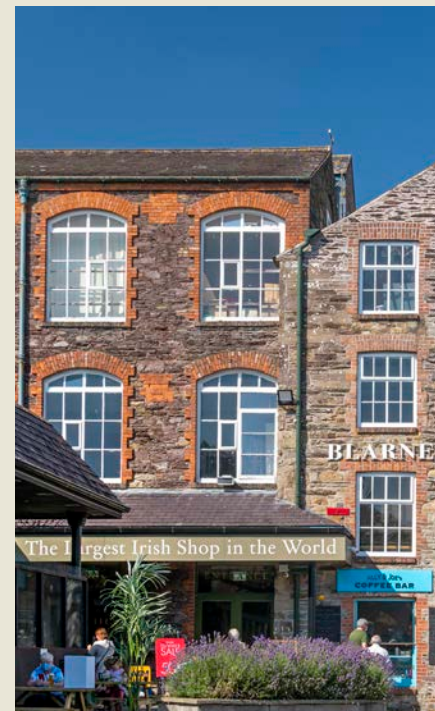


## Draft Blarney Masterplan

presented to Cork City Council

October 2021





*This **Masterplan Booklet** introduces the vision, principles, and objectives that are envisaged to act as a framework for guiding the development of zoned lands in the Stoneview and Ringwood areas of the Cork City Metropolitan Area town of Blarney.*

*The Booklet consists of two main sections:*

**Part A Project Introduction**

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*Establishes the context within which the masterplan has been prepared, identifies the lands, determines their character and assesses their opportunities and constraints. It provides the basis upon which the strategy in Part B is developed.*

**Part B Project Implementation**

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*Sets out the response to the opportunities and constraints of the lands. A development framework is arrived at which realises the development potential of the lands. In doing so it puts forward a series of solutions addressing infrastructural issues, topography, amenity and landscaping matters and delivers on the public transport potential.*





# PART A





In this Masterplan the joint landowners of the Ringwood and Stoneview lands in the Cork City Metropolitan Area town of Blarney set forward a credible plan for delivery of homes within the timetable of the proposed city development plan whilst achieving a sustainable approach to travel, landscape and sensitivity of the local context.

These lands play a pivotal role in the delivery of the city's land use and transportation strategy due to their strategic location in the context of the rail planned station and their capability to accommodate the scale of residential development required to justify its business case and ongoing operation.

This Masterplan Booklet introduces the vision, principles, and objectives that are envisaged to act as a framework for guiding the development of these zoned lands.

The Masterplan responds directly to the rich legacy of local planning policy formulated for the lands over the last two decades which anticipated and fully align with current integrated land use and transportation strategy policy and objectives as set out in the Government's 2018 National Planning Framework (NPF).

These NPF policies seek to ensure increased housing delivery in the form of compact urban growth that supports and is complemented by enhanced sustainable transport services.

In this regard, the principle of the Masterplan finds full endorsement from the Government's current Economic Recovery Plan 2021, which prioritises significant capacity increases on the Cork Area Commuter Rail network, including electrification and a new rail station at Blarney, and for which €164 million of funding has been allocated.

The challenge for the Masterplan is to guide the social, economic, and physical development of its locality while capturing the vision of an attractive, inclusive, high-quality, healthy, and sustainable future urban environment. In this regard, the key components of the Masterplan seek to achieve the provision of:

- A mix of quality housing types and tenures;
- Effective connectivity to excellent sustainable transport infrastructure;
- High-quality amenity and service provision, including attractive open space to support a high quality of life;
- Distinctive, functional, and permeable medium-high density urban form; and
- Best practice in design and layout, including sensitive integration with the existing landscape and providing for the protection of environmental resources such as biodiversity and water.

