

HRA PLANNING  
Chartered Town Planning Consultants

**Submission on  
Draft Clare Development Plan 2023 - 2029**

On behalf of:  
Lakeside Holiday Homes Killaloe  
Zoning/Planning Owners Committee

March 2022



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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

HRA PLANNING has been retained by Lakeside Holiday Homes Killaloe, represented by the Zoning / Planning Owners Committee (our client), to prepare this submission to Clare County Council in respect of the Draft Clare Development Plan 2023 – 2029 (Draft Plan).

Lakeside Holiday Homes comprise 48 no. semi-detached and terraced housing units located to the north of Killaloe village, situated inside the settlement boundary, as defined in the Draft Plan. The Draft Plan proposes to zone the land for tourism purposes reflective of the existing permitted use on the land. This submission requests a change in the zoning afforded to the land such that the land is zoned for 'existing residential' use, thereby enabling the future use of all houses for permanent occupation.

There is significant demand for housing in Killaloe. As acknowledged in the Draft Plan, Killaloe is long recognised as a very attractive place to live, rich in natural beauty and amenity, and all within commuting distance of Ennis and Limerick. However, as stated in the Draft Plan there is limited scope for further residential development within the town until such time as the planned upgrade of the wastewater treatment plant serving the area is completed by Irish Water.

It is submitted to the planning authority that the potential to use permitted holiday home accommodation for permanent occupation, would assist in addressing the existing housing shortage in Killaloe in the short term, providing for viable, affordable housing units. However, to enable a change of use, the landuse zoning afforded to the land needs to change from tourism to existing residential use in the first instance.

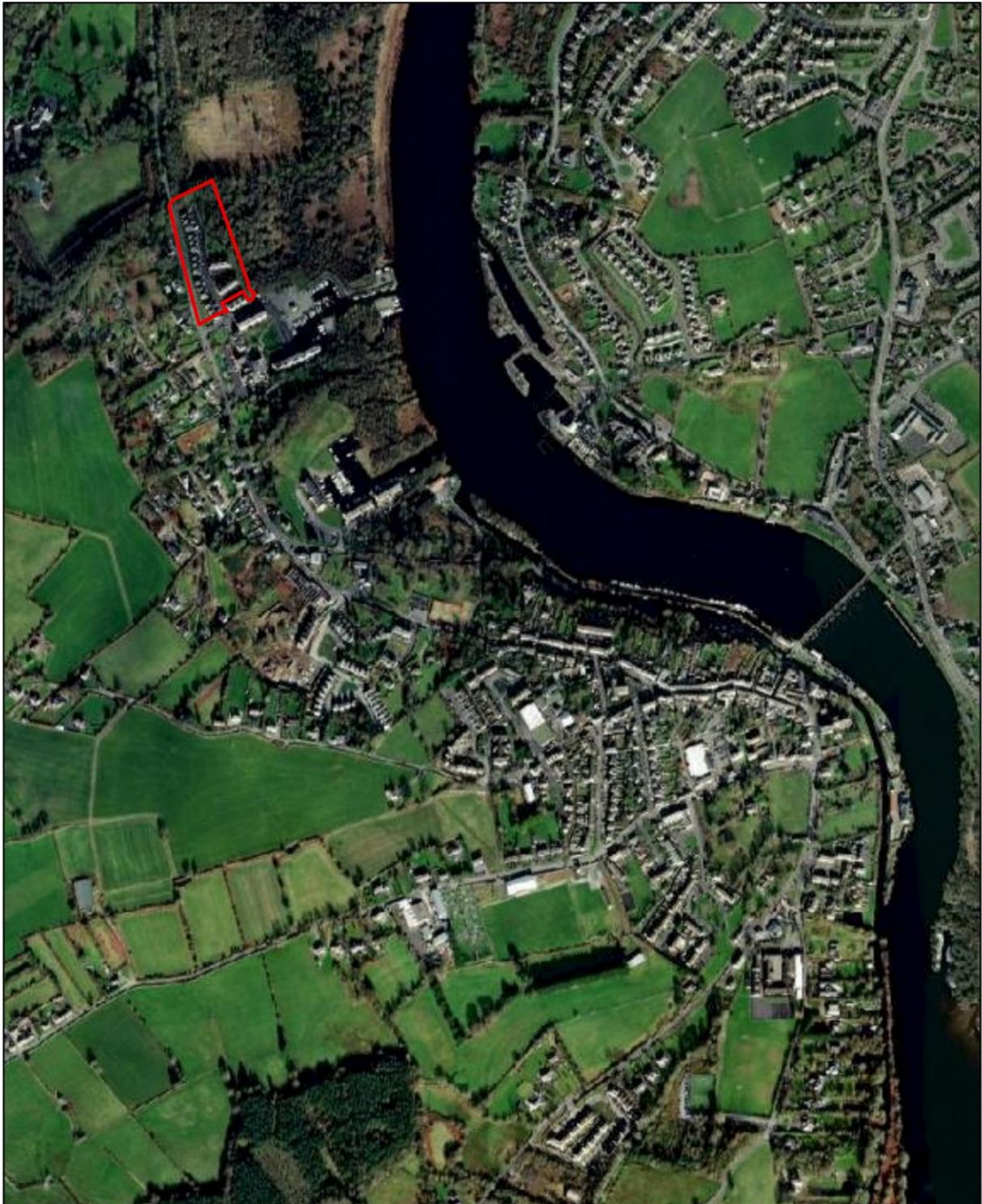
## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Location & Characteristics of Site**

