

BAILE NA NGALL LOCAL AREA PLAN

1.0 CONTEXT

1.1 Location

Baile na nGall is a small fishing village on the eastern side of Smerwick Harbour located approximately 1km to the north west of Muiríoch Village.

The name of the village is directly translated as “townland of the foreigner.” It is likely that the foreigners referred to were the Vikings, as Smerwick Harbour was a Viking settlement from which butter was shipped to Limerick.

The topography of the village is of land gently sloping from the east towards the beach to the west. Baile na nGall is situated in close proximity (c. 1 km) to An Mhuiríoch and is functionally linked to An Mhuiríoch. The village is situated some 10 km northwest of Daingean Uí Chúis on the R559 Slea Head Drive – an important tourist route.

1.2 Population

There are no specific population statistics for the plan area of Baile na nGall. The smallest available statistics relate to the DED of Cill Maolchádair in which Baile na nGall is located. The total population of the DED in 2011 was 476, 511 in 2006 and 549 in 2002. This indicates a 6.3% decrease in the period 2006-2011. There is usually a large influx of people during the summer. It is estimated that the year round population of Baile na nGall is approximately one third that of the summertime population.

The census figures for those able to speak Irish in Baile na nGall has remained static at approximately 88% over the last decade between 1996-2006. From these figures it appears that the Irish language is strong in the area and is in widespread use making it one of the strongest Irish speaking areas in the Dingle Functional Area. Little change has occurred in its use and in the ability of people to speak the language in the period between 2002 and 2006.

1.3 Functions & Facilities

Baile na nGall is mainly a fishing and tourist village and is closely linked with An Mhuiríoch, An Bóthar Buí and An Fheothanach.

Baile na nGall has a basic range of services which includes two public houses, a shop and a post office. The Radio na Gaeltachta offices are located to the north of the village. There are two national schools within short driving distance, at An Mhuiríoch and An Fheothanach and a church at An Bothar Buí. There are also several one-off and multiple holiday home developments in the plan area.

Baile na nGall has a pier and beach which is easily accessed. This beach acts as a focal point for the community and visitors to the village and is a great facility for adults and children throughout the year. The pier was recently extended and is a valuable asset to the area. There is a working Coastguard Station opposite the pier.

The village does not benefit to any great extent from tourism traffic on the Sleah Head Drive, or from its fine beach. There are a number of bed and breakfast operations and quite a number of holiday homes in the village.

1.4 Infrastructure

Baile na nGall is served by a septic tank which outfalls to the sea shore which is currently operating at capacity. There are no immediate plans to upgrade or expand on sewerage facilities in the village. The village is served by a public water supply.

The constraint on existing effluent treatment facilities will be a limiting factor in the future development of the village in the short-term.

1.5 Urban Form

Baile na nGall has developed to the east of Smerwick Harbour and has traditionally comprised of small groupings of buildings at the minor road junctions and at minor road ends with a nucleus of development around the pier area. In recent years some ribboning of development has occurred on the roads to An Fheothanach and An Mhuiríoch. Despite this the village itself is still quite compact in nature.

Baile na nGall is a dispersed rural settlement with no streetscape and is developed on an undulating rural landscape. Services are located a distance from each other. There is no obvious service focal point in the village, although the pier and waterfront area at Baile na nGall defines a geographic centre.

The predominant settlement pattern is of small to medium sized detached single storey dwellings on small plots with a random layout reflecting a traditional clachan style settlement. Extensive development of one off housing has occurred on local roads in the vicinity of the village creating a haphazard development pattern which is unsustainable, erodes the rural environment and undermines the development of a compact village form.

1.5.1 Character Area

The existing settlement pattern comprises of traditional dwellings at the core with more recent dwellings on the outskirts displaying a more dispersed pattern than the older core areas.

On the south-eastern side of the road towards the pier there is grouping of two-storey and single-storey buildings which has evolved over the years (see Figures 1 and 2 and zoning map CA-1). This group of structures consists of a tight knit group of dwellings and outhouses with a random layout and with gables to the public road. The buildings are finished in either local stone or rendered and are traditional in design and scale based on a narrow plan.