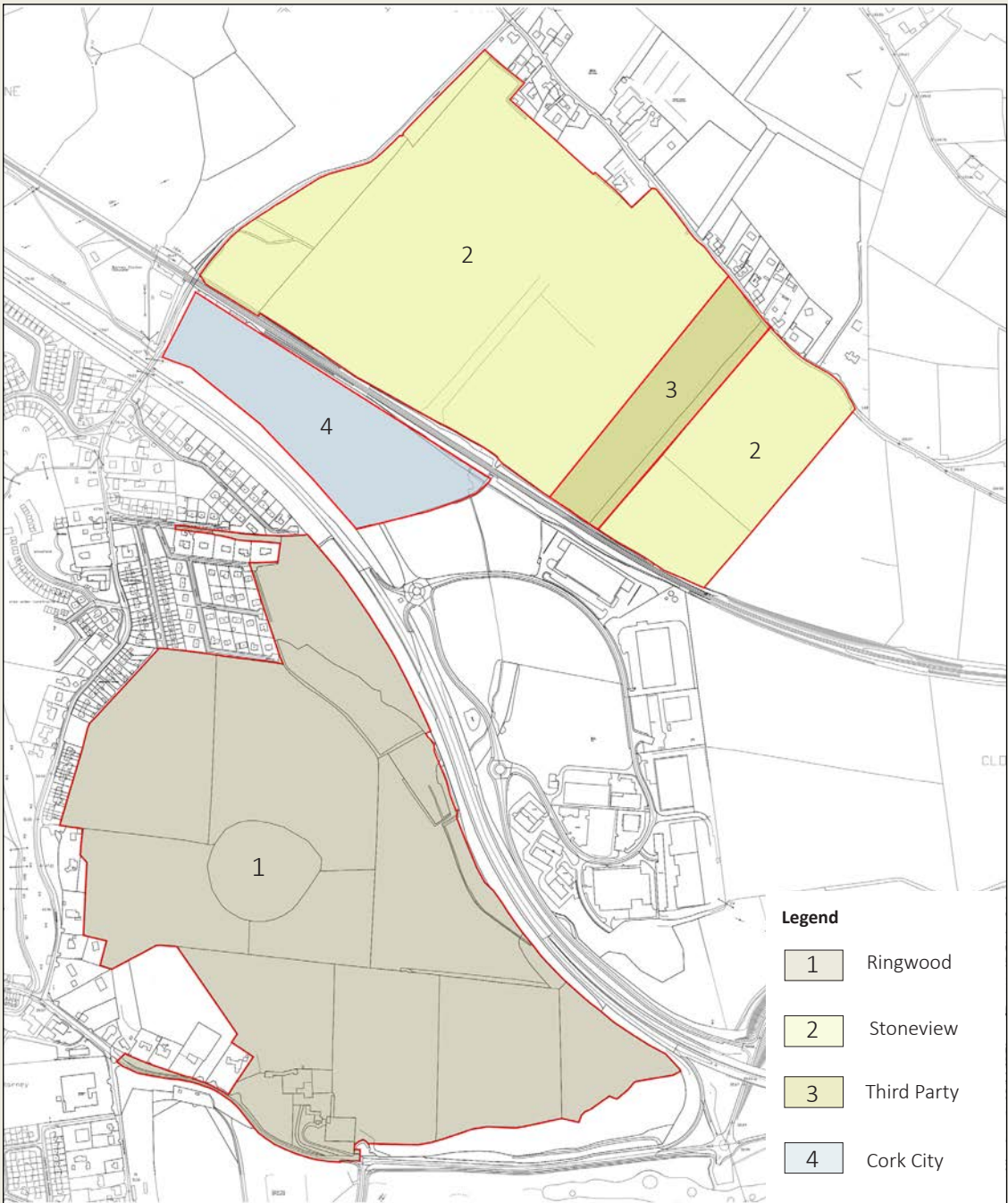


Aerial view of Development Lands show in the context of Blarney and Cork City Centre



### 2.1 The Lands Ownership

The Forrest Family own the Ringwood Development Area and Elkstone Ltd. own the eastern part of Stoneview Urban Expansion Area. Both landowners are presenting the delivery of the development of these lands in Blarney in tandem with upgrades to the local public transport network having established a credible and well funded approach to the masterplanning and delivery of new homes.



Map identifying the lands

### 2.2 Character of the Lands

The lands form a natural expansion to the urban area of Blarney utilising zoned, serviced residential lands which will connect the proposed rail station to the high quality tourist assets of Blarney Castle and Blarney Woolen Mills. The lands are elevated in nature and offer significant opportunity to deliver a quality living area whilst maintaining key landscaping features and protecting critical views in the area.



