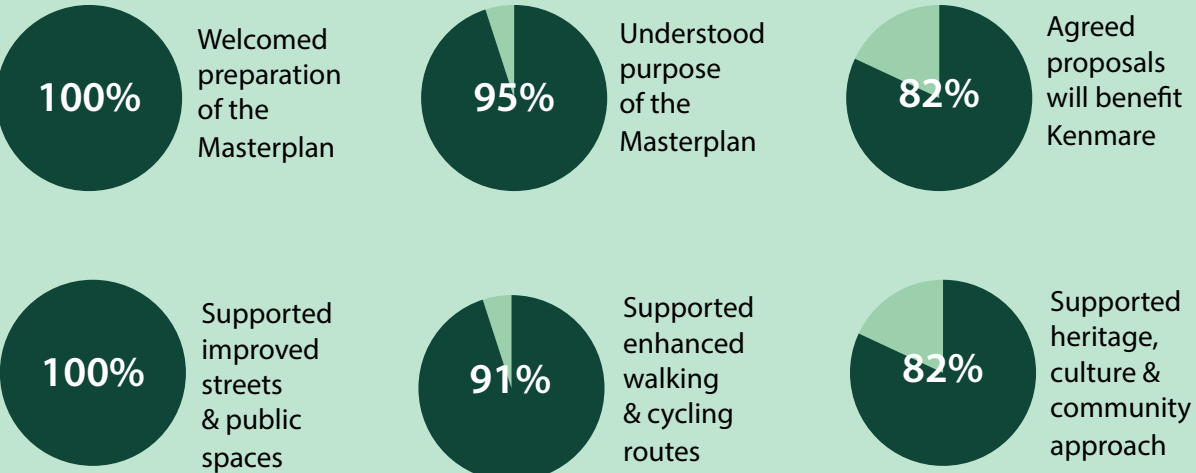
“The Masterplan is a positive step - now let’s deliver it.”

“Accessibility needs to be improved, especially for wheelchair users”

“The pier is a huge asset — improved lighting and facilities are needed.”

“We need a balanced approach to parking that supports residents and visitors.”

LEVELS OF SUPPORT



MOST FREQUENT TOPICS RAISED



HOW FEEDBACK SHAPED THE MASTERPLAN

- Community feedback directly shaped and strengthened the final Masterplan. Key updates and amendments include, but not limited to:
- ✓ Baseline mapping expanded to include additional facilities and amenities (Section 3.0)
 - ✓ Stronger accessibility measures added and pedestrianisation to be explored carefully as part of a funded public realm project (Project 01 update)
 - ✓ Project 05 enhanced to address public transport improvements, including new bus stop options
 - ✓ Project 10 expanded to strengthen loop walks and walking connections
 - ✓ Broader scope for the Community Centre included in Project 28
 - ✓ Project 32 expanded to provide additional public toilets and changing facilities
 - ✓ New Youth Hub project added to support young people (Project 30)
 - ✓ New Community Energy & Resilience project added to promote sustainability (Project 21)

05

MASTERPLAN

5.1 Vision

5.1.1 Vision

Kenmare will build on its unique strengths — its natural setting, vibrant community, rich heritage, and strong visitor appeal — to become an even greater place to live, work and visit. This Town Centre First Masterplan sets out a clear and practical framework for enhancing the town’s public spaces, local economy, and social infrastructure, while supporting a high quality of life for all who live in and engage with Kenmare.

The vision for Kenmare is:
“Rooted in heritage and framed by nature, Kenmare will evolve as a thriving town centre — a great place to live, work and visit, where community, culture, enterprise and the environment come together.”

The masterplan is designed to coordinate investment, support compact and sustainable growth, and guide the improvement of buildings, streets and civic amenities — always reflecting Kenmare’s unique sense of place and community values.

5.1.2 What has informed the Vision?

The vision for Kenmare has been informed through a comprehensive process of analysis, community engagement, and collaboration with the Town Team. It responds directly to the priorities identified by local residents, businesses, and stakeholders, Kerry County Council, Town Team and the wider community — including the need to address traffic and congestion, improve public realm and mobility, support local enterprise, and enhance community facilities.

Key factors informing the preparation of the vision and themes include:

Research and analysis	Qualitative and quantitative research was carried out to understand the town and its context, including field studies, site visits, demographic trends, mapping, and review of previous plans and development patterns.
Policy Context	A clear understanding of statutory and policy requirements — particularly the Town Centre First framework — has ensured alignment with national, regional and local development strategies and funding mechanisms.
Stakeholder Engagement	An integrated process of engagement with a wide range of stakeholders — including residents, local representatives business owners, community groups and statutory bodies — has directly informed the vision, themes and objectives, ensuring they reflect shared local values and aspirations.
Deliverability and Place-Sensitivity	A commitment to proposals that are both practical and place-sensitive, tailored to Kenmare’s scale and setting, and capable of being implemented in phases over time to respond to local priorities and available resources.

“Rooted in heritage and framed by nature, Kenmare will evolve as a thriving town centre — a great place to live, work and visit, where community, culture, enterprise and the environment come together.”

5.1 Themes and Objectives

5.1.1 Masterplan Themes

The themes and objectives for the Kenmare Town Centre First Masterplan have evolved iteratively through the various stages of analysis, community engagement, and consultation with the Town Team and the wider community. Workshop sessions and review of the engagement feedback led to the refinement of these themes to ensure they respond directly to local needs while aligning with the national Town Centre First policy framework.

The national Town Centre First policy agenda is focused on securing a sustainable future for towns and villages across Ireland. Reflecting this, the themes for the Kenmare Masterplan place environmental, economic, and social sustainability at their core — with a strong emphasis on Kenmare’s distinctive natural setting, cultural identity, and active community life.

The four Kenmare Masterplan themes are:

A. Movement and Sustainable Environment

Focused on enhancing movement, accessibility, climate resilience, and the public realm through connected infrastructure, green space, and active travel initiatives.

B. Heritage, Culture and Visitor Experience

Celebrating Kenmare’s unique story, historic character and cultural assets while strengthening the town’s appeal as a year-round visitor destination.

C. Enterprise and Economic Resilience

Supporting local business, enabling innovation and reuse, and building a diverse, sustainable economy beyond seasonal tourism.

D. Community Wellbeing and Inclusion

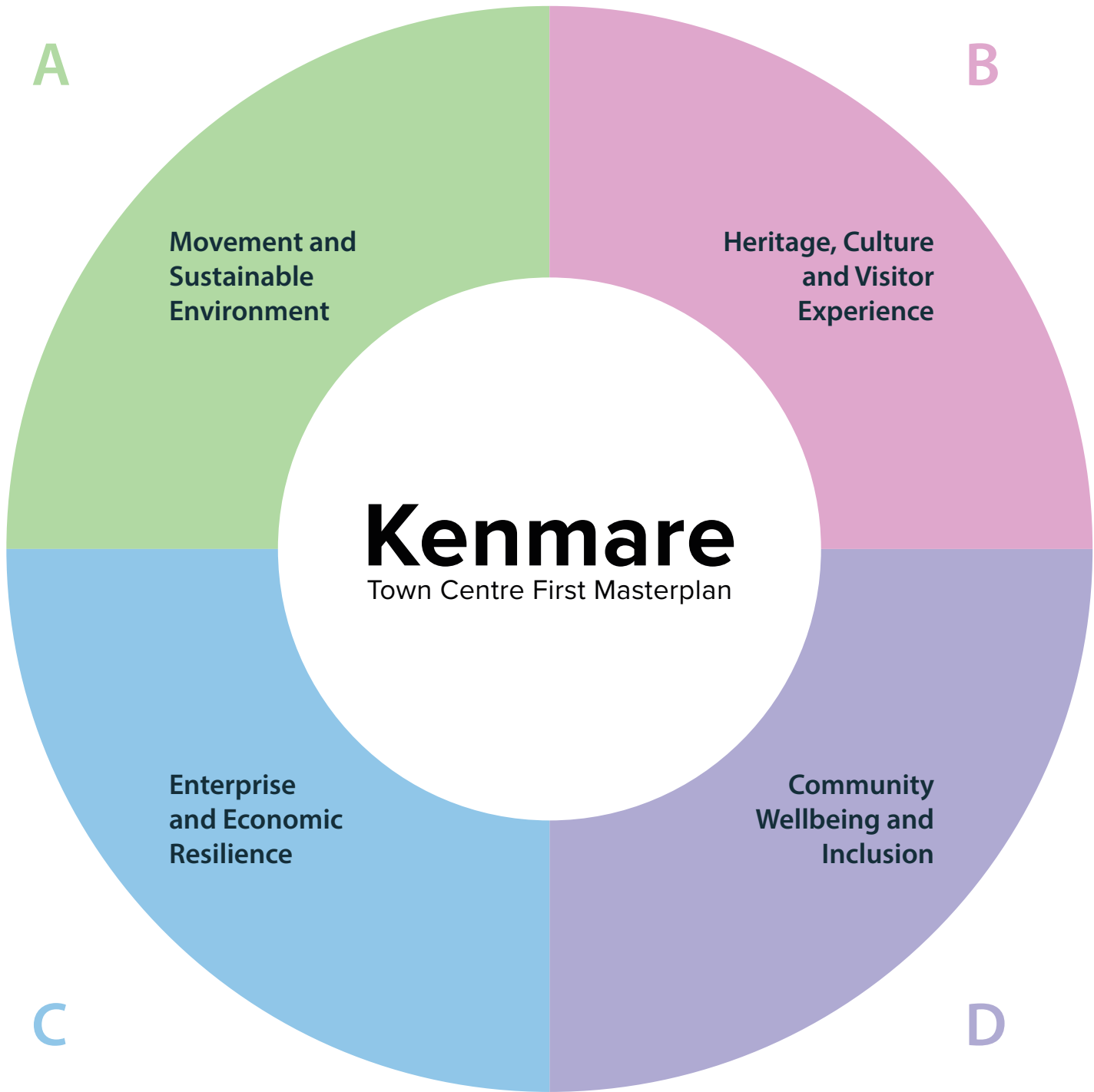
Ensuring that Kenmare meets the needs of all its residents by providing inclusive, age-friendly infrastructure, community facilities, and social supports.

The Masterplan Objectives have been developed in alignment with these themes and are grouped accordingly in the following section. They set the strategic direction for delivering the vision for Kenmare and guiding future investment and decision-making.

Infrastructure

Kenmare is currently subject to a number of essential infrastructure projects that, while not forming part of this Masterplan, are critical to the town’s future growth and resilience. Uisce Éireann is progressing investigations for a new drinking water source, with groundwater exploration scheduled for Q3 2025 and results expected by Q4 2025, which will inform timelines for increasing supply capacity. Construction of the upgraded Kenmare Wastewater Treatment Plant is now more than 70% complete, with early commissioning underway, delivering enhanced pumping, stormwater management and treatment capacity. In parallel, Ayesa (formerly ByrneLooby) has been appointed to design appropriate flood-relief measures for the town, with the emerging scheme currently in development.

(Note: All projects and objectives outlined in this Masterplan are subject to the necessary statutory consents, including planning permission, environmental assessments, and any other approvals required under relevant legislation. The inclusion of a project within this Masterplan does not confer approval and does not prejudice any future decision by the competent authorities.)



Map 5.1 - Masterplan Objectives

Key Focus Area

Objectives - Movement and Sustainable Environment

Objectives - Heritage, Culture and Visitor Experience

Objectives - Enterprise and Economic Resilience

Objectives - Community Wellbeing and Inclusion

Note: Not all masterplan objectives are mapped. Some objectives apply town-wide or relate to initiatives that are not spatial in nature and therefore cannot be shown on this map.

This map illustrates the Masterplan Objectives for Kenmare, Ireland. The map features a red dashed outline representing the Key Focus Area. Numbered markers (01-34) are placed across the map, color-coded to represent different objective categories:

- Green:** Objectives - Movement and Sustainable Environment (01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34)
- Pink:** Objectives - Heritage, Culture and Visitor Experience (15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 30, 31)
- Blue:** Objectives - Enterprise and Economic Resilience (20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 30, 31)
- Purple:** Objectives - Community Wellbeing and Inclusion (20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 30, 31)

The map also shows the Kenmare River, The Sound, and surrounding areas like Tubbrid and Killowen. Key locations marked include Kenmare, Kenmare Old, and Kenmare Golf Club.

THEME A

MOVEMENT
AND
SUSTAINABLE
ENVIRONMENT

Kenmare’s stunning natural setting, historic street layout, and popularity as a visitor destination place significant pressure on its public realm and transport network. During engagement, residents and stakeholders consistently identified congestion, traffic conflicts, parking pressures, and limited space for walking and cycling as key concerns - particularly in the town centre and around key junctions such as the N71/Pier Road.

Kerry County Council will seek funding under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) or other suitable funding streams to support transformational public realm improvements, integrate enhanced pedestrian and cycle connectivity, and manage parking more effectively. The Masterplan recognises that tackling these issues is not only essential for safety and accessibility but also for climate resilience, business viability, and social inclusion.