The subject site, comprising 48 no. semi-detached and terraced dwelling units is located a short walk from the village centre, situated at the northern extremity of the settlement boundary for the town with access off the R.463 (Scarriff Road).

The Lakeside development is adjoined to the north by undeveloped lands to the east by undeveloped lands and the shore of Lough Derg, to the south east by Kincora Harbour and a marina and to the south by an apartment development and the Kincora hotel. To the west, on the opposite side of the R463 (Scarriff Road), there are a number of individual dwellings.

The subject site is well connected to the centre of Killaloe village with dedicated footpaths and public lighting.



 Site Location



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**Figure 1.0** Location of the Subject Site

## 2.2 Planning History

Planning permission was granted for the 48 no. dwellings on site as holiday homes with a condition that they be used for short-term letting purposes only (condition no.21). Subsequently, planning permission was granted on two separate occasions for a change of use of 6 no. holiday homes (No's 2, 11, 15, 26, 28 & 39) for permanent occupation (planning file ref. P12/570 & P14/335). Accordingly, 42 no. units are currently restricted to holiday home use / use for short-term letting purposes.

Within these 42 no. units, 5 no. housing units are currently leased by Clare County Council (no's. 2, 15, 26, 28 & 39) to families on their social housing list, thereby demonstrating the suitability of the houses for permanent occupation.

The extant planning applications on the subject site are detailed as follows:

- In 2003 planning permission was granted to construct a Holiday Home Scheme of 72 no. dwellings and an 80 no. berth marina and all associated site works (planning file ref. P03/1032). Condition no.21 of that permission stated that "the units shall be used for short terms tourism letting only. No unit in the development shall be used for commercial overnight guest accommodation without a separate planning permission being obtained, notwithstanding that any such use might be considered exempted development but for the provisions of this condition".
- In 2012, planning permission was granted for a change of use from holiday homes to dwelling houses for 5 no. units, including unit no's 2, 15, 26, 28 and 39 (planning file ref. P12/570).
- In 2014 planning permission was granted for a change of use form holiday homes to dwelling houses for 1 no. unit, namely unit no. 11 (planning file ref. P14/335).
- Planning permission was refused for a change of use to 2 no. units, namely unit no.'s 44 & 45 in 2016 (planning file ref. P16/618) and one of those reasons directly relates to the tourism zoning afforded to the land and the fact that a change of the houses to permanent occupation would materially contravene the zoning. The other reason for refusal related to the design and layout of the dwellings and the unusual internal layout of the dwellings which it was considered would result in a sub-standard level of residential amenity for future permanent residential occupants.
- Planning permission was also refused for a change of use to 1 no. unit, namely unit no. 25 in 2018 (planning file ref. P18/331).