Aerial view of Stoneview Lands looking from North-East



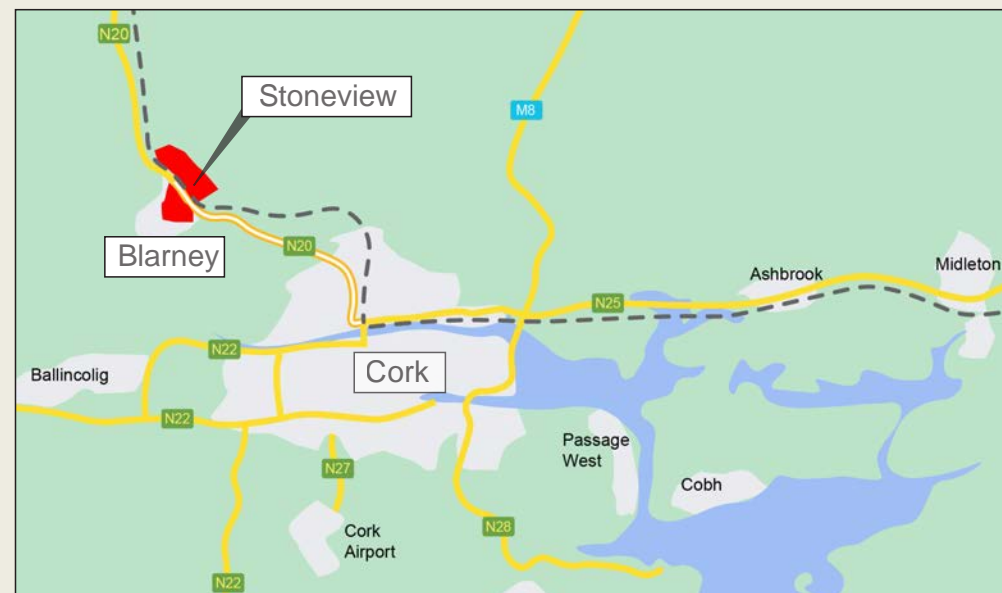


## Part A 3.0 Regional and Local Context

## Setting the scene

### 3.1 Regional Context

The lands are located within the Metropolitan Cork Area. They are situated in the northeast of the town of Blarney, approximately 8km northwest of Cork City Centre. The town has a population of over 2,500 and lies to the east of both the Cork-Dublin rail line and the N20 Cork Limerick National Primary Road.



Context Map



Map showing the lands in a broad context

### 3.2 Local Context

The lands extend over 92 hectares to the east and northeast of the town. They are separated by the rail line and National Primary Road, with Ringwood to the south adjoining the existing built up area of the town and Stoneview to the north, currently accessed via Station Road.

The historic village centre lies at the western side of the town, centred around the village square, a short distance from its historic castle. The River Martin flows through the town and runs eastward along the Clogheenmilcon Sanctuary Walk to the south. To the east of the N20 is the Blarney Business Park which has been expanding recently. Station Road runs to the land's immediate west and is accessed by a series of residential estates. The wider countryside to the east and north of the lands are in agricultural use, generally focused on pasture and dairy farming.



Blarney Castle as a focal / key asset in both regional and local context



Woolen Mills



Clogheenmilcon scenic route



Blarney Square



Waterloo scenic route



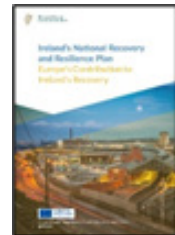
Blarney Business Park



## Part A 4.0 Statutory Policy and Regulatory Context

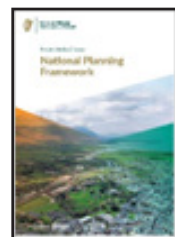
*Matters arising*

### 4.1 Statutory Policy



On 28th May 2021, the Irish Government put forward its submission to the European Union's National Recovery and Resilience Facility fund in the form of Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan. The top priority of the plan is to advance the green transition, with €164m suggested to be allocated towards enabling future electrification and significant capacity increase of the Cork Commuter Rail Network. Speaking on 1st June 2021 about the launch of the Government's Economic Recovery Plan 2021, Minister Eamon Ryan said that the plan constituted "a billion euro investment, bringing a metropolitan rail system to Cork so we can help tackle the housing crisis by leading out on transport-led solutions".

On 16th July 2021 the European Commission endorsed Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan. In a press release from the Commission, President Ursula von der Leyen stated the following: "The Irish plan presents a well-balanced mix of reforms and investments that address the key challenges facing Ireland. It places a particularly strong emphasis on the green and digital transitions, with investments in sustainable rail transport in Cork..."



Project Ireland 2040- National Planning Framework 2018 (NPF) sets a population growth target of at least 50-60% for Cork City and its suburbs by 2040. This is to facilitate Cork becoming a city of scale which can compete internationally and be a driver of national and regional growth, investment and prosperity. The preferred spatial development approach contained in the NPF is to provide as compact an urban environment as possible, where increased residential densities are complemented by easy access to sustainable modes of transport and high-quality services and amenities.