Reflecting these challenges and opportunities, the objectives under this theme are supported by the following projects:

- 01** Public Realm Enhancement
- 02** Transport Hub at St. Clare’s
- 03** Parking Node, Link and Amenity Space
- 04** Active Travel Measures
- 05** Public Transport
- 06** Wayfinding Strategy
- 07** Sustain and Expand Greening the Town
- 08** Kenmare Pier- Public Realm and Waterside Amenity
- 09** Greenway
- 10** Loop walks
- 11** Relief Road

01

Public Realm Enhancement

A transformative public realm scheme, which aims to enhance accessibility, create welcoming civic spaces, reduce street clutter and reinforce Kenmare’s historic townscape as a vibrant social and commercial hub.

Summary

Kenmare’s town centre is defined by its planned layout and historic character. This project proposes enhancement of streets and public spaces, building on the original ‘X’ formation of Main Street, Henry Street and the Fair Green. It will deliver high-quality paving, coordinated furniture and greening to create a more attractive, inclusive and accessible public realm.

There is strong competition for space in the town centre, with a need to balance vehicles, pedestrians and outdoor dining. As part of the design process, the potential for pedestrianisation will be explored only through a coordinated and fully funded project, ensuring any trials are properly designed, tested and evaluated. By improving connectivity, usability and visual quality, the project will support locals and visitors while reinforcing a strong sense of place.

Key Features / Actions

- New paving, lighting, seating, other furniture (incl. age-friendly seating).
- Street tree planting and greening.
- Nature-based solutions.
- Decluttering and coordinated street furniture.
- Enhanced accessibility for all and pedestrian crossings.
- Public realm design to support events and tourism.
- Minor enhancement works to the Fair Green.

Theme	Lead and Partners
• Movement and Sustainable Environment	• Kerry County Council (Lead) • Kenmare Town Team • Tidy Towns

Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●●●	●●●●●	High	Short-medium term



Figure 5.2: Map showing the key location of the proposed public realm upgrade scheme. Note: this is subject to change.

Case Study: Clonakilty

Clonakilty demonstrates how investment in high-quality public realm can regenerate a town centre and strengthen community life.

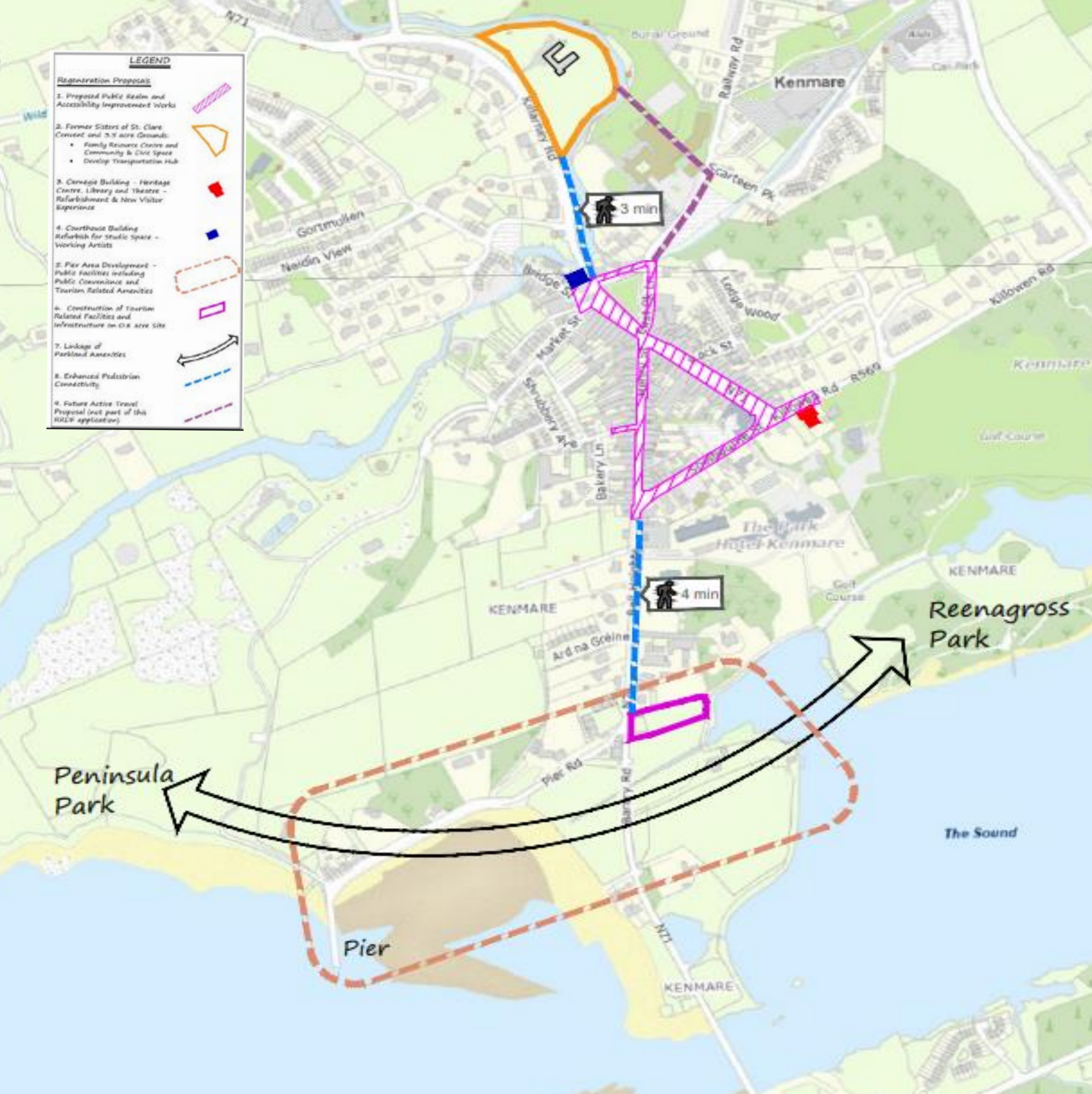
In recent years, Cork County Council led regeneration initiatives to address challenges in Clonakilty, including traffic impacts, out-of-town retail competition, and underused public spaces.

Asna Square, formerly a car park, and Emmet Square, a neglected park, were reimagined and connected through a new urban streetscape featuring pocket squares. The scheme prioritised pedestrians, public spaces, and enhanced permeability within the town.

The project demonstrates how good urban design, local materials, and skilled craftsmanship can deliver impactful results on a modest budget, creating inviting, people-focused spaces.

Clonakilty’s development strategy focused on consolidating the town centre, safeguarding heritage, supporting local business, and fostering a vibrant, walkable core through sensitive interventions and high-quality public realm improvements.





Paving

Clear design of paving is essential to give a simple uncluttered appearance to the streetscape and, to help achieve this, the surface material palette is limited to a few complimentary choices to be laid out in a coordinated manner.



Street Furniture and Planting

A coordinated approach to street furniture should ensure appropriate placement for accessibility, simple and robust design, and a positive contribution to the streetscape. Materials must prioritise durability and ease of maintenance. New street trees should be of suitable species, size and form, consistently spaced along Main Street, with tree pits designed to support long-term health while protecting pavements and utilities.



Accessibility

Accessibility must be central to Project 01. The upgraded public realm should follow universal design principles, with level footpaths, safe crossings, good lighting and unobstructed routes. Designing for people of all ages and abilities, including mobility-impaired users, older residents and families, will create a more inclusive, comfortable and welcoming town centre.

Artist's Impression of Henry Street

Please note: This image is an artist's impression and is intended for illustrative purposes only.



02

Transport Hub at St. Clare’s

A multi-modal transport hub with car and coach parking, EV infrastructure, and active travel links connecting the Convent lands with the town centre. This project supports sustainable mobility while easing congestion and enabling a more pedestrian-friendly town core

Summary

Situated on the former St. Clare’s Convent lands, this project will deliver a modern public transport hub with coach and car parking, electric vehicle charging and secure bike infrastructure. It includes an active travel route (and bridge over River Finnihy) that links the site directly to the town centre, encouraging walking, cycling and public transport use. By shifting longer-stay parking away from the town core, it reduces congestion, supports modal shift, and allows future improvements to the public realm and street life in central Kenmare.

Key Features / Actions

- Coach and car parking within Convent lands.
- EV and e-bike charging facilities.
- Safe walking and cycling route to town centre.
- Supports sustainable tourism and local travel.
- Reduces town centre traffic and parking pressure.
- Enables future public realm improvements.

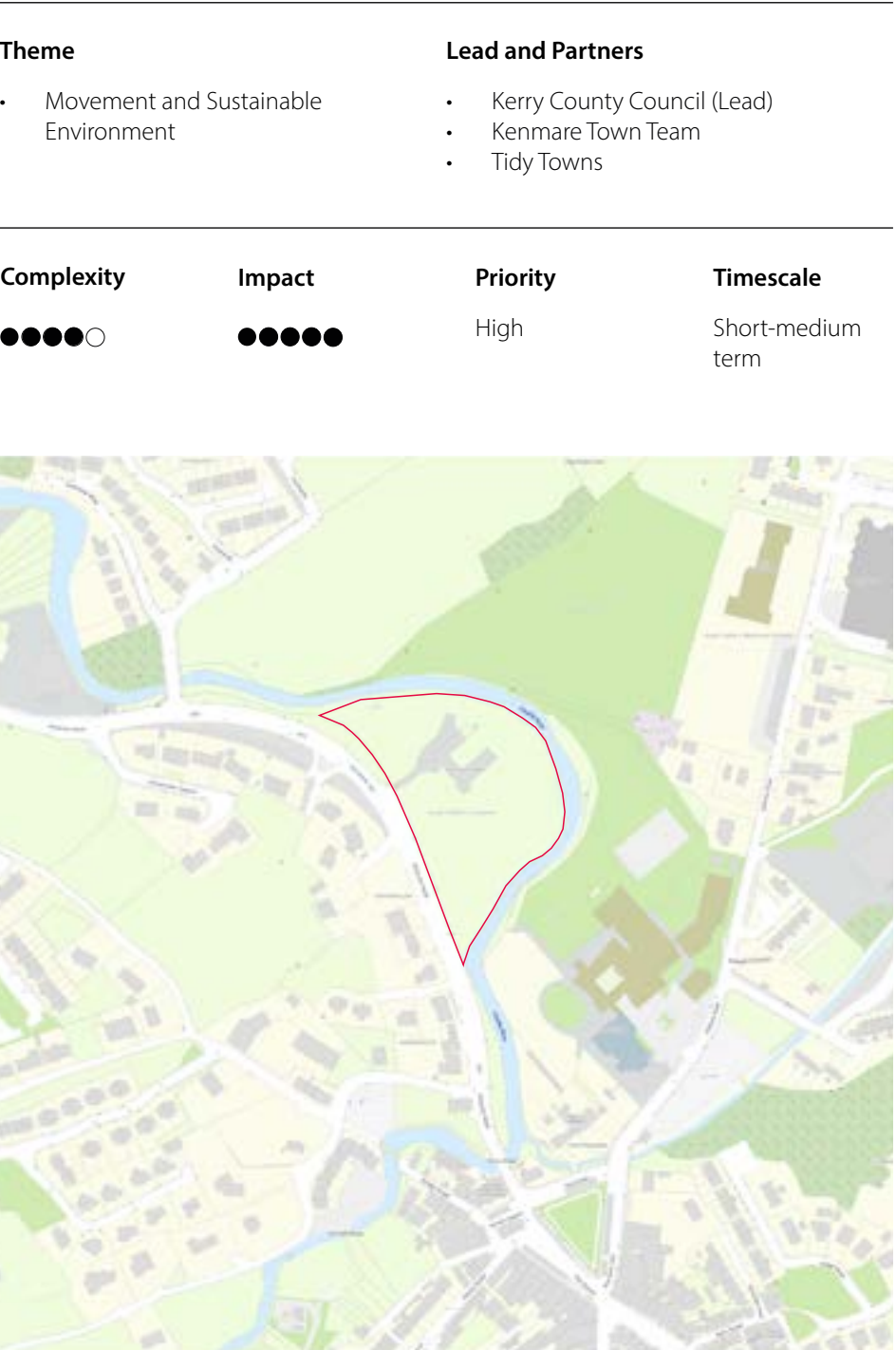


Figure 5.3: Map showing the location of the former St. Clare’s Convent lands.



03

Parking Node, Link and Amenity Space

A green gateway project connecting Peninsula Park, Reenagross, the pier and town centre through upgraded junctions, new links and strategic visitor facilities. This initiative will improve access, safety and mobility while relieving parking pressure from the town centre and pier.

Summary

Located at the junction of N71 and Pier Road, this multifunctional project creates a strategic link between Kenmare’s major natural amenities and its town centre. It will deliver a safer, more attractive pedestrian and cycle environment, potentially using raised tables and footpath realignments. The scheme will provide dedicated car and coach parking, including public toilets, information points and a designated amenity space for visitors to relax and enjoy the surroundings. Removing long-stay vehicles from the town centre and pier will create space for enhanced public realm and safer, more pleasant streets. The project supports a park-and-walk approach and reinforces Kenmare’s sustainable tourism offering.

Key Features / Actions

- Safer N71 / Pier Road junction (incl. raised table option).
- Pedestrian/cycle links between town, pier, Peninsula Park and Reenagross.
- Dedicated car and coach parking.
- Supports public realm improvements in town centre.