The planning history demonstrates how the site has been considered from a planning perspective over the years and in particular, how the principle of permanent occupied houses on the site were deemed acceptable in the first instance. This position is further reinforced by the lease of 5 no. houses by Clare County Council for social housing purposes. The change of use applications which were refused planning permission

demonstrate the restricted nature of the existing tourism zoning afforded to the land and highlights why a change in the zoning is necessary to ensure flexibility of tenure in the future.

### **3.0 DEVELOPMENT INTENT**

This subject site and associated houses have not been successful as a holiday home development, with significant vacancy levels throughout the year. The majority of units remain vacant, even throughout the summer period, as self-catering accommodation struggles to compete.

In addition to ongoing vacancy levels, there is an existing, significant housing shortage in Killaloe / Ballina. Reflective of this situation is the fact that many of the existing residential units on site are let on a long-term basis to families in need of accommodation. The lease of 5 no. housing units by Clare County Council (no's. 2, 15, 26, 28 & 39) to families on their social housing list is further evidence of the housing demand and shortage in the village.

The existing terraced and semi-detached units could satisfy some of the affordable housing demand in the area in the short term, once planning permission has been secured for a change of use.

The stated floor area of each of the dwellings is 105.2 sqm as detailed on previous planning applications submitted to the planning authority. All dwellings have identical internal layouts and comprise three double bedrooms with a living, kitchen and dining area at first floor level. The private amenity space afforded to each dwelling is different, dependent on the location of the dwelling within the overall scheme of development. Some of the units benefit from significant rear gardens whilst others comprise smaller rear yards.

It is our client's intention to advance an application for a change of use from houses used for short-term letting purposes only to houses for permanent occupation. The internal layout of the dwelling can be modified, if required and necessary, to ensure that an adequate standard of residential amenity is provided for future permanent residential occupants.

To deliver on this intent, it will be necessary for the planning authority to change the existing tourism zoning afforded to the land to 'existing residential' use.

### **4.0 NEED FOR CHANGE**

#### **4.1 Draft Development Plan Provisions**

The Draft Development Plan (Volume 3c Killaloe Municipal District Settlement Plans) currently on public display proposes to zone the subject land for tourism purposes,

reflective of its existing use, as detailed in Figure 2.0. A description of land zoned for tourism purposes is provided in the Draft Plan as follows:

*"Land zoned for tourism development shall be used for a range of structures and activities which are primarily designed to facilitate tourism development and where uses are mainly directed at servicing tourists/holiday makers and visiting members of the public".*

The Draft Plan zones significant land area for tourism development purposes. In total there are 38.92 hectares of land zoned for tourism purposes, with 6.88 hectares of tourism zoned land already developed (including the subject site) and 32.04 hectares undeveloped.

The subject land, measuring 1.7 hectares, is surrounded by tourism zoned land (see Figure 2.0), with tourism zoning acknowledging the existing, operational hotel on adjoining land to the south. To the north at Ballyvalley, additional undeveloped land is zoned for tourism purposes (TOU6), with the proviso that no short term / holiday accommodation shall be provided. Such a proviso would appear to acknowledge that there is already adequate short term / holiday accommodation in the village.

It is considered that the loss of 1.7 hectares of tourism zoned land to 'existing residential use' in the context of the existing 38.92 hectares of land that are zoned would be insignificant in the context of the overall tourism objectives for Killaloe.

