

# **Report to Members**

## **Fermoy Electoral Area Local Area Plan Preliminary Public Consultation & Other Issues**

**June 2010**

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This report focuses on the submissions and observations received from the public following publication of an Outline Strategy for Fermoy Electoral Area which identified the critical planning issues and choices facing the Electoral Area in the future. The report summarises the outcome of this pre-draft public consultation which was carried out in line with S.20 (1) of the Planning & Development Acts 2000-2006 and will inform the preparation of the Draft Fermoy Electoral Area Local Area Plan. Appendix A of the report includes a list of the submissions received relevant to the Electoral Area while Appendix B details the issues which arose from the Stakeholders meeting held in January 2010.

This report was circulated to the members of the Fermoy Electoral Area Committee at a meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2010. A second meeting has been arranged for the 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2010 to discuss the issues arising from the report.

## Section 1 Electoral Area Context

### 1.1 Main changes since the last plan

4.1.1 The geographical extent of the Electoral Area has contracted since the 2005 Local Area Plan, as a portion of land to the south-west (containing the Key village of Watergrasshill and the village nucleus of Kildinan), has been transferred to the Mallow Electoral Area in the general changes to Electoral Areas that came into effect at the end of 2008.

4.1.2 The most recent Census data for the Electoral Area registered an increase in population from 22,686 in 2002 to 25,764 in 2006 (14%). This overall growth masks disproportionate growth within the settlement hierarchy. Fermoy Town performed well, recording a 22% population increase, while Mitchelstown grew by only 1% (or 65 persons). The villages and rural areas grew by 13%, with strong population growth recorded across most of the seven key villages. Rathcormack recorded the largest population increase (151%), followed by strong levels of growth in Kilworth (51%), Conna (46%) and Ballyhooly (20%).

4.1.3 Economically the area has faced some notable challenges including the loss of Quinn Healthcare in Fermoy (a significant employer within the Electoral Area) and the contraction of the dairy processing industry which has created several brownfield sites within the towns and villages.

4.1.4 The opening of the M8 in 2009 has vastly improved the accessibility and attractiveness of the area as a place to live and work but has similarly made commuting to Cork City more achievable.

4.1.5 Flood Relief works are ongoing in Fermoy and this should restore confidence amongst local business in the town centre and contribute to the revitalisation of the retail environment.

### 1.2 Pressure/ Challenges for the future

1.2.1 The southern portion of the electoral area including the main town of Fermoy and the key villages of Ballyhooly, Castlelyons/Bridesbridge, Conna, Glanworth, Kilworth and Rathcormack are within the CASP Ring Strategic Planning Area defined in the County Development Plan 2009. Here, the CASP Update Study, completed in 2008, identified the need to moderate the high growth rates experienced in recent years particularly in the villages and rural areas so that growth in the area will be closer to the CASP targets overall. Setting out a land-use planning framework to moderate underlying growth rates closer to the targets represents a significant challenge for the Draft Plan.

1.2.2 The main challenge for the Electoral Area will be boosting the population and employment base of the towns which can create a critical mass to stimulate the performance of the wider Electoral