Theme		Lead and Partners	
• Movement and Sustainable Environment		• Kerry County Council (Lead) • Kenmare Town Team • Tidy Towns	
Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●●○	●●●●●	High	Short-medium term



Figure 5.4: Project Example - potential car park at lands located at the junction of N71 and Pier Road.



04

Active Travel Measures

A package of improvements to support walking, cycling and micro-mobility through new infrastructure, parking and town-wide connectivity. This project will help shift local journeys to more sustainable modes and enhance Kenmare’s liveability.

Summary

This project delivers a targeted set of active travel measures across Kenmare to support safer, more attractive walking and cycling. It includes the installation of secure bicycle parking, public e-bike stations, and improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. These upgrades will connect with other strategic projects including the greenway, public transport hub and public realm enhancements, helping to form a joined-up network. The scheme supports modal shift, improves accessibility, and reinforces the town’s climate resilience objectives.

Key Features / Actions

- Installation of cycle parking and e-bike infrastructure.
- Improved walking and cycling links across the town.
- Integration with greenway, public realm and wayfinding projects.
- Encourages modal shift from car to active travel.
- Partnership with NTA and other mobility providers.
- Phased implementation aligned with wider street upgrades.

Theme	Lead and Partners
• Movement and Sustainable Environment	• Kerry County Council (Lead) • Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine

Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●●●	●●●○○	High	Medium term



Figure 5.5: Active travel.

05

Public Transport

A project to upgrade bus stop infrastructure, expand town-wide coverage, and improve service coordination to deliver a more accessible, reliable and user-friendly public transport network in Kenmare.

Summary

This project aims to strengthen Kenmare’s public transport offering by improving both the infrastructure and the operation of bus services within the town. Alongside essential upgrades to the Main Street bus stop, the initiative will explore opportunities for additional stops at key locations to enhance accessibility. Close coordination with Bus Éireann, Local Link and the NTA will seek to address timetable clustering, improve reliability, and explore options to increase frequency. Combined with clearer signage, improved passenger facilities and enhanced safety features, this project will support a more visible, convenient and connected public transport system for residents, workers and visitors.

Key Features / Actions

- Upgrades to Main Street bus stop infrastructure and passenger facilities
- Assessment and delivery of new bus stops at Pat Scarteen Road, St. Clare’s and other strategic locations.
- Coordination with Bus Éireann, Local Link and the NTA to avoid timetable clustering.Engagement with TFI to explore increased frequency (e.g. 2-hourly services).
- Improved signage, route information poles, shelters and coloured surfacing at stops.
- Better accessibility, safety and visibility for all passengers.

Theme	Lead and Partners
• Movement and Sustainable Environment	• NTA and Bus Eireann (Lead) • Local Link • Kerry County Council

Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●○○○	●●●●●	High	Short Term



Figure 5.6: Local Link Bus Service.

Artist's Impression of Main Street
Please note: This image is an artist's impression and is intended for illustrative purposes only.



06

Wayfinding Strategy

Building on the success of the recently implemented Tralee Wayfinding Strategy, this project aims to implement a coordinated signage and orientation strategy to improve how people navigate Kenmare on foot, by bike, or by vehicle. This project will help residents and visitors explore the town with confidence and clarity.

Summary

This project will deliver a town-wide wayfinding system to help people move easily through Kenmare and discover key destinations, parks, parking areas and heritage assets. It will include a hierarchy of signs, maps and digital tools, reflecting the town's character while supporting tourism and local use. The strategy will be designed to integrate with public realm improvements, active travel routes, and transport hubs, reinforcing Kenmare's identity and supporting a more walkable, legible town centre.

Key Features / Actions

- Town-wide pedestrian, cycle and vehicular signage.
- Consistent visual language and place-branding aligned with a countywide branding strategy.
- Includes directional signage, interpretive panels and mapping.
- Links key destinations incl. parks, pier, parking (including age-friendly and accessible), transport, heritage.
- Developed in coordination with other mobility and tourism projects.
- Requires design, stakeholder input, and phased delivery.

Theme		Lead and Partners	
• Movement and Sustainable Environment		• Kerry County Council (Lead) • Kenmare Town Team	
Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●●○	●●●●●	Medium	Short-medium term



Figure 5.7: Bath Wayfinding - a system designed to be suitable within a heritage City.



Case Study: Tralee Town Wayfinding Strategy

The Tralee Wayfinding Strategy illustrates how a clear, consistent, and well-designed signage system can enhance the visitor experience and strengthen civic identity.

Implemented in 2024 by Kerry County Council, the strategy introduced a distinctive design language and unified brand for pedestrian and vehicular wayfinding across the town. The system includes map panels with ‘heads-up’ orientation, directional fingerposts, and strategically located information points, making it easy for residents and visitors to navigate Tralee’s streets, cultural attractions, and key destinations safely and intuitively.

The wayfinding elements were designed to reflect Tralee’s character while adhering to best practice in accessibility, legibility, and durability. The outcome is a coherent network that connects cultural, civic, and recreational

destinations, supporting both everyday movement and tourism activity.

Importantly, Kerry County Council intends to roll out this design language and branding across the county — including in Kenmare — to establish a consistent approach to wayfinding and signage in towns and villages. This countywide strategy will improve orientation, promote sustainable travel choices, and reinforce a strong, place-sensitive identity for Kerry’s settlements.

07

Sustain and Expand ‘Greening the Town’

A town-wide greening initiative to enhance public spaces, support biodiversity, and foster community stewardship. This project will deliver a coordinated programme of planting and landscape enhancements across Kenmare’s town centre, creating a greener, more attractive and climate-resilient environment.

Summary

Kenmare’s greening strategy will upgrade existing open spaces and introduce planting into key streets and civic areas. Linked with wider public realm improvements, the project will support health, biodiversity and placemaking by using native species and pollinator-friendly planting. Opportunities for small-scale green moments — from street trees and planters to pocket parks and living lanes — will improve amenity, air quality and town centre experience. The project will be shaped through collaboration with Tidy Towns, local groups and residents, embedding long-term community involvement and care.

Key Features / Actions

- Integrated planting in streets and civic spaces.
- Tree and biodiversity-friendly planting including use of native species suited to local conditions.
- Planters and greening of lanes, passages and wider streets.
- Community collaboration via Tidy Towns and local groups.
- Supports climate resilience and visual amenity.
- Public realm design to support events and tourism.

Theme		Lead and Partners	
• Movement and Sustainable Environment		• Tidy Towns (Co-Lead) • Kerry County Council (Co-Lead) • Kenmare Town Team	
Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●○○○	●●●●○	High	Short-medium term



Figure 5.8: Living Streets - Dún Laoghaire, which includes a greening strategy as a core component of its public realm improvements.

08

Kenmare Pier – Public Realm and Waterside Amenity

A strategic upgrade to Kenmare Pier, enhancing land and water-based amenities to support sustainable tourism, active travel, and local community use—while safeguarding the pier’s unique character and sensitive environmental setting.

Summary

Kenmare Pier is an important arrival point and scenic destination, but faces challenges due to camper van parking, limited facilities, and underutilised waterfront potential. This project proposes a comprehensive enhancement of the pier and adjoining area, including public toilets, tourism information, and modest interventions such as a pontoon to support passive recreation and water-based activity. It will eliminate overnight vehicle stays by formalising parking off-site and improving wayfinding and access. The works will strengthen the pier’s role as a community and tourism asset while respecting its heritage and environmental sensitivities, including its location within a designated SAC.

Key Features / Actions

- Upgraded public realm at the pier for residents and visitors.
- Undertake a feasibility study for the Pier Area to explore potential of other water-based activities.
- New public toilets and tourism information point.
- Improved pedestrian and cycle connections with the town centre.
- Potential installation of a pontoon or similar low-impact waterside infrastructure.
- Relocation of camper van parking (aligned with Fáilte Ireland and KCC Tourism strategies).

Theme		Lead and Partners	
• Movement and Sustainable Environment		• Kerry County Council (Lead) • Kenmare Rowing and Boating Club • Kenmare Town Team	
Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●●○	●●●●○	Medium	Medium-long term



Figure 5.9: Copenhagen Islands – a ‘Parkipelago’ designed by Marshall Blecher and Magnus Maarbjerg, Fokstrot.



09

Greenway

A long-term vision to deliver a strategic greenway linking Kenmare to Killarney, building on the disused railway corridor.

Summary

This project proposes the long-term objective of creating a dedicated greenway linking Kenmare and Killarney, a route of approximately 43km primarily following the disused railway corridor. Such a greenway would deliver significant benefits for sustainable travel, tourism, recreation, and economic development.

While initial sections within Kenmare, such as the short link between the Old Net Factory and Pat Scarteen Road, may be progressed in the shorter term, these are viewed as early steps in a much more ambitious and transformative regional project. The Kenmare–Killarney greenway would connect key destinations, support active travel, and create a unique off-road route through some of Ireland’s most scenic landscapes. (A useful precedent, although much larger in scale, is the Old Rail Trail Greenway between Athlone and Mullingar, a 42 km off-road route developed along a disused railway with €4 million in government funding.)

Key Features / Actions

- Long-term objective: greenway from Kenmare to Killarney (~43km).
- Utilises the disused railway corridor as a key asset.
- Supports active travel, tourism, and rural regeneration.
- Enhances biodiversity, climate resilience, and access to nature.
- Requires phased delivery, landowner engagement, and external funding.

Theme	Lead and Partners
• Movement and Sustainable Environment	• Kerry County Council (Lead) • Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) • Local Landowners • Kenmare Town Team

Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●●●	●●●●○	Medium	Long term



Figure 5.10: Old Rail Trail Greenway, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

10

Loop walks

Improving pedestrian connectivity and creating a coordinated network of looped walking routes throughout Kenmare, including stronger links between the Peninsula, town centre and surrounding amenities.

Summary

This project responds to KENMD-KE-26 in the LAP and aims to establish a coherent network of looped walking routes throughout Kenmare. It will link the Peninsula, Reenagross Park, the pier, the town centre, schools, residential areas and key local amenities. The objective is to provide safe, attractive and well-connected routes that support everyday movement as well as recreation, health and wellbeing. The project will assess potential alignments, consider environmental sensitivities, and identify where improvements such as surfacing, crossings, lighting and wayfinding may be required. Engagement with the community and stakeholders will guide the selection of preferred loops. The loops should also be designed to allow for features such as a sculpture trail and to integrate with wider wayfinding improvements (Project 06) and digital and heritage app initiatives (Project 14).

Key Features / Actions

- Identify and assess options for a townwide network of looped walks.
- Improve surfacing, crossings, lighting and wayfinding where appropriate.
- Ensure routes are safe, accessible and environmentally sensitive.
- Engage with the community and stakeholders to refine priorities
- Strengthen Kenmare’s active travel and green infrastructure network.

Theme	Lead and Partners
• Movement and Sustainable Environment	• Kerry County Council (Lead) • Kenmare Town Team • Local Land Owners

Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●●○	●●●●○	Medium	Short-medium term



Figure 5.11: The Enniscoe Loop Walks: Scenic Trails for All, Co. Mayo.



Case Study: Westport Looped Walks

Westport demonstrates how well-designed looped walks can enrich both the resident and visitor experience by linking the town centre with its surrounding natural environment.

The town has developed a network of looped walking routes that allow people to explore heritage streets, riverside corridors, and coastal landscapes in a seamless way. These trails encourage active travel, connect everyday amenities with leisure spaces, and offer opportunities to experience the unique character of Westport at different scales and levels of difficulty.

The looped walks have been carefully integrated with the town’s public realm and transport infrastructure, ensuring safe and legible access points from the centre. Clear waymarking and consistent branding guide users along the routes, while interpretation highlights local history, cultural landmarks, and

biodiversity features.

By connecting the urban core with its natural setting, Westport has strengthened its identity as a walkable town, supported local businesses by increasing footfall, and enhanced its appeal as a visitor destination. This approach illustrates how Kenmare can achieve similar outcomes by linking the Peninsula Lands looped walk with the town centre—promoting health, wellbeing, tourism, and sustainable mobility in a way that is rooted in place.

11

Relief Road

A strategic long-term road link between Pat Scarteen Road and the N71 to relieve town centre congestion and support sustainable growth. This project will enable better traffic flow, enhance safety, and future-proof Kenmare’s movement network.

Summary

The proposed relief road will provide a vital northern bypass between Pat Scarteen Road and the N71. This strategic intervention is designed to divert through-traffic and larger vehicles away from Kenmare’s town centre, helping to reduce congestion, noise, and vehicle dominance on key streets. As a long-term project, it supports future development, protects public realm improvements, and creates a safer, more accessible environment for pedestrians and cyclists within the town core.

Key Features / Actions

- New road link from Pat Scarteen Road to N71.
- Diverts through-traffic from town centre.
- Reduces congestion and vehicle conflict.
- Supports town centre as a people-focused place.
- Land acquisition and feasibility studies required.
- Funding and phased delivery to be progressed.
- Design, land acquisition and statutory process required.

Theme		Lead and Partners		
• Movement and Sustainable Environment		• Kerry County Council (Lead) • Department of Transport • Local Landowners		
Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale	
●●●●●	●●●●●	High	Medium term	



Figure 5.12: Map showing indicative location of relief road. Note: map is diagramatic only and subject to change.