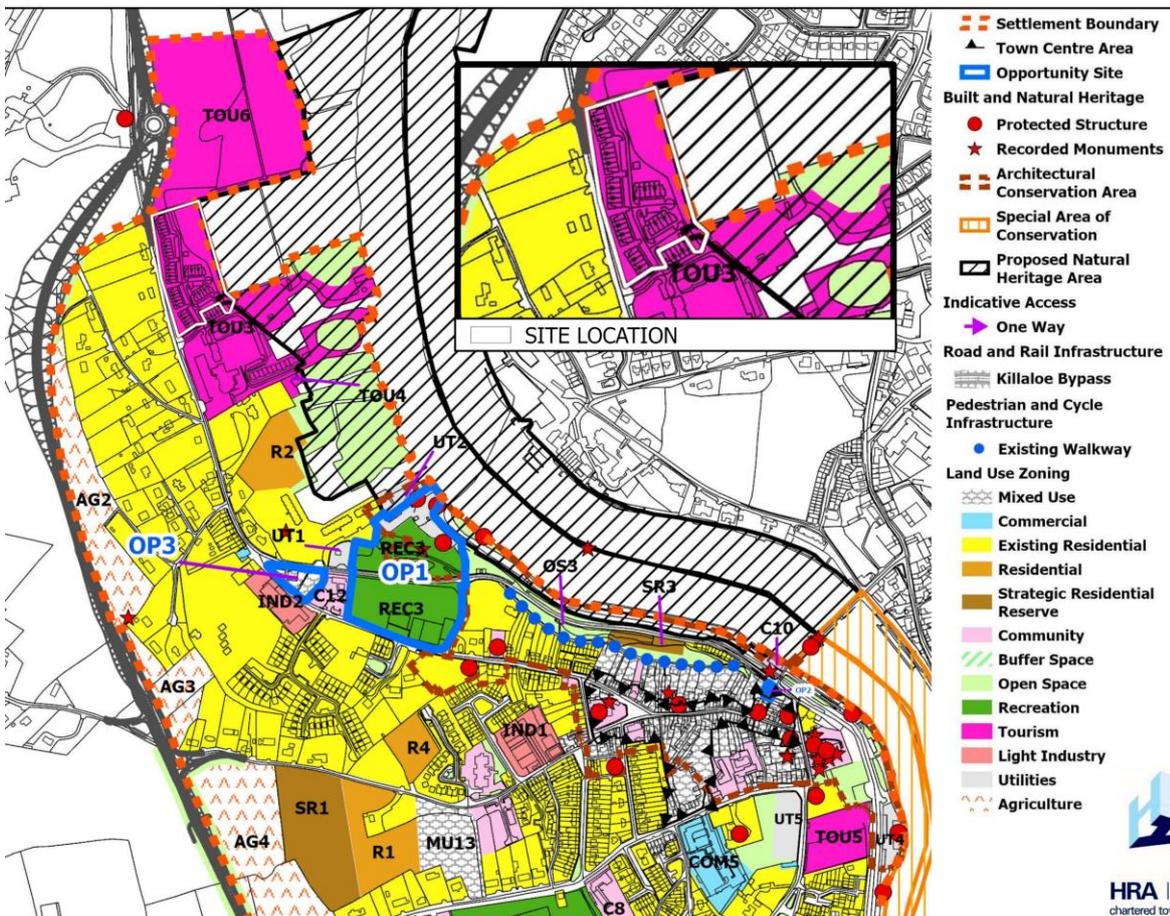
Objective CDP5.14(c) in the Draft Plan acknowledges that there is an oversupply of holiday accommodation in some villages including the settlements of Ballyvaughan, Bellharbour, Bunratty, Carrigaholt, Doolin, Doonbeg, Fanore, Kilkee, Lahinch, Liscannor, Mountshannon, Querrin and Spanish Point. In such settlements the Draft Plan seeks

*"to support and facilitate the conversion of some holiday home units to permanent homes or appropriate uses where:*

*i) It can be demonstrated that both the dwellings and the associated infrastructure (open space provision, car parking, waste water capacity etc.) are of a sufficient standard to support the proposed new use; and*

*ii) The Planning Authority is satisfied that the conversion will not have a negative impact on the tourism product in the settlement".*

The village of Killaloe is substantially different in location and context to the villages listed in Objective CDP5.14, particularly given the location of the village in close proximity to Limerick City and the pressure for family homes for permanent occupation. The villages listed in Objective CDP5.14 are very much 'tourist destinations' and given their location, remote from centres of employment, there is little pressure for permanently occupied dwellings.