Figure 1: OS Map Character Area

This attractive settlement pattern is specific to the Baile na nGall area and constitutes a valuable blueprint for future residential and mixed use development within the plan area.



Figure 2: Character Area

1.6 Built Heritage & Archaeology

There are no recorded monuments or existing protected structures in the plan area.

1.7 Natural Environment and Amenity

There are no designated NHA's or SAC's in the plan area or immediately outside the plan area. The plan area adjoins the Dingle Peninsula SPA. Development proposals should be compatible with the conservation objectives of this SPA.

1.8 Employment

The 2006 Small Area Population Statistics for the DED in which Baile na nGall is located indicate that the main source of employment for males in the area is the construction industry (20%) and agriculture(20%) followed by manufacturing(14%). The majority of employed females are professionals, followed by those working in the service sector.

The development of ecotourism and other niche markets along with the sustainable extension and diversification of tourist facilities are a possible source of employment.

The provision of local based industry/ Craft Industry is seen as forming a significant part in the provision of sustainable employment in the area. This concept needs to be combined with nurturing existing indigenous talent to provide products which are unique to the area and capitalise on creative local talents.

1.9 Vehicular and Pedestrian Traffic

The village is located on a cross roads within a network of local roads (L-5006-0, L-12044-0 and L-8031-0) and traffic through the settlement peaks during the summer season. There is no public car park in the plan area or immediately outside of the plan area.

1.10 Growth and Residential Development

Like other towns and villages in the county, Baile na nGall experienced a period of growth as evidenced by the number of new dwellings built in the villages. The majority of dwellings built in the last ten years have been second homes and holiday homes. The level of residential planning permissions granted in the period 2008 – 2011 has indicated a limited growth potential over the next number of years.

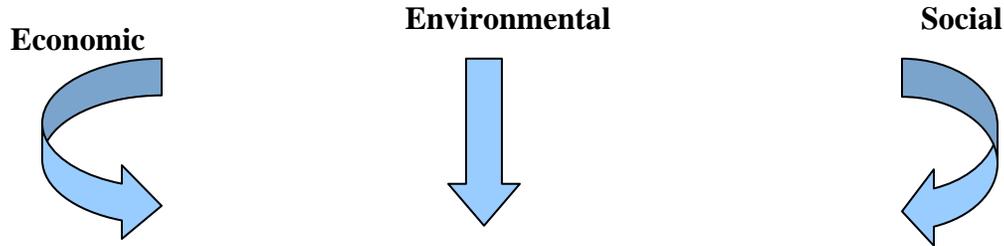
The development boundary for Baile na nGall defines the existing extent of the area where new development may be considered, whilst also allowing for some expansion for residential development adjacent to the village core. The development boundary for Baile na nGall is largely determined by topography and infrastructural considerations. During the lifetime of this Plan, development will focus mainly on these lands, located close to the village core.

It is the an objective of the plan to encourage the development of a compact and sustainable village structure by ensuring that new development is contiguous with existing development and makes effective use of backland and infill sites. All new development shall occur within the development boundary and shall reflect the existing vernacular design subject to compliance with the development management standards set out in the County Development Plan 2009-15.

2.0 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The overall vision for Baile na nGall is to maintain the character of this distinctive fishing village and to promote a compact and sustainable village which is an attractive place to live in and to visit. Future development should be in-depth to create a strong and identifiable village core and to avoid ribbon development along the approaches to the village.

The development strategy for the village is to:-



- Support the existing role and function of the village as a rural service centre and small tourist village having regard to the scale of the existing settlement and the setting of the village in an attractive rural landscape.
- Ensure that all new development is of traditional design and layout and does not detract from the character of the settlement. New developments should have reference to the settlement pattern found in the grouping of buildings adjacent to the pier(Character Area)
- Ensure that all new development is located within the settlements development boundary.
- Provide for an attractive waterfront area incorporating residential and mixed uses.
- Preserve and enhance the use of the Irish language.
- Ensure that any future tourism developments should be sensitive to the existing character of the village and should be appropriate in scale. Developments which are open on a year round basis should be encouraged.
- Ensure that all residential development within the village should cater for the needs of the local population who wish to live in the area on a permanent basis.
- Encourage the creation of commercial services & craftwork enterprises within the village which in turn will provide local employment and improve the quality of life of the local community.

