



Frank Pentony
Director of Services
Development Plan Review
Forward Planning Unit
Louth County Council
Town Hall, Crowe Street,
Dundalk, Co Louth.
A91 W20C

18th December 2020

**RE: Draft Louth County Development Plan 2021 – 2027
Submission on behalf of Boyne Grove Fruit Farms
in relation to lands Stameen, Dublin Rd, Drogheda, Co. Louth**

Dear Mr Pentony,

With reference to the above, and further to your invitation to the public to make submissions in respect of the Draft County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 for County Louth, please note that we have been appointed by Boyne Grove Fruit Farms to make this submission on their behalf. Please find attached contact details for our client separately as directed.

Background:

Boyne Grove Fruit Farms owns and operates a residential farmyard at Stameen, Dublin Road Drogheda. Along with the Farmyard, the business has considerable land holdings, much of it under orchards, to the north east of the Dublin Belfast Railway in adjoining Co. Meath. The Farmyard is identified on the satellite image below, the orchards can be seen in the same image to the north east.



Figure 1 – Satellite Image with Boyne Grove Fruit Farms highlighted.

Key Issue

Boyne Grove Fruit Farm is a residential farm yard operating for many years in an established residential area.

It should be noted, that the McNeece family, owners of Boyne Grove Fruit Farms, were the developer of the adjoining highly regarded Roschoill Housing Estate. Boyne Grove Fruit Farms is accessed via the Roschoill development. Our client has a proven track record for delivery of residential development on the southside of Drogheda in Co. Louth. In 2007 our client sought and obtained planning permission on this site for a significant residential development of 52 units under planning reference 07/207 (Drogheda Borough Council ref). This scheme did not proceed due to the economic downturn and the planning permission has since expired.



Figure 3 – Site Layout Plan for residential Development approved under 07/207 on the subject site..

With the improving economy and Drogheda's established status as a Regional Growth Centre, it is our client's intention to reinvigorate their previous plans for the farmyard. They intend to relocate their farmyard east, into Co. Meath and develop their current site as an infill/brownfield residential development. We believe that it is an excellent opportunity site that would help Louth County Council achieve their targets for brown field infill development in built up areas with good transport links.

The draft plan currently on display seeks to change the existing residential zoning to employment use zoning, and this would mean that residential infill would not be permitted, and the opportunity to increase the residential density of this established neighbourhood on a serviced brownfield site, in accordance with National and Regional planning policy objectives would be lost.

Draft County Plan:

The Draft Land Use Zoning Map for Drogheda included as part of the Draft County Plan seeks to change the zoning on our client's residential farmyard (comprising approx. 2 Hectares) from **RE - Existing Residential** as applied by the 2011 Drogheda Borough Development Plan to **E1 - Employment Uses**. Please refer to Figures 3 and 4 below.