THEME B

HERITAGE,
CULTURE
AND VISITOR
EXPERIENCE

Kenmare has long attracted artists, makers, and cultural experts, forming a strong and visible creative community that contributes significantly to the town’s identity, economic vibrancy and year-round appeal. The arts including visual, craft-based, performing and digital play a central role in Kenmare’s cultural life and support its reputation as a distinctive, creative, and welcoming place. This Masterplan aligns with wider policy frameworks including the Kerry Arts Strategy 2024–2034 and the Creative Ireland Kerry Strategy 2023–2027, which emphasise inclusive cultural participation, support for local artists and the role of creativity in community wellbeing and placemaking.

Through engagement, the community expressed a strong desire to protect and celebrate the town’s heritage, while enhancing the visitor experience and offering year-round cultural activity. This theme supports the sensitive reuse of historic buildings, the enhancement of shopfronts and public realm character, and the development of storytelling tools - both physical and digital - to share Kenmare’s past and present. It also includes support for cultural events and visitor infrastructure that reinforce Kenmare’s reputation as a vibrant, welcoming place.

- 12** Courthouse Refurbishment: Visitor Experience (also incorporating Kenmare Lace)
- 13** Shopfront Enhancement Scheme
- 14** Heritage & Biodiversity Trails with Interpretive Signage, QR Codes and App Integration
- 15** Kenmare Tourism Festivals & Events Programme
- 16** Marketing of Kenmare
- 17** Pop-Up Cinema and Outdoor Screening Programme
- 18** Butter Market

12

Courthouse Refurbishment: Visitor Experience (also incorporating Kenmare Lace)

A sensitive refurbishment of Kenmare’s historic courthouse to enhance visitor experience and support cultural, educational and creative activity. This project will celebrate Kenmare’s Lace making expertise and honour the wider heritage of the town.

Summary

This project involves the conservation and adaptive reuse of the historic courthouse building to retain and enhance the existing Lace Visitor Experience. The refurbished space will showcase Kenmare’s lace-making tradition while also capturing the town’s wider heritage story. The project incorporates a structured process for gathering heritage material from diverse sources, ensuring its secure storage and ongoing curation. It will also incorporate flexible space for interpretation, small-scale exhibitions or workshops. The upgrade will improve accessibility, energy performance and visitor facilities, securing the building’s future while contributing to the town’s tourism, heritage and cultural infrastructure.

Key Features / Actions

- Refurbishment and fit-out of historic courthouse.
- Enhanced interpretation of Kenmare Lace and the wider heritage of the town.
- Systematic gathering of heritage material from multiple sources.
- Ongoing management, curation and updating of heritage content.
- Potential for flexible cultural and educational uses.
- Sensitive conservation and accessibility upgrades.
- Supports sustainable, year-round tourism.
- Requires detailed design, funding, and expert heritage guidance.

Theme	Lead and Partners
• Heritage, Culture and Visitor Experience	• Kerry County Council (Lead) • Kenmare Heritage CLG • Heritage Council • Kenmare Town Team • Court Services

Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●●●	●●●●●	High	Short-medium term



Figure 5.13: Images of Kenmare Lace and Designs. Source: Kenmare Heritage CLG.



Case Study: Portumna Courthouse, County Galway

The refurbishment of Portumna Courthouse illustrates how sensitive restoration and thoughtful design can revitalise a historic building as a vibrant community and visitor destination.

Originally constructed in the early 19th century, the Courthouse is a prominent landmark in the heart of Portumna. The project focuses on carefully conserving the building’s architectural character while adapting it to accommodate new cultural and community uses.

The refurbishment works will include the restoration of key heritage features alongside the introduction of modern services and accessibility upgrades. This balanced approach ensures that the historic fabric is respected, while the building can function effectively as a contemporary public space.

Interpretive design will play a central role in sharing the Courthouse’s layered history — from its role in the judicial system to its civic and social significance

within the town. Through curated displays, digital media, and flexible exhibition spaces, visitors will be able to engage with the story of the building and its place in the wider heritage of Portumna.

The project aims to re-establish the Courthouse as a focal point for cultural activity, tourism, and community engagement in the town, demonstrating the potential of heritage-led regeneration to strengthen local identity and support sustainable rural development.

13

Shopfront Enhancement Scheme

A grant-based initiative to improve the visual quality and historic character of shopfronts across Kenmare’s town centre. This project will support business owners in enhancing the streetscape and reinforcing the town’s identity.

Summary

Kenmare’s rich built heritage and traditional streetscape are key to its character and appeal. This project will provide financial and design support to local businesses to restore or upgrade shopfronts in line with conservation principles and good urban design. The scheme will focus on traditional materials, improved signage, colour coherence and repair of historic detailing. It complements wider public realm improvements and will reinforce Kenmare’s identity as a vibrant, attractive place for both commerce and culture. A good precedent is the Dundalk Shopfront Enhancement Scheme, which successfully combined financial incentives with design guidance

Key Features / Actions

- Grant support for shopfront restoration and upgrades.
- Design guidance for traditional and high-quality finishes.
- Focus on signage, colours, materials and detail repair.
- Strengthens visual cohesion and town centre vitality.
- Promotes collaboration with business owners and traders.
- Requires funding mechanism, guidelines and promotion campaign.

Theme	Lead and Partners
• Heritage, Culture and Visitor Experience	• Kenmare Town Team (Lead) • Property Owners • Kerry County Council

Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●○○○	●●●●●	High	Short-medium term



Figure 5.14: Dundalk Shopfront Enhancement Scheme, which successfully combined financial incentives with design guidance

14

Heritage & Biodiversity Trails with Interpretive Signage, QR Codes and App Integration

A town-wide initiative to celebrate Kenmare’s history, biodiversity, and cultural identity through signage, trails, and digital tools. This project will build local pride, support tourism, and enrich the visitor experience.

Summary

This project will deliver an interpretive strategy that highlights Kenmare’s built heritage, lace-making tradition, biodiversity, and local stories. It will include a series of themed walking trails supported by interpretive signage, QR codes, and an app offering maps and layered content. Trails will highlight heritage buildings, native flora and fauna, and cultural narratives. The initiative will align with the town’s Wayfinding Strategy (see project No. 6) to ensure consistency in visual language and location. A key aim is to provide a self-guided, interactive cultural and environmental experience for all users. Precedents include the Dublin Discovery Trails, which integrate signage and digital media to deepen engagement with place.

Key Features / Actions

- Interpretive signage across the town with heritage and biodiversity themes.
- Creation of walking trails focused on culture, nature, and local stories.
- Integration of QR codes and an app for deeper digital engagement.
- Developed in tandem with the town-wide Wayfinding Strategy.
- Supports education, tourism, and community identity.
- Requires research, community collaboration, and design expertise.

Theme	Lead and Partners
• Heritage, Culture and Visitor Experience	• Kenmare Tidy Towns (Lead) • Kenmare Town Team • Kerry County Council

Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●○○○	●●●●○	Medium	Short-medium term



Figure 5.15: Dublin Discovery Trails by Tandem Design.

15

Kenmare Tourism Festivals & Events Programme

Strengthening Kenmare’s cultural calendar to support tourism, heritage, and the arts.

Summary

This project focuses on visitor-facing festivals and cultural events that promote Kenmare as a tourism destination and enhance its position within the Wild Atlantic Way. It builds on existing events while exploring opportunities for new heritage-led initiatives, such as a Kenmare Lace Festival, which would celebrate the town’s unique cultural traditions and craftsmanship.

The programme aims to attract visitors, extend the tourist season, and strengthen Kenmare’s reputation as a centre for arts, culture, and heritage-based tourism. It will also support the local creative economy by providing platforms for artists, makers, and performers. Events will be promoted through Kenmare’s tourism marketing platforms to maximise visibility, increase visitor dwell time, and encourage repeat visits.

Key Features / Actions

- Develop and expand visitor-focused cultural festivals (e.g., Lace Festival).
- Promote arts, heritage, and creative sectors to enhance tourism appeal.
- Align with Kenmare’s tourism marketing and events calendar.
- Support the local creative economy and reinforce cultural identity.
- Coordinate with Town Team, Fáilte Ireland, and tourism bodies.
- Integrate visual arts trails, open studios, and artist-led workshops into the events calendar.
- Collaborate with KCC on event licensing and road closure requirements.

Theme	Lead and Partners
• Heritage, Culture and Visitor Experience	• KMEG (Lead) • Kenmare Town Team • Local Groups

Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●○○○	●●●●○	High	Short-medium term



Figure 5.16: Clonmel Junction Arts Festival - The 100 Dogs Project, funded by Creative Ireland. Artist Tom Campbell.

16

Marketing of Kenmare

A coordinated marketing initiative using digital tools and events to promote Kenmare’s identity, year-round vibrancy and visitor appeal. This project will strengthen the town’s profile, support local businesses and foster community pride.

Summary

This project will develop a modern marketing platform for Kenmare, including a dedicated app or website, branding materials, and a curated calendar of events. It will promote the town’s unique cultural offering, heritage, local businesses and amenities to both visitors and residents. The initiative will also support non-tourism-related community events to reinforce local engagement and year-round activity. Marketing tools will be designed to reflect Kenmare’s distinct character and will integrate with signage, wayfinding and tourism infrastructure and the Discoverkerry.com platform.

Key Features / Actions

- Development of a Kenmare-branded digital platform (app/website).
- Yearly calendar of tourism and community events.
- Support for local campaigns, festivals and promotions.
- Integration with wayfinding, heritage and town centre strategies.
- Encourages off-season and local engagement.
- Requires coordination between Town Team, business and tourism groups.

Theme	Lead and Partners
• Heritage, Culture and Visitor Experience	• KMEG (Lead) • Kenmare Town Team • Kerry county Council

Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●○○	●●●●○	High	Short-medium term



Figure 5.17: Dublin Discovery Trails App tells stories of Dublin’s culture, heritage and history via themed GPS enabled immersive walking trails.



17

Pop-Up Cinema and Outdoor Screening Programme

A mobile cinema setup to deliver seasonal film screenings in public spaces and flexible indoor venues. This project will bring cultural vibrancy to Kenmare through accessible, low-cost community film events.

Summary

Young people and families expressed a strong desire for more opportunities to watch films and gather informally. While the Carnegie already hosts regular movie screenings, this project proposes expanding the cultural offering through a pop-up cinema programme using a portable screen and projector. This flexible setup would complement existing indoor screenings and introduce an outdoor option in locations such as Peninsula Park, the Square, or other suitable community venues. The programme would support seasonal and intergenerational events, adding vibrancy and cultural activity without requiring a large capital investment.

Key Features / Actions

- Purchase of portable screen, projector and equipment.
- Screenings in town centre locations (outdoor/indoor).
- Collaboration with youth groups, schools and cultural organisations.
- Supports local engagement and off-season animation.
- Minimal infrastructure with maximum flexibility.

Theme		Lead and Partners	
• Heritage, Culture and Visitor Experience		• KMEG (Lead) • Kenmare Town Team • Local Groups	
Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●○○○	●●●●●	High	Short-Medium



Figure 5.18: Pop-up cinema – a flexible, low-cost way to activate public spaces and foster community engagement.

18

Butter Market

A town team and community-led project to adapt the historic Butter Market into a vibrant, multi-functional venue for cultural, creative, and civic use in the heart of Kenmare.

Summary

The Butter Market is a well-known building in Kenmare with strong potential to serve as a central community space. This project proposes to adapt the building for events, exhibitions, workshops, markets, and social gatherings. The building can complement other community facilities by offering an accessible, year-round indoor space for local groups and events. It could also operate in tandem with the town square. The first step will be to undertake a feasibility study and business case to assess viable use scenarios, accessibility, conservation requirements, and funding pathways. Precedents such as Nun’s Island Theatre in Galway and the Presentation Arts Centre in Enniscorthy demonstrate the potential for successfully adapting historic buildings into well-used civic spaces.

Key Features / Actions

- Reuse of the Butter Market as a civic, cultural, and community venue.
- Step 1: Feasibility study and business case to test options and viability.
- Potential uses include exhibitions, workshops, social and markets.
- Assessment of building condition, accessibility, and funding opportunities.
- Led by Town Team, local heritage stakeholders, and community groups.
- Aims to create a year-round, inclusive space that enhances local cultural life.

Theme		Lead and Partners	
• Heritage, Culture and Visitor Experience		• Town Team (Lead) • Local Groups • Property Owners	
Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●●●	●●●●○	High	Short-medium term



Figure 5.19: Interior of the Butter Market, Kenmare.



Case Study: Presentation Arts Centre, Enniscorthy

Presentation Arts Centre, Enniscorthy demonstrates the value of adaptive reuse and community-led cultural investment in revitalising historic buildings.

The Presentation Arts Centre in Enniscorthy exemplifies the adaptive reuse of a historic building for contemporary cultural purposes. Originally a 19th-century convent chapel, the building was transformed into a fully accessible, multi-use arts venue, officially opened in 2012. The renovation preserved key architectural features, including original stained glass windows, ornate timber ceilings, and decorative arches, blending heritage with modern functionality.

The centre supports a diverse range of activities, hosting exhibitions, performances, workshops, and community events. It emphasizes inclusivity by promoting local emerging artists alongside national and international practitioners, and by welcoming proposals from marginalized communities. The gallery space accommodates approximately six exhibitions annually, supplemented by additional temporary exhibits. Artists are supported with funding and residency applications, and are encouraged to engage with the community through talks, demonstrations, and workshops.

