

Forward Planning Unit,  
Development Plan Review,  
Louth County Council,  
Town Hall,  
Crowe Street  
Dundalk,  
Co. Louth.

18<sup>th</sup> December 2020

**RE: Draft Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027**

To whom it may concern,

Having reviewed the draft county development plan for 2021-2027, I am strongly opposed to any policy which will deprive rural residents the right to live in one-off rural developments.

In particular, I am opposed to the extremely restrictive qualifying criteria for local needs set out in Rural Zones 1 and 2, which will discount the needs of people who have spent much of their lives in these communities.

The county is overstepping its remit and attempting to implement policy which will have a drastic effect on the livelihoods, rural life, and happiness of rural Co. Louth residents.

There is a striking imbalance between the prioritisation of urban development over the needs and ideals of rural life, and there has been a blinkered approach in relation to the type of housing that rural residents find acceptable. There is a long tradition of single one-off development in this country, and it has become an intrinsic and irrevocable part of life in rural Ireland.

The policies proposed will effectively amount to the downfall of local communities in Louth and will result in an exodus of young people from their local communities, while encouraging an influx of people from outside the area buying homes in the more preferred clustered developments.

The restriction of one-off developments will effectively destroy the livelihoods of countless small scale building contractors and associated tradespeople. This policy would promote large contractors over these more local contractors and would lead to significant job losses in the local community.

The county council must recognise that rural Ireland needs to be protected and that this type of restrictive policy will result in a crisis in the communities within the county as it will deny young local people who have grown up in the community an opportunity to build in areas where wish to live and raise a family close to their loved ones.

Given the current Covid-19 crisis, I also find it unreasonable and undemocratic that the public consultation for the draft development plan has not been postponed until there is an opportunity for public meetings, and there has been more opportunity for locals to discuss the implications of the plan in face-to-face settings.