A key future growth enabler for Cork outlined in the NPF is to progress the sustainable development of new greenfield areas for housing, especially those on public transport corridors. The corresponding economic investment plan, the National Development Plan 2018-2027, specifies that the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) provides for enhancements to the Cork Commuter Rail Network including additional stations and increased rail fleet.



On 2nd September 2021 the Government launched the Housing for All – A new Housing Plan for Ireland (HFA). This is the Government's revised policy and investment plan to address the housing crisis which has affected the entire country since 2014. Section 5.6 of the plan emphasises that transport infrastructure and access to public transport are critical enablers of new housing supply, and that if the long-term trend of growth in demand for housing and transport is to be met, we must improve land-use and transport planning to meet the NPF objective of compact growth.

HFA Housing Policy Objective 26 is specifically aimed at supporting critical infrastructure development by establishing a working group to consider opportunities for transport-led development in major urban centres. The development of the subject masterplan lands wholly satisfies the above criteria and fully aligns with the principles of the plan.



The 2020 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES) and its constituent Cork Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) both build on the policy contained in the 2001 Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) and 2008 CASP update, all of which emphasise Blarney as a strategic residential growth node on the Cork Commuter Rail Network where major population growth and development should be prioritised via an integrated land use and transportation strategy that is infrastructure-led.

Upgrading the Cork commuter rail service and providing additional stations in areas targeted for growth is a key enabler for the Cork MASP. In line with NPF targets, the Cork MASP targets Cork City and Suburbs to grow by an additional 75,000 people over the next decade. The MASP states the indicative residential yield at Blarney as 3,555 new dwellings (including 2,600 at Stoneview Urban Expansion Area), with the development of a new commuter rail station and Park and Ride facility in Blarney being some of the key transport priorities for the Cork Metropolitan Area (CMA).

The CMATS (2020) reaffirms the preceding two decades of planning policy for Blarney regarding the development of a new rail station and associated Park and Ride facility to support sustainable growth. CMATS envisages enhanced pedestrian and cycling infrastructure for Blarney, including the Blarney Greenway Route, which will abut Castleview lands to the south, as well as a Core Radial Bus Network to serve the town, all of which will facilitate connectivity between Blarney and the wider metropolitan area.



Proposed Suburban Rail Map

Thus, at a national, regional, and metropolitan level it is clear that developing the lands that are the subject of this masterplan is considered critical to achieve the targeted, sustainable growth of the CMA.