The development and ongoing operation of the Presentation Arts Centre are managed by Wexford

Arts Centre, in partnership with Wexford County Council. While specific details about the initial funding and feasibility study are not publicly documented, the centre’s success underscores the impact of strategic planning and community collaboration in repurposing heritage structures for contemporary cultural use.



Artist's Impression of the The Square and the Butter Market
Please note: This image is an artist's impression and is intended for illustrative purposes only.

THEME C

ENTERPRISE
AND ECONOMIC
RESILIENCE

Kenmare’s economy is shaped by a strong retail and hospitality offering, but community feedback highlighted the need to broaden the economic base, tackle vacancy, and support local enterprise throughout the year - not just in the high season. The town’s compact, walkable core presents an opportunity to bring underused properties back into productive use, foster new businesses, and enhance the environment for entrepreneurship and innovation.

This theme focuses on enabling a more diverse, sustainable economy by supporting property reuse, improving the business environment, facilitating skills development, and encouraging investment in a range of sectors. It aligns closely with the national Town Centre First policy’s emphasis on local economic resilience and place-based enterprise strategies.

The following projects support the delivery of these objectives:

- 19** Tackling Vacancy and Underutilised Buildings
- 20** Living Over the Shop
- 21** Community Energy & Resilience
- 22** Unlocking Development Sites
- 23** Tailored Business Advice Clinic
- 24** Economic Diversification Partnership
- 25** Business Incubation Hub

19

Tackling Vacancy and Underutilised Buildings

A targeted initiative to bring vacant and underutilised buildings in Kenmare back into productive use. This project will improve the town’s appearance, unlock housing and commercial potential, and support long-term regeneration.

Summary

Fortunately, Kenmare’s town centre is a vibrant hub of commercial activity centred on the hospitality, retail and services sectors. Some vacant and underutilised buildings, however, detract somewhat from the vitality and visual quality of the town centre. This project will identify and prioritise key properties for reuse, engaging with owners and promoting available supports such as the Town Centre First, Croí Cónaithe Towns Fund, and heritage grants. The initiative will include mapping, condition surveys and outreach, and it will link with other projects such as Living Over the Shop and Opportunity Site Collaboration.

Key Features / Actions

- Identification and prioritisation of vacant and derelict properties.
- Owner engagement and promotion of funding and support schemes (including workshop with property owners).
- Aligns with reuse strategies for housing, enterprise or community use.
- Supports regeneration, heritage and town centre vitality.
- Requires mapping, surveys and inter-agency collaboration.
- Links with wider town renewal and placemaking goals, supporting efforts to create a more attractive town centre, enhances the public realm, and strengthens Kenmare’s overall sense of place.

Theme		Lead and Partners	
• Enterprise and Economic Resilience		• Kerry County Council (Lead) • Kenmare Town Team • Property Owners	
Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●●○	●●●○○	High	Short-medium term



Case Study: Strokestown

Strokestown exemplifies a community-led approach to addressing vacancy and dereliction in line with Town Centre First principles.

Strokestown, a heritage town in County Roscommon, has faced significant challenges with vacancy and dereliction in its town centre. In response, Roscommon County Council, in collaboration with the Strokestown Town Team and local residents, developed a targeted plan aiming to eliminate vacancy rates by 2040. This plan focuses on engaging stakeholders, including the Strokestown diaspora, to bring vacant properties back into use for business, enterprise, and town centre living. Funding mechanisms such as the Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund and the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) programme are being utilized to support these initiatives.

The strategy includes promoting awareness of available funding opportunities, encouraging property owners to participate in the revitalization efforts, and implementing a focused marketing and engagement campaign. By addressing dereliction and vacancy, Strokestown aims to rejuvenate its town centre, enhance economic activity, and improve the quality of life for its residents.



Example in Strokestown, Elphin Street
Vacant - before refurbishment



Example in Strokestown, Elphin Street
After refurbishment: Mane Attraction Hair Salon

20

Living Over the Shop

An initiative to encourage the reuse of vacant upper floors for residential use in Kenmare’s town centre. This project will help tackle vacancy, support housing supply, and bring renewed vitality to the heart of the town.

Summary

Many traditional shopfront buildings in Kenmare have vacant or underused upper floors. This project aims to reactivate these spaces by supporting property owners to convert them into residential units. Through design guidance, funding pathways and engagement with relevant agencies, the initiative will help bring people back into the town centre, support passive surveillance and create a more vibrant, lived-in environment. It aligns with national town centre renewal policies and complements wider public realm and vacancy reduction strategies. A strong precedent is the project on Lower George’s Street in Dún Laoghaire, where vacant upper floors above a retail unit were sensitively converted into apartments. It demonstrates how modest, conservation-led interventions can deliver quality housing while revitalising town centre buildings.

Key Features / Actions

- Promotion of upper-floor reuse for housing in town centre (including workshop with property owners).
- Support for design, funding and regulatory navigation.
- Aligns with vacancy and dereliction reduction goals.
- Reinforces vibrancy and security through increased occupancy.
- Potential links to existing housing or heritage funding schemes.

Theme		Lead and Partners	
• Enterprise and Economic Resilience		• Kenmare Chamber (Lead) • Kerry County Council • Property Owners • Kenmare Town Team	
Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●●●	●●●●○	High	Short-Medium term



Figure 5.20: Sòstrene Grene, Dún Laoghaire – Upper floors converted to residential use by conservation architect Ekaterina Voronova.

21

Community Energy & Resilience

A collaborative Energy Masterplan to guide Kenmare’s transition towards a more efficient, climate-resilient and community-driven energy future.

Summary

Kenmare Tidy Towns, the Sustainable Energy Community (SEC), Kerry County Council and the Kenmare Chamber are jointly progressing an Energy Masterplan (EMP) to understand the town’s current and future energy needs. The EMP will establish a baseline of energy use across residential, private, community and transport sectors, helping identify opportunities for efficiency, local generation and carbon reduction. It can also examine specific local priorities, such as food waste and community-led composting initiatives. This work aligns with national and local climate action goals and will provide an evidence base to support future funding applications, including renewable energy, energy efficiency upgrades and community facilities. The EMP will act as a roadmap for Kenmare’s long-term sustainability, resilience and energy independence.

Key Features / Actions

- Preparation of a community-led Energy Masterplan for Kenmare
- Baseline assessment of energy use across key sectors.
- Identification of opportunities for efficiency, renewable energy and community projects.
- Supports initiatives such as community composting and water fountains.
- Provides a foundation for future climate action funding and implementation.

Theme		Lead and Partners	
• Enterprise and Economic Resilience		• Kenmare Tidy Towns (Lead) • Kenmare Sustainable Energy Community • Kerry County Council • Kenmare Chamber	
Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●○○○	●●●●○	High	Short-Medium term



Figure 5.21: Energy Masterplan (EMP)

22

Unlocking Development Sites

An initiative to unlock underused sites. This project will use available tools and mechanisms to identify appropriate uses for vacant, underutilised, or strategically located sites including options such as new housing, small-scale parking or community amenities.

Summary

Kenmare’s renewal depends not only on public investment, but also on the activation of privately owned land and buildings. This project will use available tools and mechanisms to identify appropriate uses for vacant, underutilised, or strategically located sites including options such as new housing, small-scale parking or community amenities. It will align with wider vacancy strategies, support the delivery of compact growth, and help overcome piecemeal development by encouraging collaboration and design-led solutions that serve community needs.

Key Features / Actions

- Identify key underused or vacant properties and sites.
- Use available tools, mechanisms, and interventions to unlock sites for viable reuse or redevelopment.
- Promote mixed-use opportunities including housing, parking and amenity space.
- Aligns with public realm, vacancy, and housing delivery goals.
- Supports compact town centre regeneration.
- May require feasibility studies, partnership frameworks, and planning support.

Theme		Lead and Partners	
• Enterprise and Economic Resilience		• Kerry County Council (Co-Lead) • Property Owners (Co-Lead) • Kenmare Town Team	
Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●●●	●●●●●	High	Short-Medium term



Figure 5.22: The Initiative could unlock sites to provide much needed local housing.

Unlock mixed-use opportunities that enhance life in Kenmare



23

Tailored Business Advice Clinic

A locally focused business clinic, delivered with the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), to support new and existing businesses in Kenmare. This project will provide practical guidance and tailored support to help local enterprises grow, adapt and innovate.

Summary

In partnership with the Local Enterprise Office, this project will deliver a tailored business advice clinic in Kenmare, targeting local start-ups, sole traders, creatives and small businesses. The clinic will offer direct support on business planning, funding, digital marketing, and accessing grants. By hosting it in Kenmare and linking it to wider regeneration and marketing efforts, the initiative will ensure that local businesses can access expert support without needing to travel or navigate national systems alone. Precedents such as Urlingford’s Exit 4 initiative, along with advice clinics run by LEO Cavan and LEO South Cork, show how place-based business support can empower local enterprise and foster economic resilience.

Key Features / Actions

- Host business advice clinic in Kenmare through LEO partnership.
- Targeted support for small businesses, creatives and entrepreneurs.
- Advice on funding, planning, digital tools and business growth.
- Aligns with wider economic resilience and town renewal goals.
- Potential to repeat annually or as part of a wider support programme.
- Requires coordination between Kerry County Council and LEO.

Theme		Lead and Partners	
• Enterprise and Economic Resilience		• Town Team and Chamber Alliance (Lead) • Kerry County Council • Local Enterprise Office	
Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●○○○	●●●●●	Medium	Short-Medium



Figure 5.23: Local Enterprise Office supporting Tailored Business Advice Clinics.



Case Study: Urlingford - Activating Enterprise and Supporting Business

Urlingford demonstrates how community-led regeneration can activate enterprise through strategic reuse and partnership.

Following the closure of the Bank of Ireland branch in 2021, the Urlingford Town Team, in collaboration with Kilkenny County Council and Kilkenny LEADER Partnership, repurposed the vacant building into the Exit 4 Remote Working Hub. This transformation was guided by the Urlingford Town Centre Masterplan, which emphasized the adaptive reuse of heritage structures to stimulate economic activity.

‘Exit 4’ now offers state-of-the-art facilities, including high-speed internet, dedicated workstations, meeting rooms, and communal areas, supporting remote workers, entrepreneurs, and small businesses. The hub is part of Ireland’s National Hub Network under ‘ConnectedHubs’, aiming to revive rural areas by providing opportunities to live and work locally.

Building on this infrastructure, the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Kilkenny and South East Technological University (SETU) launched the ‘START’ Exit 4 initiative. This program offers early-stage entrepreneurs training, mentoring, and a business pitch competition with a €6,000 prize fund, including €1,500 worth of office space at Exit 4.

Workshops and a ‘Start Your Own Business’ course are also conducted at the hub, providing comprehensive support for budding businesses.

Urlingford’s approach exemplifies how small towns can leverage strategic planning, community engagement, and inter-agency collaboration to foster local enterprise and economic resilience.

24

Economic Diversification Partnership

A strategic partnership between the Town Team, Chamber of Commerce and KMEG to attract new investment and explore alternatives to a tourism-dependent economy. This project will coordinate local leadership to identify and deliver innovative economic opportunities for Kenmare.

Summary

This project proposes the establishment of a dedicated focus group to explore and deliver long-term economic diversification strategies for Kenmare. By convening key local actors, including the Town Team, Chamber of Commerce and KMEG, the initiative will identify investment priorities and pursue innovative sectors suited to Kenmare’s identity and skills base. (For example: one proposed idea is the creation of a hospitality or tourism business school, building on the town’s legacy of excellence in service, food and tourism.) The group will also explore opportunities in creative industries, digital services and education to build resilience and year-round employment.

Key Features / Actions

- Establish a local economic diversification focus group.
- Explore investment strategies and sector-specific opportunities.
- Investigate feasibility of a Kenmare-based hospitality/tourism school.
- Promote alternatives to seasonal tourism reliance.
- Harness local skills in retail, food, events and service industries.
- Aligns with Town Centre First and local economic development goals.
- Participate in the Failte Ireland - South Kerry DEDP Planning Process - 2026

Theme		Lead and Partners	
• Enterprise and Economic Resilience		• Kerry County Council (Co-Lead) • Kenmare Chamber (Co-Lead) • KMEG • Failte Ireland	
Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●○○○	●●●●○	High	Short-medium term



Figure 5.24: Ballymaloe Cookery School – an example of how Kenmare could explore a hospitality or hotel management training facility, subject to focus group outcomes.

25

Business Incubation Hub

A flexible work and learning hub integrated within the refurbished St. Clare’s Convent Building to support local enterprise, training and collaboration. This project will provide informal co-working space, host business supports, and promote a culture of enterprise within the town centre.

Summary

This project proposes a small-scale business incubation space within the refurbished St. Clare’s Convent (see Project No. 25 below), comprising two offices to the rear. While a full remote working hub is not required in Kenmare, the former convent offers an opportunity to provide flexible workspaces, hot desks, and shared meeting areas, alongside space for Local Enterprise Office (LEO) clinics and digital skills training. The facility will support local sole traders, creatives, and part-time remote workers, while also hosting business development events and training programmes.