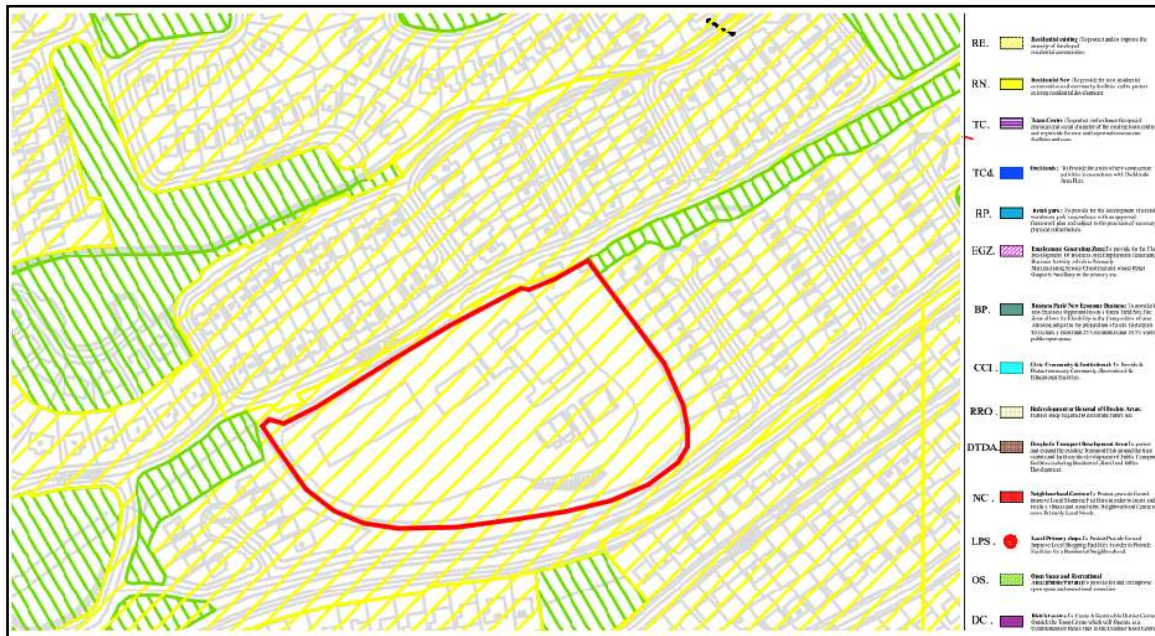


Figure 3 – Drogheda Borough Council Development Plan 2011-2017 Land Use Zoning Map with McNece landholding highlighted



Figure 4 – Draft Louth County Development Plan Land Using Zoning Map for Drogheda with McNece landholding highlighted

As can be seen in figures 1, 3 and 4 above, the residential farm yard is surrounded by established residential communities.

Please note that the Draft County Plan gives the following guidance relating to E1 Zoned Land:

13.19.16 General Employment (E1)

Objective

To provide for general enterprise and employment generating activities.

Guidance

This zoning is the primary location for employment generating activities. It will facilitate the improvement and expansion of existing employment areas and the investment and development of new employment areas. A wide range of uses will be facilitated on these lands including small, indigenous enterprises, general industry, manufacturing, food production, logistics, and warehousing. The compatibility of a particular use or operation will be dependent on the nature of the use/operations and surrounding uses in the area in which the development will be located.

This zoning also facilitates opportunities for uses that are deemed permissible under the "Business and Technology" zoning category.

There are a wide range of 'Permitted' and 'Open for consideration' uses including Energy Installation, Industrial, recycling, warehousing and Office Park. Many of these uses are simply not appropriate in the centre of a residential area accessed through a housing estate (Roschoill).

The reason why the planning authority changed the zoning from Residential to Employment in the Draft Plan is not clear. Currently the property is a working farm yard with a planning objective to protect the existing residential amenities of the area. This doesn't prevent the day-to-day farm activities in any way, and there are many examples in the Draft Plan of non-conforming land uses within zoned areas.

In short, we contend that the current zoning objective (as per Drogheda Borough Council's Development Plan) is appropriate and does not require any change.

Requested Change

We respectfully request that the Land Use Zoning Map prepared for Drogheda as part of the Draft County Plan 2021 – 2027 be amended to change the 'E1' Zoning on our client's lands identified in Figure 3 above (back) to A1 Existing Residential as per Figure 5 below.



Figure 5 – Suggested Amended Draft Louth CDP Land Use Zoning Map for Drogheda showing subject site zoned A1

A key element of the National Planning Framework (NPF) is the need for compact growth, with development being focussed within and close to existing built-up areas. A vital element of this approach is the regeneration of infill and brownfield sites. Achieving compact growth targets requires Planning Authorities to be active with respect to land management responses, ensuring that land and building resources within existing settlements are used to their full potential. National Policy objective 35 is relevant in this regard.

National Policy Objective 35

Increase residential density in settlements, through a range of measures including reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill development schemes, area or site-based regeneration and increased building heights.

We would respectfully suggest that the subject site offers an opportunity to increase the density in this residential area of a Regional Growth Centre, in accordance with NPF and Regional Planning policies, and that the requested change should be made prior to adoption of the county plan.

Prepared by

Brian Hughes
BA BAI CEng MIEI
Chartered Engineer