**Figure 2.0:** Existing & Proposed (Draft) Landuse Zoning

It is submitted that the opportunity to convert some holiday home units to permanent homes or appropriate uses should not be solely limited to the villages referenced in Objective CDP5.14, but rather should be determined on a case by case basis, with specific reference to the need for permanently occupied dwellings and the ability of the development plan to deliver permanent housing in the short term.

In support of such a request it is noted that one of the Strategic Aims of the Draft Plan (Section 5.1) is

*“to encourage greater levels of residential occupancy in town and village centres and to ensure our towns, villages and rural areas sustain their population and are vibrant places in which to live”.*

Further Objective CDP 5.2(c) seeks

*“to prioritise the reuse of existing housing stock in the Plan area and the renovation and re-use of obsolete, vacant and derelict homes”.*

#### **4.1 Lough Derg Visitor Experience Development Plan 2020 - 2024**

The Visitor Experience Development Plan 2020 – 2024 promotes Killaloe / Ballina as a Destination Hub. In identifying what the village ‘already has’ the study identifies *“great family hotels with indoor facilities for rainy days”* as one of the assets. In identifying ‘the Opportunities’ the study highlights that *“there may be scope for distinctive alternative accommodation in line with the Failte Ireland Welcome Standard: glamping, pods, huts, conversion of commissioned cruise boats etc”*. In setting out the Vision for 2024 there is no identification or need for additional tourist accommodation in the village.

In contrast, the need for self catering and hotel accommodation is noted in other settlements including Holy Island and Destination Villages; and in Portumna.

Of note, the study provides Failte Ireland accommodation data for the Lough Derg area (extending from Portumna to the Slieve Aughtys to O’Briensbridge and Nenagh). It identifies 42 no. premises and 1,799 bed spaces including self catering, bed and breakfast accommodation and hotels. Of the 5 no. hotels identified, 2 no. of the hotels are located in Killaloe / Ballina, along with a number of Bord Failte registered B&B’s and self-catering accommodation. Although the bed spaces in Killaloe / Ballina have not been quantified, the number and location of accommodation opportunities have been mapped for the purpose of this submission and are identified in Figure 3.0.

It is submitted to the planning authority that the number of hotels for the size of the village and a lack of reference to tourist accommodation in the study, would suggest the village is well supplied. Accordingly, a change of use of 42 no. houses intended for short term accommodation to use for permanent occupation would have little impact on the tourism product in the settlement of Killaloe.



- Site Location
- Rental Accommodation
- Hotel
- AnnaCarriga Estate (32 Holiday Rentals)



**Figure 3.0** Location and Number of Short-Term Accommodation Facilities in Killaloe / Ballina

## **5.0 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

There are a number of material considerations put forward which, it is submitted, must be considered by the planning authority, in respect of a change in zoning on the subject land from 'tourism' to 'existing residential' use, including:

- Existing vacancy levels and minimal requirement for short term tourism lettings;
- Core strategy and housing supply; and
- Planning for compact growth.

### **5.1 Existing Vacancy Levels**

There is limited demand for 42 no. short term tourism self catering homes (equivalent of 126 no. bed spaces) in the village. The majority of units remain vacant, even throughout the summer period, as self-catering accommodation struggles to compete with the two family orientated hotels currently operational in the village (Kincora Hotel and Lakeside Hotel), a number of B&B's, 32 no. self-catering rentals at Marina Walk in Twomilegate and an increasing number of properties on AirBnB. Within the settlement boundary of the twin villages of Killaloe / Ballina, there are 19 no. registered properties on AirBnB, excluding the 42 no. houses the subject of this submission. This tourist accommodation is detailed in Figure 3.0.

It is submitted to the planning authority that there is no demonstrable need for the provision or operation of 42 no. short term tourism accommodation units in the village of Killaloe. To ensure efficiency of use and in order to achieve the most beneficial use from existing constructed housing units, a change in use to permanently occupied units is required.