Key Features / Actions

- Space available within within St. Clare’s Convent Building for business and learning.
- Host LEO advice clinics and digital upskilling sessions.
- Promote collaboration between entrepreneurs, makers and service providers.
- Links to wider projects on shopfronts, business advice and vacancy reduction.

Theme		Lead and Partners	
• Enterprise and Economic Resilience		• Kerry County Council (Lead) • Kenmare Town Team	
Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●●○	●●●○○	High	Short-medium term



Figure 5.25: Precedent - Business and Learning Hub at Exit 4, Urlingford.

THEME D

COMMUNITY
WELLBEING
AND INCLUSION

Kenmare’s community is diverse, engaged, and deeply invested in the town’s future. Throughout the engagement process, there was a strong emphasis on the need for inclusive, intergenerational spaces, accessible public amenities, and support for local groups. As Kenmare grows, ensuring that all residents - from children to older adults - have access to social infrastructure and welcoming community spaces is essential to maintaining quality of life and a strong sense of belonging.

This theme focuses on enhancing the town’s civic infrastructure, improving social and recreational facilities, and fostering participation in local life. It also supports feasibility work for new community hubs, while ensuring existing buildings like St. Clare’s and the Carnegie can serve as flexible, inclusive resources.

The following projects support these objectives:

- 26** Repurpose St. Clare’s Convent for Community and Civic Use
- 27** Carnegie Building Refurbishment
- 28** Community Centre Feasibility
- 29** Play and Recreation Facilities
- 30** Youth Hub
- 31** Living Kenmare: A Community Initiative
- 32** Public Toilets and Changing Facilities
- 33** Kenmare Shed (Men’s and Women’s Shed)
- 34** Kenmare Boathouse- A Permanent Home for Rowing and Waterside Recreation

26

Repurpose St. Clare’s Convent for Community and Civic Use

A flagship reuse project to transform the vacant St. Clare’s Convent into a vibrant multi-use civic and community hub. This project will deliver new spaces for groups, services and inclusive community activity at the heart of Kenmare.

Summary

St. Clare’s Convent presents a major opportunity to create a landmark civic and community facility. This project proposes its adaptive reuse to accommodate a range of uses such as meeting rooms, support services, spaces for young and older people, and flexible event or workshop space including a new Family Resource Centre. Its location offers strong pedestrian links to the town centre and wider mobility projects, and it may share infrastructure with the proposed public transport hub.

Key Features / Actions

- Adaptive reuse of St. Clare’s Convent for civic and community use.
- Requires completion of statutory process and confirmation of sources of funding.
- Flexible spaces for local groups, services and events.
- Potential shared use with public transport and mobility hub.
- Strong pedestrian links to town centre and green network.
- Supports long-term social inclusion and service provision in Kenmare.

Theme		Lead and Partners	
• Community Wellbeing and Inclusion		• Kerry County Council (Lead) • Kenmare Family Resource Centre • Kenmare Town Team	
Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●●○	●●●●●	High	Short term



Figure 5.26: Former St. Clare’s Convent Building, Kenmare.

27

Carnegie Building Refurbishment

A creative reimagining of the historic Carnegie Building as a cultural and civic space for learning, events, and the arts. This project will strengthen Kenmare’s community infrastructure and provide flexible, inclusive space for cultural expression.

Summary

This project will restore and extend the use of the former Carnegie Library as a dynamic civic facility. The refurbished building will accommodate the public library alongside space for exhibitions, performances, workshops and working artists. It will provide a central venue for education, creativity and cultural life, supporting all age groups and visitor engagement. Sensitive refurbishment will preserve the building’s character while enhancing accessibility, usability and energy efficiency. The project also has potential to act as an anchor for Kenmare’s wider arts ecosystem, offering a focal point for visual artists, workshops, maker spaces and community-led creative programming.

Key Features / Actions

- Refurbishment of historic Carnegie Library building.
- Modern public library facilities.
- Exhibition, performance and community event space.
- Studios and workspaces for artists and makers.
- Supports intergenerational learning and cultural inclusion.
- Requires funding, stakeholder engagement, and detailed design.

Theme		Lead and Partners	
• Community Wellbeing and Inclusion		• Kerry County Council (Lead) • Kenmare Town Team • Carnegie Arts Centre	
Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●●○	●●●●○	High	Short-medium term



Figure 5.27: Carnegie Library, Kenmare.

28

Community Centre

A feasibility study and business case to explore the development of a new multi-purpose community centre, incorporating a sports hall, to serve Kenmare’s growing and diverse population. This project will assess the scope, location and delivery options for a facility that supports social, cultural, and physical wellbeing activities.

Summary

Community feedback strongly supports the delivery of a new community centre, incorporating a sports hall, in Kenmare but the exact requirements, functions and site are yet to be defined. A submission on the draft masterplan has indicated progress on a potential community facility near Pat Scarteen Road, highlighting one possible delivery route. A detailed feasibility study and business case should be prepared to explore how best to deliver an inclusive centre that serves all age groups. The facility is expected to include flexible spaces for meetings, events, young and older people, and indoor sports areas for physical and wellbeing activities such as exercise classes, sport and movement-based programmes.

Key Features / Actions

- Prepare feasibility study and business case for a new community centre.
- Define space requirements including social, cultural, sports and physical uses.
- Engage community to understand needs across all demographics.
- Assess site options, funding models and delivery mechanisms.

Theme		Lead and Partners	
• Community Wellbeing and Inclusion		• Kenmare Town Team (Lead) • Local Community Groups • Property Owners	
Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●●○	●●●●○	High	Medium term



Figure 5.28: Indicative CGIs of a potential Community Centre for Kenmare. (Source: Submission to Draft Masterplan.)



Case Study: Adamstown – Delivering Community Infrastructure Through Partnership

Adamstown demonstrates how coordinated planning, developer–local authority partnership, and community engagement can deliver high-quality community facilities in growing areas.

Following the designation of Adamstown as Ireland’s first Strategic Development Zone (SDZ), South Dublin County Council (SDCC) and private development partners worked together to ensure that social and community infrastructure accompanied new housing. The Adamstown Youth & Community Centre emerged from this collaborative framework, with its design and functions shaped through engagement with

residents, local groups, schools and sporting organisations.

The Centre provides a multi-purpose, inclusive facility designed for a rapidly expanding population. It includes a sports hall, activity rooms, meeting spaces, youth facilities and access to an all-weather pitch, enabling programmes such as sport, fitness, youth services, arts, community events and family activities. Its flexible layout supports both everyday community use and organised events, establishing the Centre as a focal point for social and wellbeing activity.

The project is an effective model of developer-delivered infrastructure within a statutory

planning framework, with SDCC overseeing design standards, consultation and long-term governance. Through this partnership approach, Adamstown secured early delivery of high-quality amenities that might otherwise have required significant public investment.

Adamstown’s experience demonstrates how collaborative planning, developer contributions and meaningful engagement can produce a centre that reflects local needs. It offers a useful precedent for Kenmare, showing how an inclusive, multi-use community facility—designed with and for residents—can strengthen social cohesion and enhance the quality of town-centre life.

29

Play and Recreation Facilities

Enhancing play, recreation, and wellbeing infrastructure through targeted improvements at key locations.

Summary

Community engagement has highlighted the need for more play and recreation facilities in Kenmare, beyond the existing SuperValu playground. This project will deliver natural, inclusive, and accessible spaces for play, activity, and wellbeing. Importantly, facilities should be safe, inclusive, and accessible to all. Options include:

- A natural-style playground near Railway Road car park, close to schools and community services.
- Installing play and exercise equipment at Peninsula Park to create an intergenerational space for activity and wellbeing.

These improvements will complement Kenmare’s green and blue infrastructure, support active travel, and enhance local quality of life.

Key Features / Actions

- Provide a second, natural-style playground at Railway Road.
- Explore the potential of installing play and exercise equipment to complement Peninsula Park.
- Improve opportunities for outdoor recreation, health, and wellbeing for all ages.
- Design spaces to be accessible and inclusive and serve a broad range of ages and abilities.
- Provide drinking water fountains.

Theme	Lead and Partners
• Community Wellbeing and Inclusion	• Kerry County Council (Lead) • Kenmare Town Team

Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●○○○	●●●●○	Medium	Medium term



Figure 5.29: Example of a playground constructed using sustainable and natural materials.

30

Youth Hub

A project to strengthen and grow the new Youth Hub as a safe, vibrant and inclusive space where young people in Kenmare can connect, socialise and take part in positive activities.

Summary

The Youth Hub, launched in June 2025, provides a dedicated space in The Square for 3rd–6th year students to meet, relax and take part in positive activities. Despite excellent facilities and volunteer support, early uptake has been slow, partly due to limited awareness of the service. This project aims to grow participation through a targeted communication campaign across schools, parents and the wider community, supported by social media, local radio and community events. It will also explore partnerships with youth services, local schools and community groups to integrate the hub into wider youth initiatives. Subject to demand, the project will assess funding opportunities to expand activities and extend opening hours, ensuring the Youth Hub becomes a valued and sustainable youth facility in the town centre.

Key Features / Actions

- Targeted awareness campaign to increase youth engagement
- Partnerships with schools, KCYS and community groups.
- Integration into broader youth programmes and activities.
- Exploration of funding to expand services and hours.
- Strengthens social connection and provides a safe, inclusive space for young people.

Theme	Lead and Partners
• Community Wellbeing and Inclusion	• Local Community Groups (Lead) • Kenmare Town Team • Property Owners • KCYS and Schools

Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●○○	●●●●○	High	Short term



Figure 5.30: Example - Adamstown Community Centre, Co. Dublin.

31

Living Kenmare: A Community Initiative

Bringing people together to strengthen community life, connection, and local pride.

Summary

In a town shaped by tourism, Living Kenmare is a programme focused on the people who call Kenmare home. Led by the Town Team, KMEG, and local organisations, this initiative will support collaboration across the community to strengthen civic life, inclusion, wellbeing, and local pride. It will create opportunities for residents to connect, share resources, and work together on initiatives that enhance everyday life - from health and wellbeing to the arts, environment, and education.

A key proposal is to designate an annual “Kenmare Community Day” - a day solely for locals to celebrate their town, their connections, and their shared identity. This will ensure that amid a busy tourism calendar, there remains a moment for Kenmare’s people to come together as a community.

Key Features / Actions

- Led by Town Team, KMEG, and local groups.
- Promote collaboration on community wellbeing, inclusion, and shared initiatives.
- Establish an annual Kenmare Community Day — for locals, by locals.
- Foster partnerships across arts, heritage, environment, education, and health.
- Strengthen Kenmare’s civic life alongside its tourism economy.

Theme	Lead and Partners
• Community Wellbeing and Inclusion	• Kenmare Town Team • KMEG • Local Groups

Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●○○○	●●●●○	Medium	Medium term



Figure 5.31: Example - Street Feast. Nationwide community gatherings, street-parties / shared meals, bringing neighbours together in public spaces.

32

Public Toilets and Changing Facilities

Upgrade of existing public toilet facilities at Railway Road and delivery of additional public toilets at other key locations in the town where needed.

Summary

Community feedback identified the Railway Road toilets as outdated and in need of significant improvement, while also highlighting the wider need for more public toilet provision across Kenmare. This project proposes a coordinated upgrade of the Railway Road facility alongside the identification and delivery of additional public toilets in appropriate locations. Improvements will include modern, accessible and inclusive design, baby-changing facilities, enhanced lighting and hygiene, and integrated signage. Drinking water fountains will also be incorporated where suitable. These upgrades will complement wider public realm projects and improve the overall visitor experience. (Note: Toilets at the pier are delivered under Project 08 – Pier Area Development.)

Key Features / Actions

- Refurbishment of public toilets at Railway Road.
- Identify and deliver additional toilet facilities at suitable town centre or high-usage locations.
- Provide universal access, baby-changing facilities and improved safety and hygiene.
- Integrate wayfinding and signage to key toilet locations.
- Include drinking water fountains where appropriate.

Theme	Lead and Partners
• Community Wellbeing and Inclusion	• Kerry County Council (Lead) • KMEG

Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●○○	●●●●●	High	Short term



Figure 5.32: Example - a contemporary building at the Parade, Kilkenny providing public toilets and a cafe.

33

Kenmare Shed (Men’s and Women’s Shed)

A community-driven project to establish a dedicated space for a Men’s and Women’s Shed in Kenmare—supporting wellbeing, creativity, and social connection through shared activity.

Summary

Kenmare needs a permanent space to host a Men’s and Women’s Shed—providing inclusive, welcoming environments for hands-on projects, skills-sharing, and social connection. This project will bring together the Town Team, KMEG, Tidy Towns, and other local organisations to identify a suitable location, secure funding, and develop the facilities needed.

The shed will offer practical workshops, shared tools, and opportunities for intergenerational learning and community contribution. Beyond physical projects, they will foster wellbeing, reduce isolation, and promote inclusion—creating spaces where people can come together with purpose and pride.

Key Features / Actions

- Identify and secure a site for Men’s and Women’s Shed in Kenmare.
- Develop facilities for workshops, tools, and shared activity.
- Led by Town Team, KMEG, Tidy Towns, and local volunteers with assistance from South Kerry Development Partnership and Family Resource Centre.
- Promote wellbeing, skills-sharing, and inclusion through hands-on work.
- Encourage collaboration with schools, artists, and groups.