## Part A 4.0 Statutory Policy and Regulatory Context

*Matters arising*

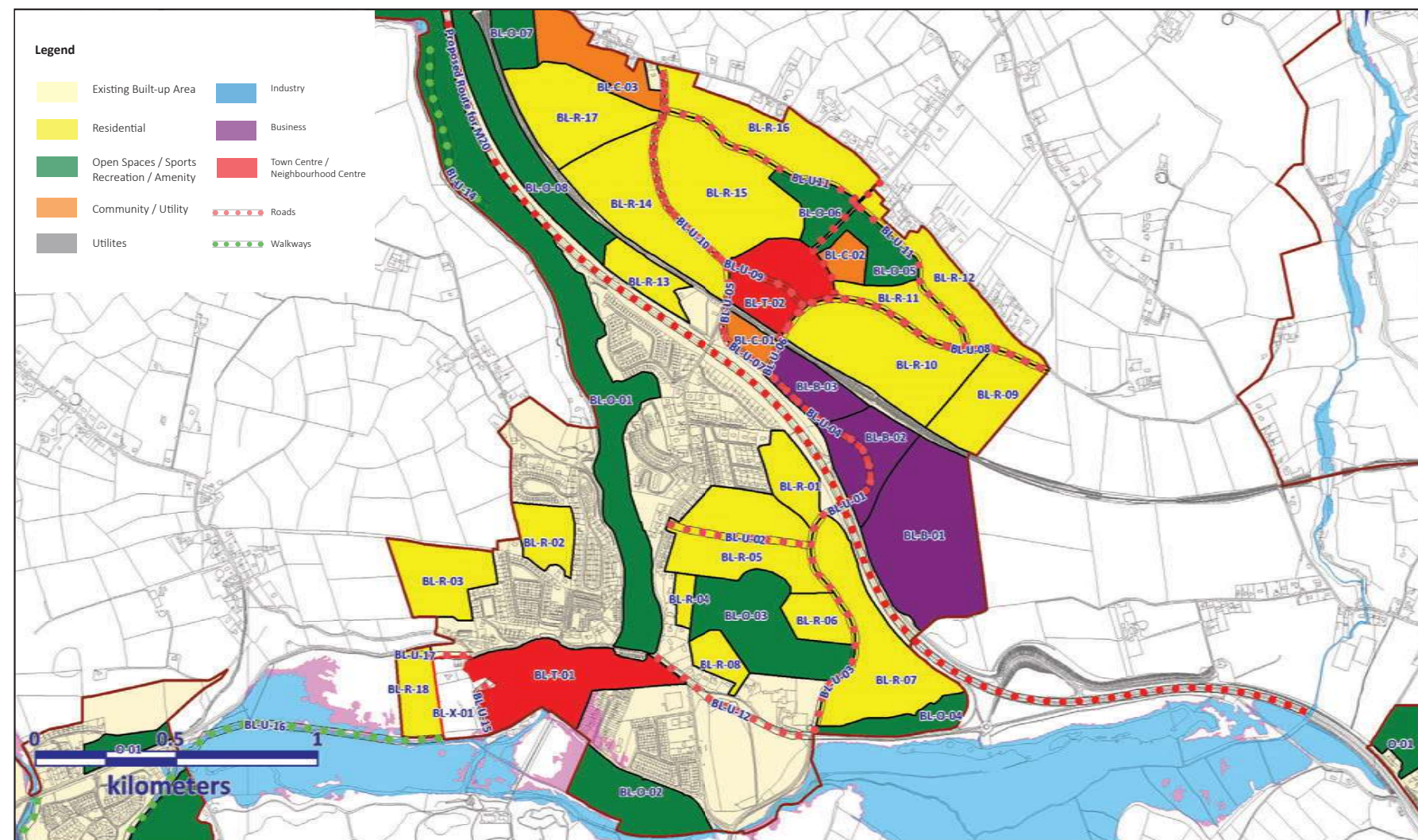
### 4.1 Statutory Policy- continued

Until Cork City Council has completed its development plan review, the relevant statutory development plan for the subject lands is the Cork County Development Plan 2014 (CDP). Under the CDP, Blarney is a Metropolitan Town in the Cork Gateway where the strategic aim is to facilitate critical population growth and develop the town as a service and employment centre along the Cork Commuter Rail Network. Stoneview is one of the locations where new residential and jobs-related development is prioritised.