Five of the 42 no. housing units are currently leased by Clare County Council (no's. 2, 15, 26, 28 & 39) to families on their social housing list. This demonstrates the suitability of the houses for permanent occupation by families. Further, planning permission has already been secured for the change of use of 6 no. housing units within the development, thereby enabling their permanent occupation by families.

Vacant housing units within the settlement boundary is not desirable as it will not contribute to the regeneration or compact growth of Killaloe. Houses need to be occupied to contribute to the sustained and sustainable growth of the village. A change in the zoning of the land from 'Tourism' to 'Existing Residential Use' will enable a change of use application to be made on all remaining 42 no. units, thereby enabling the development to become a sustainable, residential community.

### **5.2 Core Strategy and Housing Supply**

The Draft Plan predicts the need for 77 no. additional housing units between 2023 and 2029 in Killaloe in accordance with the requirements of the core strategy. This quantum of housing is intended to facilitate a growth in population of 148 persons over the lifetime

of the Draft Plan. However, inadequate sewerage treatment has obstructed housing supply in the past and will restrict future supply in the short term. Consequently, there will be no new significant housing supply in the short term with house construction on hold until such time as the sewerage treatment plant is upgraded in circa 2024.

There are 42 no. existing residential units which could contribute to the permanent housing stock in the village, if the zoning of the land was changed from 'tourism' to 'existing residential' use.

It could be argued that these housing units are existing and therefore will not affect housing provision as set out in the core strategy. Further, the housing units, irrespective of their short-term tourism status, are currently being occupied by families on a permanent basis; a situation which has arisen having regard to a lack of available and affordable houses in the village. The landuse zoning sought is 'existing residential', such that the quantum of land required to satisfy housing output as detailed in the core strategy table, will not be affected.

### 5.3 Planning for Compact Growth

The National Planning Framework (NPF) seeks to achieve more compact and sustainable growth through consolidating a greater share of future development within the existing built footprint of settlements, to include new homes, businesses and amenities. The NPF sets national targets for brownfield/infill housing development in settlements (30%) to support the regeneration of existing urban areas. NPF compact growth objectives together with Town Centres First principles are focused on the reuse of previously developed buildings and land along with building on 'infill' sites, especially those that are located within settlements at all scales.

The subject land can best be described as an existing developed urban site, surrounded by tourism development to the south and proposed tourism zoning to the north and comprehensively serviced with appropriate infrastructure mobility and water services infrastructure. A change in zoning on the land does not seek to extend the existing settlement boundary of the village nor does it seek to radiate housing away from the village core. Rather, it seeks to facilitate the use of existing residential units within an existing urban settlement, making the most efficient use of valuable, serviced urban land.

The planning situation has significantly changed since the 48 no. units were first constructed in 2005 after being granted planning permission in 2003 (planning file ref. P03/1032). An Bord Pleanála approved construction of the Killaloe by-pass, effectively defining the outer limits of the settlement, as detailed on the landuse zoning map set out in the Draft Plan. Whereas once, this residential development may have been considered to be on the fringe of the urban settlement of Killaloe, it is now very much part of the urban form of the village. The site is located within a 10 minute walk of the village centre, connected via a public footpath and public lighting. It is within easy walking distance of all services and amenities including schools, shops and services provision as detailed in Figure 1.0.

## **6.0 THE REQUEST**

It is requested that the planning authority changes the landuse zoning in respect of the subject land as detailed in Figure 1.0, such that the landuse is changed from proposed 'tourism' use to 'existing residential' use. The following changes are requested:

1. Change the zoning of 2.36 hectares of land from proposed 'tourism' use to 'existing residential' use
2. Amend Objective CDP5.14 such that the opportunity to convert some holiday home units to permanent homes or appropriate uses should not be solely limited to the villages referenced, but rather should be determined on a case by case basis, with specific reference to the need for permanently occupied dwellings and the ability of the development plan to deliver permanent housing in the short term.