Theme	Lead and Partners
• Community Wellbeing and Inclusion	• Kenmare Town Team • Local Groups

Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●○○○	●●●○○	Medium	Medium term



Figure 5.33: Mens and Womens Shed.

34

Kenmare Boathouse – A Permanent Home for Rowing and Waterside Recreation

A purpose-built boathouse at Peninsula Park to support Kenmare Rowing Club and provide lasting facilities for water-based sport, community activity, and outdoor wellbeing.

Summary

Kenmare Rowing Club has a long-standing presence in the town but lacks a permanent home. This project proposes the development of a dedicated boathouse at Peninsula Park to support rowing and other waterside activity. The facility will include boat storage, a maintenance and docking area, meeting and exercise space, and accessible toilets for club and public use.

While the Rowing and Boating Club will be the key driver, the project will require support from the Town Team, KMEG, and other stakeholders to secure funding, permissions, and design input. The boathouse will strengthen the role of the park as a destination for sport and recreation while providing vital infrastructure for an active, growing club.

Key Features / Actions

- Delivery of a purpose-built boathouse at Peninsula Park.
- Facilities to include boat storage, maintenance area, exercise and meeting space.
- Accessible toilets and services for club and community use.
- Supports youth engagement, physical activity, and waterside recreation.
- Requires site design, funding, and collaboration with local stakeholders.
- Subject to planning requirements, including consideration of flood risk, nature conservation designations, invasive species, wildlife disturbance, recreational pressures, and lighting.

Theme	Lead and Partners
• Community Wellbeing and Inclusion	• Kenmare Rowing & Boating Club (Lead) • Kerry County Council

Complexity	Impact	Priority	Timescale
●●●○○	●●●●●	Medium	Medium term



Figure 5.34: Precedent - Denmark’s National Rowing Stadium by AART Architects.

06

IMPLEMENTATION

6.0 Implementation

6.1 Delivery of a Thriving Town

A key purpose of the Kenmare Town Centre First Masterplan is to build long-term confidence in the process of place-making - demonstrating that coordinated action can unlock funding, attract investment, and act as a catalyst for social, cultural and economic regeneration. The Masterplan reflects national policy goals for compact growth, green mobility, active travel, and climate resilience, and supports targeted interventions such as ‘Living Above the Shop’ and community reuse of historic buildings, all while strengthening Kenmare’s role as a vibrant place to live, work and visit.

The plan sets out a coherent programme of projects that, if implemented, will transform Kenmare’s public realm, strengthen its civic infrastructure and support sustainable development. Delivering this vision will require strong leadership from Kerry County Council in partnership with the Kenmare Town Team and a broad range of stakeholders. This chapter sets out the approach to implementation, coordination, and funding, including a Delivery Action Plan to guide prioritisation and resourcing over time.

6.2 Project Matrix

This section presents a clear, high-level summary of each of the 32 priority projects identified through the Kenmare Masterplan process.

Each project is listed in numerical order, grouped by its overarching Placemaking Theme (e.g. Movement & Sustainable Environment, Heritage & Visitor Experience). The accompanying Implementation Table provides a concise breakdown of the following components:

- **Project Title** – aligned with Section 5.2 of the Masterplan
- **Theme** – categorising each project within one of four strategic focus areas
- **Lead** – the organisation responsible for driving delivery
- **Partners** – supporting agencies or community stakeholders
- **Priority** – a high-level indicator of urgency and strategic importance
- **Timescale** – classified as Short (0–2 yrs), Medium (3–5 yrs), or Long (5+ yrs)
- **Funding** – the most relevant sources or schemes to support delivery

These details provide a framework for coordination between Kerry County Council, the Kenmare Town Team, and delivery partners. Together, the information helps to set expectations, shape funding applications, and guide phasing decisions in line with available resources and community priorities.

(Note: The table that follows focuses on place-based improvements and enabling works to support Kenmare’s long-term regeneration, quality of life, and economic resilience. Additional project sheets and precedents are set out earlier in Section 5.0.)



Implementation Table

Placemaking Theme	ID	Project	Lead
Movement and Sustainable Environment	01	Public Realm Enhancement	Kerry County Council
Movement and Sustainable Environment	02	Transport Hub at St. Clare's	Kerry County Council
Movement and Sustainable Environment	03	Parking Node, Link and Amenity Space	Kerry County Council
Movement and Sustainable Environment	04	Active Travel Measures	Kerry County Council
Movement and Sustainable Environment	05	Public Transport	NTA and Bus Eireann
Movement and Sustainable Environment	06	Wayfinding Strategy	Kerry County Council
Movement and Sustainable Environment	07	Sustain and Expand 'Greening the Town'	Kerry County Council, Tidy Towns
Movement and Sustainable Environment	08	Kenmare Pier- Public Realm and Waterside Amenity	Kerry County Council
Movement and Sustainable Environment	09	Greenway	Kerry County Council
Movement and Sustainable Environment	10	Loop walks	Kerry County Council
Movement and Sustainable Environment	11	Relief Road	Kerry County Council
Heritage, Culture and Visitor Experience	12	Courthouse Refurbishment: Visitor Experience (also incorporating Kenmare Lace)	Kerry County Council
Heritage, Culture and Visitor Experience	13	Shopfront Enhancement Scheme	Kenmare Town Team
Heritage, Culture and Visitor Experience	14	Heritage & Biodiversity Trails with Interpretive Signage, QR Codes and App Integration	Kenmare Tidy Towns
Heritage, Culture and Visitor Experience	15	Kenmare Tourism Festivals & Events Programme	KMEG
Heritage, Culture and Visitor Experience	16	Marketing of Kenmare	KMEG
Heritage, Culture and Visitor Experience	17	Pop-Up Cinema and Outdoor Screening Programme	KMEG
Heritage, Culture and Visitor Experience	18	Butter Market	Kenmare Town Team

Partners	Priority	Timescale	Key Funding Streams
Kenmare Town Team , Tidy Towns	High	Short - Medium	RRDF, TVRS
Kenmare Town Team, Tidy Towns	High	Short - Medium	RRDF, TVRS
Kenmare Town Team, Tidy Towns	High	Short - Medium	RRDF, TVRS, ORIS
Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine	High	Medium	ATG
Local Link, Kerry County Council	High	Short	NTA
Kenmare Town Team	Medium	Short - Medium	RRDF, TVRS
Kenmare Town Team	High	Short - Medium	RRDF, TVRS, LEP, CSF
Kenmare Rowing and Boating Club, Kenmare Town Team	Medium	Medium - Long	RRDF, ORIS, Fáilte Ireland, Department of Marine
TII, Local Landowners, Kenmare Town Team	Medium	Long	TII, RRDF, ORIS, ATG
Kenmare Town Team, Local Land Owners	Medium	Short- Medium	ORIS
Department of Transport, Local Landowners	High	Medium	Department of Transport
Kenmare Heritage CLG, Kenmare Town Team, Court Services, Heritage Council	High	Short- Medium	RRDF, TVRS, Heritage Council
Property Owners and Kerry County Council	High	Short - Medium	TVRS, Built Heritage Investment Scheme, LEP
Kerry County Council, Kenmare Town Team	Medium	Short - Medium	LEP, CSF, Heritage Council
Kenmare Town Team, Local Groups	High	Short- Medium	LEP, CSF, TVRS
Kenmare Town Team, Kerry County Council	High	Short - Medium	Fáilte Ireland, Arts Council, LEP, TVRS
Kenmare Town Team, Local Groups	High	Short - Medium	TVRS, Fáilte Ireland, Arts Council, LEP, CSF
Local Groups, Property Owners	High	Short- Medium	LEADER

Implementation Table (continued)

Placemaking Theme	ID	Project	Lead
Enterprise and Economic Resilience	19	Tackling Vacancy and Dereliction	Kerry County Council
Enterprise and Economic Resilience	20	Living Over the Shop	Kenmare Chamber
Enterprise and Economic Resilience	21	Community Energy & Resilience	Kenmare Tidy Towns
Enterprise and Economic Resilience	22	Unlocking Development Sites	Kerry County Council, Property Owners
Enterprise and Economic Resilience	23	Tailored Business Advice Clinic	Kerry County Council - LEO
Enterprise and Economic Resilience	24	Economic Diversification Partnership	Kerry County Council, Kenmare Chamber
Enterprise and Economic Resilience	25	Business Incubation Hub	Kerry County Council
Community Wellbeing and Inclusion	26	Repurpose St. Clare’s Convent for Community and Civic Use	Kerry County Council
Community Wellbeing and Inclusion	27	Carnegie Building Refurbishment	Kerry County Council
Community Wellbeing and Inclusion	28	Community Centre	Kenmare Town Team
Community Wellbeing and Inclusion	29	Play and Recreation Facilities	Kerry County Council
Community Wellbeing and Inclusion	30	Youth Hub	Local Community Groups
Community Wellbeing and Inclusion	31	Living Kenmare: A Community Initiative	Kenmare Town Team
Community Wellbeing and Inclusion	32	Public Toilets and Changing Facilities	Kerry County Council
Community Wellbeing and Inclusion	33	Kenmare Shed (Men’s and Women’s Shed)	Kenmare Town Team
Community Wellbeing and Inclusion	34	Kenmare Boathouse- A Permanent Home for Rowing and Waterside Recreation	Kenmare Rowing and Boating Club

Partners	Priority	Timescale	Key Funding Streams
Kenmare Town Team, Property Owners	High	Short- Medium	RRDF, TVRS
Property Owners, Kerry County Council, Kenmare Town Team	High	Short- Medium	Housing Support Grants
Kenmare Sustainable Energy Community, Kerry County Council, Kenmare Chamber	High	Short- Medium	SEAI Grant
Kenmare Town Team	High	Short- Medium	RRDF, TVRS
Business Owners, Kenmare Town Team	High	Short -Medium	LEO- Suite of Supports
KMEG, Fáilte Ireland	High	Short- Medium	LEO- Suite of Supports
Kenmare Town Team	High	Short- Medium	RRDF, TVRS
Kenmare Family Resource Centre, Kenmare Town Team	High	Short	RRDF, TVRS
Kenmare Town Team, Carnegie Arts Centre	High	Short- Medium	RRDF, TVRS
Local Community Groups, Property Owners	High	Medium	LEADER, Community Centre Investment Fund
Kenmare Town Team	Medium	Medium	Sports Grants, ORIS
Kenmare Town Team, Property Owners, KCYS and Schools	High	Short	CSF, LEP
Local Groups	Medium	Medium	LEP, CSF
KMEG	High	Short	CSF
Local Groups	Medium	Medium	CSF, LEP
Kerry County Council	Medium	Medium	Sports Capital, ORIS

6.3 Stakeholders

Kerry County Council

Kerry County Council is the lead implementation body for the Masterplan and will bring forward many of the larger public realm and infrastructure projects. Its multidisciplinary expertise in planning, engineering, conservation, transport, and economic development will be vital. The Council’s dedicated Town Regeneration Officer will support coordination with other departments and ensure alignment with relevant funding programmes.

Kenmare Town Team

The Kenmare Town Team is a cross-sectoral group of local residents, business owners, Elected Members and community representatives who work collaboratively to improve the town. As a grassroots body, the Town Team plays a crucial role in shaping projects, representing local priorities, and ensuring ongoing community input. It will take the lead on several initiatives and support co-delivery of projects with the Council and other partners.

Kenmare Marketing and Events Group (KMEG)

KMEG brings together representatives from the business and community sectors to promote Kenmare through marketing, festivals, and local initiatives. Their involvement will be essential for implementing branding, digital engagement and year-round event programming.

Kenmare Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber of Commerce provides leadership on enterprise and economic development in the town. The Chamber will help to shape business-related projects, support collaboration between retailers and service providers, and provide insight into the needs of the local economy.

Local Community

The wider community is central to delivering the Masterplan. Public support, local knowledge and voluntary input will be critical in shaping projects, sustaining civic initiatives, and ensuring proposals reflect lived experience and local needs. Community voices will inform inclusive design, cultural programming, and social infrastructure.

Kenmare benefits from a wide network of active groups and organisations that represent diverse interests across sport, culture, heritage, youth, social inclusion, and environmental care. These groups bring valuable knowledge, experience, and perspectives to the Masterplan process. While it is not possible to list all such organisations individually, the Kerry Public Participation Network (PPN) provides a comprehensive directory and a key platform for engagement with these stakeholders (visit: <https://kerryppn.ie/>).

6.4 Funding Opportunities

This section of the Report sets out a list of potential sources of funding that can be used to bring forward projects identified within this Masterplan. It is important to note that additional sources of funding may be brought forward following the publication of this report and as such, this list should not be seen as exhaustive.

- **Rural Regeneration and Development Fund:** The RRDF is a funding programme, administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, that is investing €1 billion in rural Ireland up to 2027. The fund is aimed at supporting job creation in rural communities, addressing de-population of rural communities, and supporting improvements in towns and villages. This fund is available for towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000.
- **Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS):** The Town and Village Renewal Scheme provides grant funding to support the economic and social recovery of rural towns with a population of less than 10,000. Applications are submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development and Gaeltacht through Local Authorities and the scheme focuses on projects that have a positive impact in terms of place making and town centre regeneration. Projects funded have included the regeneration of banks, courthouses, cinemas and halls for community use, the development of public plazas, town parks, playgrounds, community gardens and dog parks. The scheme also funds projects at pre-development stage and the acquisition of suitable vacant or derelict properties that could be taken into public ownership and converted for community use. It has also provided specific funding to enhance streetscapes and shopfronts under the streetscape enhancement initiative.