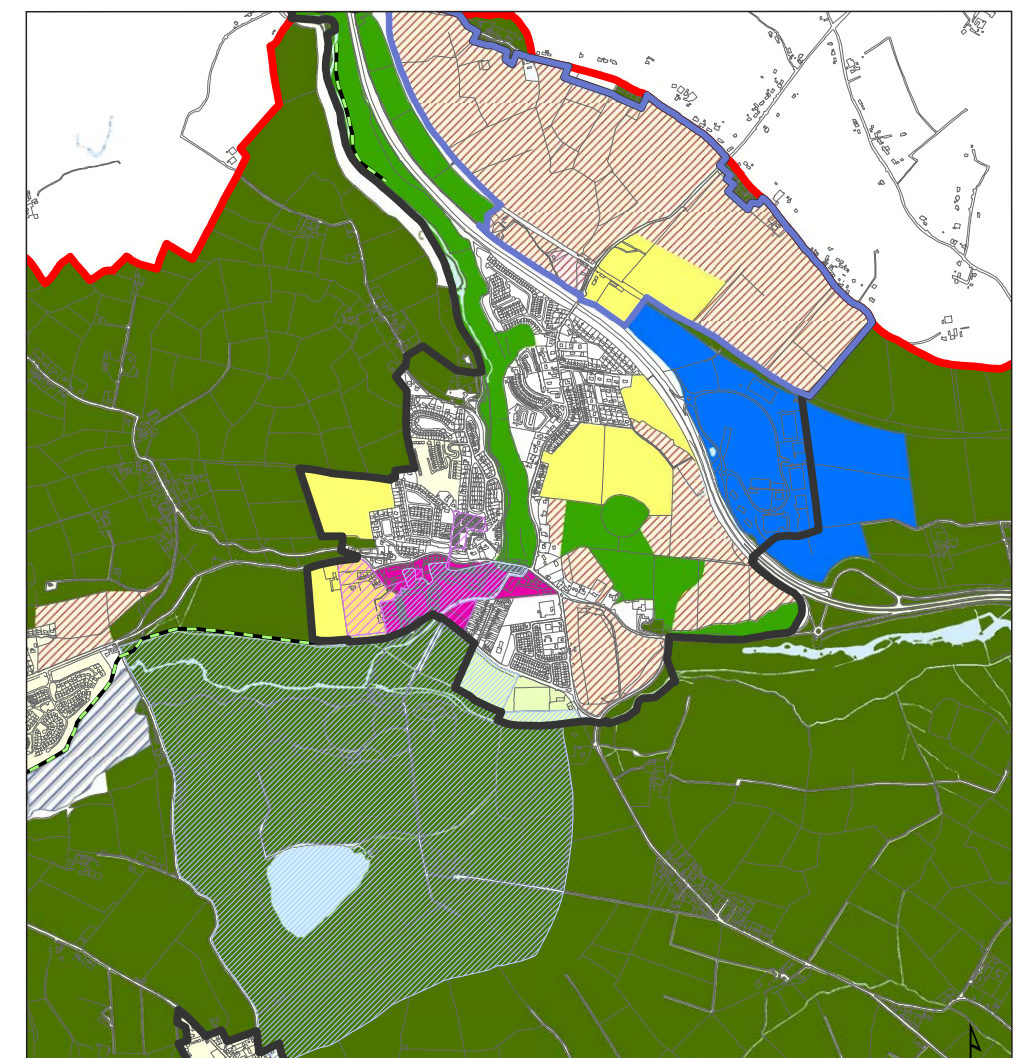
Such is the strategic significance of Blarney that the CDP's population target for the town is 7,533 by 2022, an increase of 5,096 people on 2011 Census figures. To accommodate this targeted population growth, 2,566 additional housing units are required over the period 2011-2022. However, between 2016-2020, commencement notices for just 1,687 new dwellings were submitted for the entirety of the Cork Metropolitan Area under the jurisdiction of Cork County Council, with 63.6% of these being located outside settlement boundaries, exacerbating an unsustainable pattern of development in the CMA.

