

Draft Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027

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Sent: 12 December 2020 09:16

To: LouthCDP

This plan seems to have implications that will affect an entire generation. My family, like countless families in the north Louth area, have lived in the area for centuries. Hundreds of years longer than this state has been established for. I am not suggesting this denotes privilege or authority, or that I have some special right to build myself a home here. However, there is something fundamentally unfair about the proposals. I am 22 years old and live at home in the Cooley peninsula. I live with my parents and they built the house we live in almost 20 years ago. My older brother has just bought a house in Newry, he can't afford a house here and he can't afford rent, he makes more money than anyone else in my family. My younger brother has moved to Netherlands to work and live because he can't afford to buy or rent property here. I myself will be FORCED to move country, or move far away from my family if I want to live in my own property. In a 1km radius from my house there are at least 8 abandoned house ruins with land around, not touched in decades. There are at least 10 fields less than or around 1 acre that have not been used in the past year and are only passively used to hold livestock. There are COUNTLESS MANSIONS in my area that have been built year after year, on the mountain too, beside the sea, in many areas that one would think permission to build should not be granted. These mansions, I should add, not only hurt the aesthetics of our area, many of them are rented accommodation. As well as this, the owners who built the properties have no links or ties to the area or community and are still allowed to build indiscriminately! For years locals have struggled to get permission to build a house. Now, the majority of them will simply have to rent at extortionate rates, move to another area away from their communities and families or simply emigrate. My parents built on the only bit of land they could afford at the time. They built up the road from my grandparents home. My great Grandparents' home is only a couple km further up the road, that home belongs now to my aunty, who has 4 daughters who have all built houses in the area. That home which belonged to my great-Grandparent's housed 3 generations. This is the case for many families in the area, it is not fair that this plan should affect one generation of people alone. Make homes more affordable and cheaper to build. Stop the hoarding of land by farmers who barely use it or landowners who don't use it at all. Make use of and offer grants for renovations of derelict houses. Do this all before you impose such harsh restrictions on me and my generation in the area for the mistakes made by the county council in decades previous. If sustainability is at the core of these plans, consider the fact that my parents both came from local families that had at least 6 children each. Each child in both families built their own house in the county. In my family I have two siblings, both of whom live and work in another country because of the situation in this one. I am the only one who had an intention of staying here and building myself a home. I will suffer the most from this, I will never get to live close to my parents or extended family, I will be out of place for years to come, I will not be able to participate in the community as I won't be able to live here. More than anything I would like to know what the actual point of these plans are if not to just displace families who have lived here for generations. And what of the schools, tradesmen, local businesses, GAA clubs, community development schemes who will all suffer down the line from this? There's much more to the county Louth than her towns and small villages, rural development used to be at the forefront of Irish politics. Clearly not in north Louth.

Regards Ryan O'Hanlon