- **LEADER Community Led Local Development:** The LEADER programme is funded by both the EU and Irish Government, providing grants, advice, and training to support local communities.
- **NTA Active Travel Grants Programme:** Under this programme the NTA allocates funds to Ireland’s local authorities with a view to spending on walking and cycling infrastructure.
- **Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme:** This scheme provides funding for the development of new outdoor recreational infrastructure. It also provides support for the necessary repair, maintenance, enhancement, or promotion of existing outdoor recreational infrastructure in rural areas across Ireland.
- **Historic Structures Fund:** The capital funding for built heritage under Project Ireland 2040 runs from 2018-2027 and is focused on enhancing and safeguarding built heritage throughout the country. The primary focus of the Historic Structures Fund will be on conservation and enhancement of historic structures and buildings for the broader benefit of communities and the public.
- **The Built Heritage Investment Scheme:** The BHIS provides funding for repairing and conserving structures protected under Planning and Development Acts. It supports owners of historic properties, encourages private investment, and promotes small-scale conservation projects nationwide. BHIS assists in maintaining heritage buildings, supports traditional skills training, and focuses on listed structures and Architectural Conservation Areas. Funding ranges from €2,500 to €15,000 for qualifying works detailed in the BHIS Guidance Circular.

- **European Regional Development Fund:** The European Regional Development Fund 2021-2027 programmes set out an investment strategy for €835 million, of which €396 million is financed by the EU. Funding is managed by Regional Assemblies to ensure alignment with Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and to support Local Authorities in delivering the sustainable regeneration of towns and urban centres. The fund aims to address regional imbalance, sustainable economic development, environmental sustainability, and build low carbon and climate resilient communities. Tackling vacancy and dereliction in towns, in support of the Town Centre First approach, is a particular emphasis of this fund.
- **Community Support Fund:** This fund is offered to groups across the County whose primary focus is the development or promotion of the local community or the development of a project that will benefit a group in the community. This fund is an annual scheme and is open to a range of local resident community, environmental and festival groups throughout the county to apply for local area grants.
- **TidyTowns Funding:** Every year a competition is held between TidyTown communities with approximately 900 communities entering each year. The Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltachthas operated a grant scheme of €1,000 for entrants to the competition to make their town a more attractive place to live, work, and to do business in.
- **Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant:** The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant provides funding to refurbish vacant and derelict homes. It can also be used to renovate properties that have not been used as residential properties before. Grants of up to €50,000 are awarded for vacant properties with grants of up to €70,000 awarded for

derelict properties. Grants are funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage through the Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund and applications can be made to the local authority.

- **Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland Community and Business Grant:** The Community Grant programme supports new approaches to achieving energy efficiency in Irish communities. This grant is open to homeowners, community groups, private sector organisations, and public sector bodies. This fund is to support the Government's commitment to reach 2030 and 2050 climate targets.
- **Creative Ireland Grant Scheme:** This is a culture and wellbeing programme whose ambition it is to inspire and transform people, places, and communities through creativity. The grant scheme will provide financial support to local and community groups and individuals, artistic and creative practitioners, event organisers and those involved in creative, cultural and heritage activities and projects, to encourage cultural participation throughout the County.
- **Local Enhancement Programme:** (LEP) provides capital supports essential for many small community groups and organisations, particularly those who serve disadvantaged areas. In 2024 the LEP replaced the Community Enhancement Programme which was first launched in 2018 and provided capital funding to assist thousands of community groups across the country.
- **Sports Capital Funding:** The Sports Capital Programme aims to foster an integrated and planned approach to developing sports and physical recreation facilities throughout the country.

- **Community Centre Investment Fund:** This fund supports the upgrade, renovation and refurbishment of community centres across the country. The Community Centres Investment Fund is the largest ever capital investment in Community Centres. It provides funding for investments in Community Centres in order that these vital services remain useable, accessible, and safe and continue to meet the needs of the community into the future.
- **Local Sports Partnerships:** This fund is designed to support the installation of barrier-free outdoor sport infrastructure for public use in local community settings. The fund supports the purchase and installation of permanent sport infrastructure that can be placed on public land for community use.
- **Arts Programme Funding (Arts Council):** These grants will support art organisations and centres to support and develop the arts nationwide.
- **Heritage Council Community Grant Scheme:** provides financial aid to projects that improve access and inclusion to heritage sites and practices in Ireland. The scheme is open to voluntary and community groups, like parish councils, tidy town and local action groups, non-governmental organisations and Museum Standards Programme for Ireland participants, with grants available ranging from €500 to €25,000. The scheme is intended to enable these bodies to preserve places, collections, habitats and species, objects, buildings, monuments of local historic significance, as well as intangible heritage practices too.

Climate Action and Retrofitting Initiatives:

- **Biodiversity Action Plan Grant Scheme:** This scheme will fund local biodiversity action plans across Ireland. The chosen community plans

will receive grants from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the Community Foundation Ireland.

- **Local Enterprise Office:** This organisation can offer mentoring and training programmes to help develop crucial business skills. The Local Enterprise Office helps individuals start, grow, and develop their business. It can also advise and assist with potential grants for new and existing businesses.
- **Play and Recreation Funding Scheme:** The Capital Grant Scheme for Play and Recreation provides funding to support city and county councils in upgrading existing playgrounds or developing new playgrounds.
- **Greenways and National Roads Active Travel infrastructure:** This funding is dedicated to developing walking and cycling facilities that offer safe, sustainable and healthier transportation options to communities. The funding will also be used to enable delivery of active travel infrastructure on national roads, and to progress the National Cycle Network which identifies 3,500 km of cycling corridors around the country linking cities and towns.
- **Grants for the Conservation of Protected Structures:** The Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2025 (BHIS) is for the repair and conservation of structures that are protected under the Planning and Development Acts. This scheme aims to support a significant number of projects across the country and the employment of skilled and experienced conservation professionals, craftspeople and tradespersons in the repair of the historic built environment. Grants of between €2,500 and €50,000 are available.

- **CLÁR:** CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) is a targeted investment programme for rural areas that aims to provide funding for small infrastructural projects in rural areas that have experienced significant levels of de-population. This funding assists in building the resilience of these rural communities. CLÁR 2025 will be delivered through the following three separate Measures :Measure 1: Developing Community Facilities and Amenities; Measure 2: Mobility, Cancer Care, Community First Responder and Meals on Wheels Transport; and Measure 3: ‘Our Living Islands’.

- **Festivals and Participative Events Grant Scheme:** This initiative aims to support festivals and events that promote tourism in County Kerry, encouraging domestic and international visitors, increasing overnight stays, driving local economic growth, and enhancing the overall visitor experience.

- **Strategic Tourism Festival Investment Programme:** The purpose of the programme is to help drive domestic and international tourism visitors to increase bed nights, stimulate local economic activity, and help improve visitor experience. The supported Festivals must help drive domestic and international tourism visitors, increase bed nights, stimulate local economic activity, and help improve the county’s visitor experience.

- **Historic Town Initiative:** An initiative to promote heritage-led regeneration and to improve the quality of our historic towns and villages for residents and tourists. It is a joint undertaking by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the Heritage Council which aims to promote the heritage-led regeneration of Ireland’s historic towns.

- **Creative Ireland Grant Scheme:** The Creative Ireland Grant Scheme is an annual scheme that provides financial support to projects that foster creativity and artistic collaboration in the local authority area. It’s open to individuals and community and voluntary groups with an interest in arts and culture. The Creative Ireland Grant Scheme is part of Creative Ireland, a national programme set up in 2017 and supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. The aim of the programme is to inspire and transform people, places and communities through creativity.

- **National Home Energy Upgrade Scheme:** The National Home Energy Upgrade Scheme provides grants to upgrade the energy efficiency of your property. When the work is completed your property should have an energy efficiency rating of B2 or above. The scheme is available to homeowners, private landlords and approved housing bodies. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) administers the grants and a private company manages the work for you.

- **Bus Stop Enhancement Scheme:** The scheme enables Local Authorities to work with the NTA to facilitate the enhancement / upgrade of existing bus stops to meet the Transport For Ireland minimum requirements for customer experience. The aim of the Bus Stop Enhancement Programme is to achieve consistency across the bus network in terms of infrastructure provision.

- **Low-Cost Safety Improvement Scheme:** The Low Cost Safety Improvement Scheme is an initiative aimed at improving road safety at locations with a history of collisions or identifiable safety issues — without the need for major construction or high expenditure.

- **The Public Electric Vehicle Charge Grant (for EV Parking):** The Electric Vehicle Public Charger Grant provides support up to €10,000 for the Dual Socket Charging Point. This initiative is to support the roll out of Electric Chargers in public areas. Local authorities can apply to install charge points on public streets or public car parks which provide overnight parking for local residents. The EV Public Charger Grant is only open to Local Authorities and County Councils. Typically, the chargers installed will consist primarily of charging posts and lamppost chargers. Grant support is offered for each charge point.

Potential Funding Partners

- **Fáilte Ireland:** Fáilte Ireland administers capital grants schemes for tourism product development. Its Grants Scheme for Large Tourism Projects is aimed at tourism projects of scale and innovation, awarding grants of between €200,001 and €5 million.

- **National Transport Authority:** The National Transport Authority (NTA) is charged with devising and implementing projects to enhance people’s use of public transport and sustainable travel choices, in line with government policy. The NTA manages the Sustainable Transport Measures Grant and Public Transport Accessibility Programme on behalf of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.
- **Heritage Council Ireland:** The Heritage Council is a public body whose mission is to develop a wide understanding of the vital contribution that our heritage makes to our social, environmental & economic well-being. The Heritage Council supports a wide range of heritage projects throughout the country through our annual grants programme.

- **LEADER:** LEADER is a community-led approach to local development funded through Ireland’s CAP Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027. It has been operating in Ireland since its commencement in 1991 and has evolved through five successive programming periods to become a key intervention within EU rural development policy. LEADER supports private enterprises and community groups who improve the quality of life and economic activity in rural areas. It is delivered by a network of Local Action Groups (LAGs) selected to implement Local Development Strategies for their respective geographical areas.

- **Transport Infrastructure Ireland:** TII is a state agency under the aegis of the Department of Transport, working at both national and regional level, in partnership with Local Authorities regarding national roads and greenways, and the National Transport Authority (NTA) regarding light rail and metro. TII was established through a merger of the National Roads Authority (NRA) and the Railway Procurement Agency (RPA) under the Roads Act 2015, and was set up to deliver and operate safe and efficient light rail and national road networks.

- **Department of Transport:** The Department of Transport is a department of the Government of Ireland that is responsible for transport policy and overseeing transport services and infrastructure.



6.5 Promoting and Marketing

Kenmare requires a strategic and focused marketing approach to position the town as a highly attractive and prime destination for investment and development. The development of Kenmare encompassing the enhancement of public realm spaces, regeneration and refurbishment of underutilised and vacant buildings and the implementation of social and community development initiatives by Kerry County Council, the Town Team and others will contribute to the enhancement of Kenmare Town Centre whilst retaining its unique character.

The articulation and promotion of Kenmare as an appealing and dynamic urban living environment - offering a unique and enriching quality of life for residents, employees, and visitors - is integral to the continued success of the town. The effective delivery of the masterplan will depend upon clear and consistent communication of the tangible benefits of residing, visiting and working in Kenmare. It will also require the cultivation of meaningful partnerships with businesses, sectoral stakeholders, community organisations, and cultural entities to co-create, champion, and advance a shared vision for the town’s transformation.

The overarching objective is to position Kenmare as a nationally and internationally recognised destination - a place where people choose to invest, visit, and do business. Building on its unique heritage, vibrant community, and natural setting, Kenmare aims to be known not only for its quality of life and visitor experience, but also as a hub for enterprise, innovation, and sustainable development.

Achieving this ambition will necessitate the active engagement of a broad spectrum of stakeholders, whose knowledge, networks, and influence can significantly amplify the message and broaden its reach. In this regard,

collaboration with key partners such as the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, the Kerry Chamber, multinational and indigenous enterprises, and educational and innovation institutions will be essential to realising the full potential of Kenmare’s regeneration and repositioning.

6.6 Monitoring

A framework for monitoring delivery of the projects outlined within this Masterplan, should be established by Kerry County Council and the Kenmare Town Team. Monitoring should use a combination of quantitative and qualitative metrics to track economic performance and the implementation of the various masterplan objectives (including economic objectives) and projects and will help realise the aspirations of the Masterplan.

In addition, it is recommended that a formal twice-annual consultative forum be held in respect of Kenmare with representatives of business, community and other key stakeholders to engage in a meaningful dialogue, promoting the Masterplan and providing feedback on progress. Dialogue with the local community should also be sustained as the projects within the Masterplan are progressed. This dialogue should be facilitated and promoted through dedicated information channels (such as a dedicated website and marketing / information media).

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