In 2005, Objective HOU 6-3 of the Blarney-Kilbarry Special Local Area Plan primarily involved securing the sustainable development of 2,500 new dwellings at Stoneview and sanctioned the creation of a masterplan to guide development of these lands. Accordingly, in 2006 the non-statutory Masterplan for Lands at Stoneview Blarney County Cork was prepared for and adopted by Cork County Council.

The 2017 Blarney Macroom Municipal District Local Area Plan (LAP) involved a review and incorporation of aspects of the 2006 Masterplan and anticipated the delivery of at least 2,600 new dwellings at the Stoneview Urban Expansion Area, as well as 1,000 new dwellings at Ringwood, designated as an Area for New Residential Development under the LAP. The LAP notes that between 2010-2015, the number of residential units in Blarney increased by just 9 units. Under the LAP, the subject lands are zoned predominantly for medium density residential development, with areas of open space, town centre uses, the provision of a railway station, park and ride facility, and primary school, and various roads and bridges.



Blarney Macroom Municipal District Local Area Plan 2017- Zoning Map



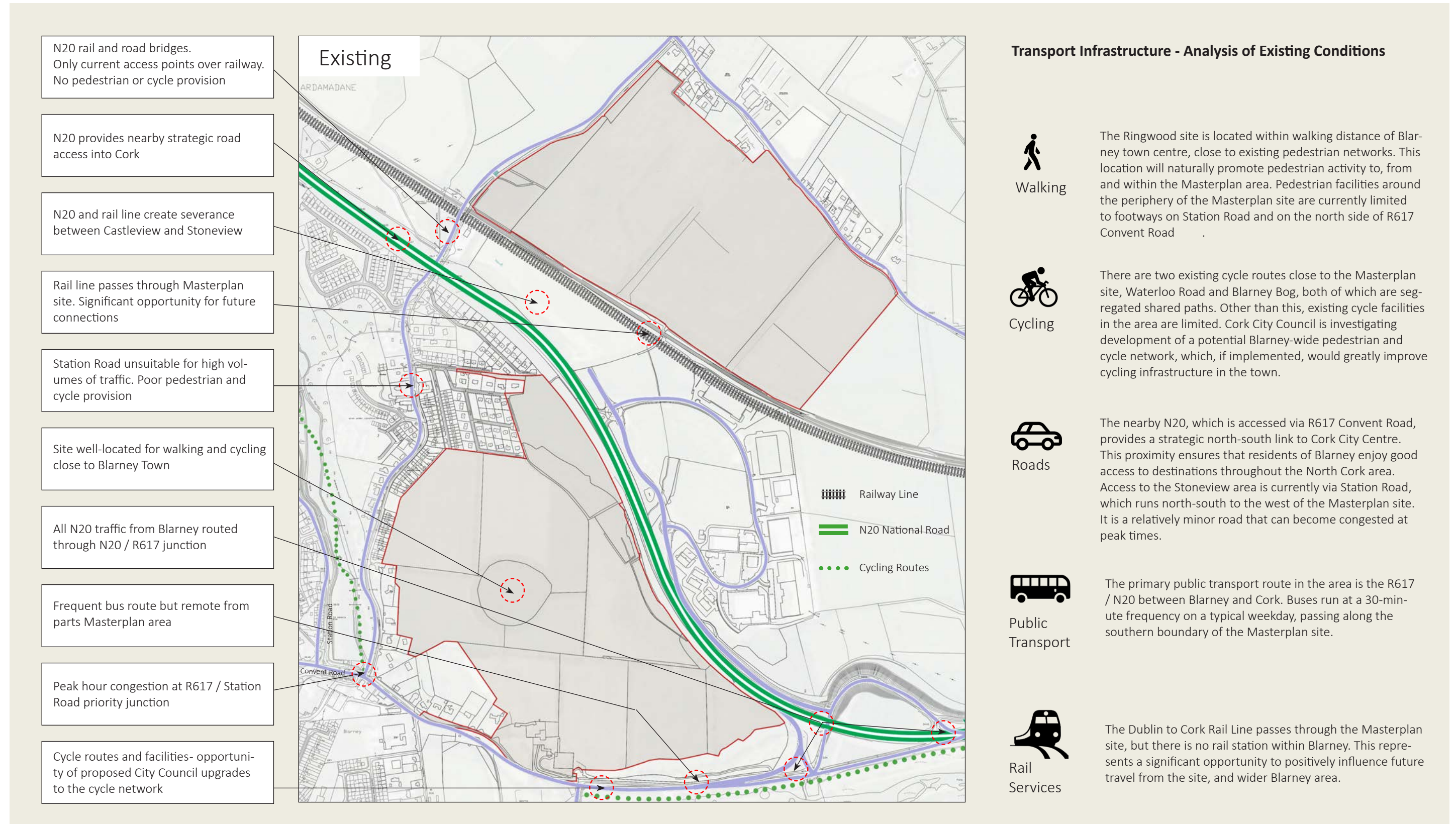
Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022- 2028- Zoning Map