3.0 OVERALL OBJECTIVES

Objective No.	It is an objective of the Council to:
OO-1	Ensure that the high quality natural setting of the village is maintained and protected from inappropriate development.
OO-2	Protect the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht in Baile na nGall including the promotion of Irish as the community language.
OO-3	Facilitate the sustainable development of ecotourism and other niche markets. Facilitate the sustainable extension and diversification of tourist facilities.

Objective No.	It is an objective of the Council to:
OO-4	Ensure that new residential developments on lands within the development boundary shall be small scale and low density served by individual treatment systems in accordance with the EPA standards pending upgrading /construction of the waste water treatment plant in the village.
OO-5	Ensure that development within the development boundary complies with the “Code of Practice; Waste water treatment and disposal systems serving single houses” and where necessary “Wastewater Treatment Manuals - Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels” pending the upgrading / construction of the WWTS.

4.0 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Objective No.	Opportunity Site It is an objective of the Council to:
OS-1	Ensure that the land as indicated on the zoning map OS-1 be promoted and developed as a mixed use opportunity site due to its current under use, its central location and its proximity to the beach and pier. Development of this site will require the preparation of a detailed design statement which will address the character, strategic location of this site and its sensitive location. Preference will be given to uses which support coastal and marine functions at the pier and beach. The need to maintain public access as well as visual and pedestrian permeability should also be addressed in the brief. In addition, development proposals should be of high quality architectural design and finish and should contribute to the public domain.

Objective No.	Amenity It is an objective of the Council to:
A-1	Retain this portion of land as an amenity area.
A-2	Protect and sensitively promote the beach as an area of amenity for the village.

Objective No.	Institutional/Community Facilities It is an objective of the Council to:
ICF-1	Reserve land at this location for the future sustainable expansion of the public sewage infrastructure serving the village.
ICF-2	Reserve land at this location for the provision of storage facilities for maritime related activities such as fishing, water-sports etc.
ICF-3	Reserve this site for its continuing use as a Coastguard Station and/or for the provision of public facilities.

Objective No.	Vehicular and Pedestrian Traffic It is an objective of the Council to:
T-1	Improve pedestrian connectivity within the village, by providing pedestrian pathways and access, which is sensitive to the character of the village and its natural heritage, where necessary.
T-2	Provide a public car park at this location to allow for an increase in the provision of public car spaces within the settlement.
Objective No	Views & Prospects It is an objective of the Council to:
VP-1	Preserve views and prospects on the seaward side of the approach road into the village from An Mhuiríoch.
Objective No.	Design and Built Environment It is an objective of the Council to:
D-1	Ensure that all exposed stonework used in construction within the village should be indigenous and locally sourced.
D-2	Ensure that any new development shall incorporate / re-use the existing, traditional stone currently on the site.
D-3	Ensure that all existing traditional stone walls within the settlement shall be retained and restored where possible.
D-4	Encourage the appropriate reuse and sensitive restoration of the existing traditional structures for use as permanent places of residence.
Objective No.	Character Area It is an objective of the Council to:
CA-1	Identify this area as a character area on the basis of the distinctive settlement pattern that has evolved there along with the traditional scale and design of the structures. Applicants should refer to and take cognisance of the character of this area when designing new residential and mixed use areas within the village.
CA-2	Ensure that any future development in the character area should be sensitive to the settlement pattern and the nature and scale of the existing structures.
Objective No	Tourism & leisure It is an objective of the Council to:
TL-1	Encourage the development of an all year round tourism & leisure facility.
Objective No	Employment & Enterprise It is an objective of the Council to:
EE-1	Encourage the creation of commercial services & craftwork enterprises within the development boundary in a manner compatible with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
Objective No	Nature Conservation It is an objective of the Council to:
NC-1	Ensure that development proposals shall pay due regard to the rich natural heritage and bio diversity in the area. As part of this all proposals will be screened for Appropriate Assessment so as to ensure that the conservation interests of the Dingle Peninsula SPA are safeguarded.