## Part A 5.0 Opportunities and Constraints

## Infrastructural challenges - transportation

### 5.1 Transport Network

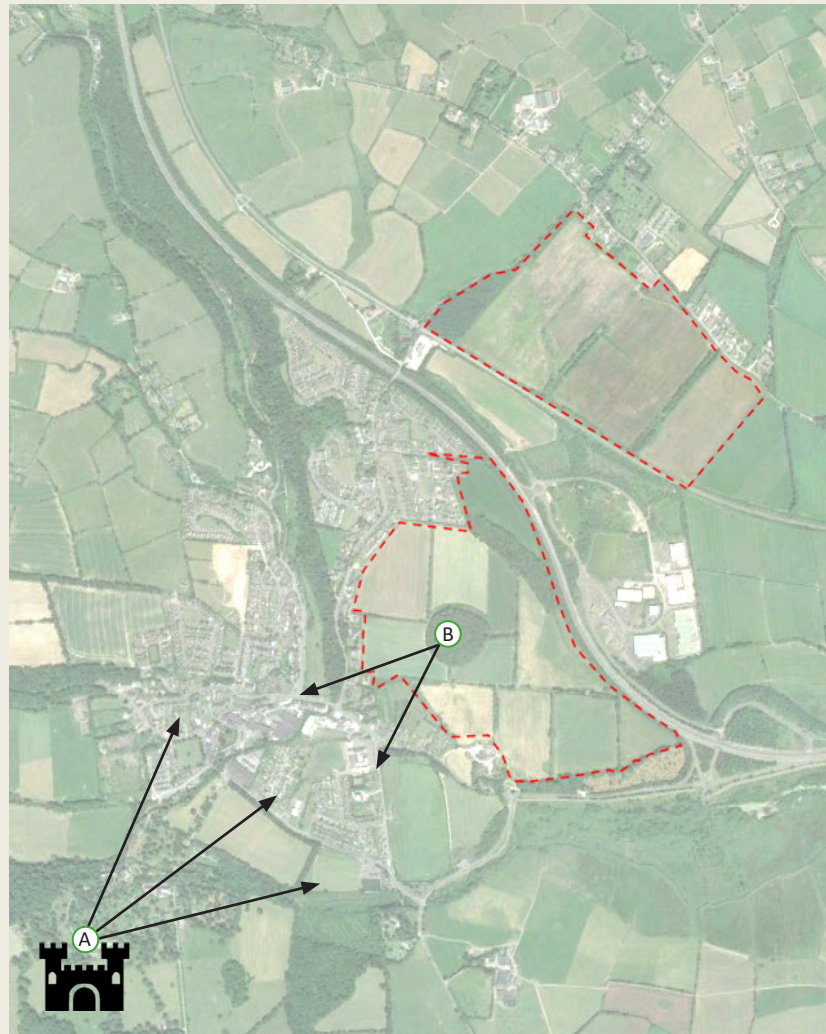




## Part A 5.0 Opportunities and Constraints

## Green infrastructure

### 5.2 Critical Views



Visual relationship between Blarney Castle and the development lands



**A** View from Blarney Castle towards the lands looking North-East



**B** Zoomed-in view from Ringwood towards Blarney Castle looking North-West

#### Views from Blarney Castle

Regard will be given to assessing potential visual impacts from Blarney Castle to ensure that proposals do not compromise the landscape heritage character of the area, in line with Objective GO-06 of the Blarney Macroom Municipal District Local Area Plan Jan 2015 Volume 1.

#### Views from Stoneview and Ringwood

The varying topography across the lands at Stoneview and Castleview gives rise to vantage points from which there are panoramic views across the surrounding landscape. Views and vistas which enhance the experience and enjoyment of the site will be identified and incorporated into the emerging site layout.

### 5.3 Green Links / Scenic Routes



Map of scenic green routes adjacent to the development lands

#### Scenic Routes

The opportunity arises to provide green network links from the site to established recreational routes in the local area such as Clogheenmilcon Fen, River Martin Walk, Ardamadane Walk and Blarney Town Centre itself, thus providing an extensive and valuable for pedestrians and cyclists.



Waterloo scenic walkway / green route



Clogheenmilcon scenic route



## Part A 5.0 Opportunities and Constraints

### Site topography

#### 5.4 Site Topography



Site topography

Site topography varies considerably across the Stoneview and Ringwood lands giving rise to a number of constraints and opportunities in respect of site design.

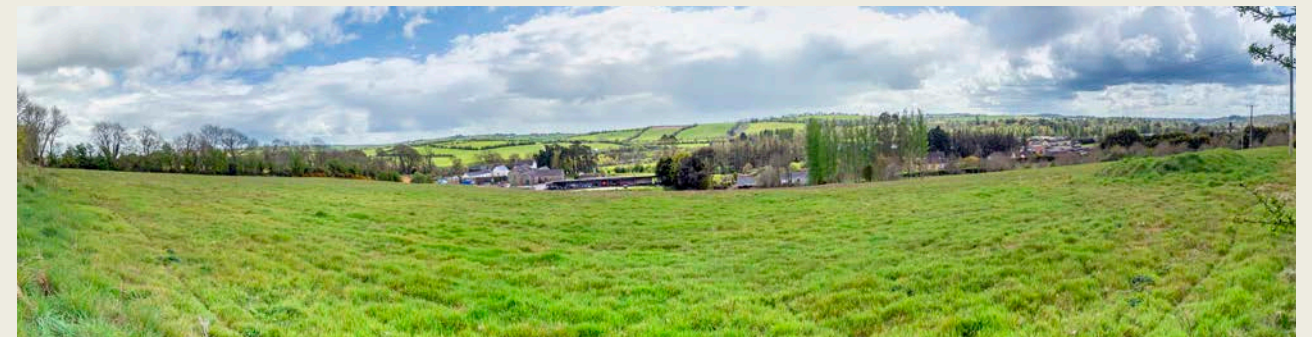
Topographical variations are relatively consistent across the **Stoneview** lands and the generally open aspect on the most elevated parts of the site gives rise to panoramic views southward over Blarney.

At **Ringwood**, the topography is more variable, wrapping around a centralised high point at Ringwood which is a distinctive hilltop feature in the local landscape. This, combined with other areas of woodland and hedgerows, give rise to a range of spaces and natural character areas which are revealed as one moves through the site.

Key topographical constraints relate to cut and fill requirements for the delivery of access infrastructure and housing footprints. Key opportunities arise in respect of adaptation of the design process to take advantage of site variations, vantage points and natural features.



① Panoramic view of Stoneview lands looking South



②



③ Panoramic view of Ringwood lands looking West