

# **Draft Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027**

## **Opportunity to Formalise by Zoning the Commercial Use Acknowledged and Confirmed by CPO**

### **SUBMISSION:**

To formalise the zoning of the referred to land based on the within to C3 and/or the opportunity now arising to :-C3/B5

### **BACKGROUND/HISTORY:**

This land, which has road frontage measuring approximately 450 metres onto the Inner Relief Road/Racecourse Road is adjacent to the Dundalk All-Weather Race Track Stadium on the Eastern side of the Inner Relief Road and runs south towards the town. Part of the land was compulsorily purchased (CPO) by the Local Authority for the building of the Inner Relief Road. See map attached. The pre 1963 use of the land is commercial and the award of compensation was made on the basis of the commercial use. The land has been covered by hardcore gravel for the purposes of facilitating access of trucks and cars. Therefore the ecological character and biodiversity value of the land is ZERO.

## **SERVICES:**

All mains services are available to the land

## **ENTRANCE:**

The entrance to the land is off the Race Course Road and facilitates the safety of vehicles and pedestrians. (See map).

## **EMPLOYMENT/TOWN OPPORTUNITY:**

The County Development Plan must be used to facilitate economic opportunities for Dundalk and make Dundalk a place where tourism and economic vibrancy is paramount. Opportunities to strengthen links along the Inner Relief Road corridor and in particular, the cross border links between Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry, have been identified as a potential driver for economic growth and we should not fail to make Dundalk great again. The international dimension of the Dundalk corridor has added significance in the context of the UK withdrawing from the EU.

A great opportunity is available for a creative and proactive County Plan to capitalise upon these opportunities and attract further foreign direct investment and/or foster indigenous industry and commerce. The M1 (Belfast to Dublin) infrastructure makes Dundalk an economic hub; gives us an opportunity; don't let it be the "death knell by-pass". The Dundalk Race Track and its future further development gives Dundalk the possibility of economic growth and make it a stop over point. This must be harnessed

and the Inner Relief Road's proper zoning is essential, in order to harness the infinite number of travel journeys, people and businesses wishing to visit and setup in Dundalk.

Careful consideration should be taken when drafting the new County Plan's policy focus and language as to how lands in proximity to the border and national and regional road networks may also positively contribute towards Dundalk's overall economic strategy and response to Brexit. Land located in proximity to the national border and accessible from either the M1 motorway or adjoining regional roads should be identified and targeted with a view to providing revised zoning objectives and associated planning policies that encourage and facilitate appropriate forms of development (i.e. customs zone, associated storage buildings and uses). In building resilience into core components of the new County Plan it will help deliver Dundalk's overall economic strategy and attract /accommodate future high quality employment generating businesses and job creation.

The new County Development Plan must adopt a proactive and refocused platform of policies, objectives and land bank of appropriately zoned lands to deliver upon a comprehensive development strategy for Dundalk's future sustainable economic growth.

A strong and proactive response to the continued uncertainty surrounding Brexit through innovative planning policies and development objectives must be reflected in the provision of an appropriate quantum of suitably zoned employment generating lands to compensate for what has already been developed and what is required to meet Dundalk's future requirements.

There are opportunities for both UK based and EU based companies who wish to retain strong connections with both jurisdictions, to locate in Dundalk due to the accessibility to both markets from the town.

There is strong support from governments on both sides of the border for continued co-operation in cross border projects and initiatives. The economic potential of the Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry network is identified in the NPF and RSES. Dundalk has the critical mass to compete in the global economy and appeal to higher value segments of the business chain by offering sizeable pools of suitably qualified workers, supporting infrastructure, and high quality public and commercial services. EU Structural Funds such as the INTERREG VA Structural Programme provides funding for cross border projects. This fund is designed to help overcome issues that arise due to the existence of a border. The issues can range from health, transport, environmental issues, and enterprise development. The fund is managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). There is a commitment from the EU to continue funding for cross border projects after the UK withdrawal from the EU.

There is excellent connectivity with both Dublin and Belfast and access to a well-educated and skilled workforce, makes Dundalk an attractive location to UK businesses which require access to the European market and Irish, European, and International businesses which require access to the UK market.

It is essential that Dundalk continues to be well positioned to facilitate further economic investment and respond to any economic uncertainties. The economic goals of the LECP are closely linked to the 10 point plans prepared by Louth Economic Forum. The

primary objective of the LECP is to create a thriving economy and community where both indigenous and international businesses can prosper.

The Covid-19 pandemic is the greatest threat the Irish economy has faced since the global financial crisis. The response to the spread of the virus has resulted in significant job losses across the economy, with an unemployment rate of 28.2% recorded in April 2020. In September 2020 the Government published a 'Resilience and Recovery Plan for Living with COVID 19' to manage the risk associated with the pandemic and deal with the social and economic consequences. Due to the uncertainty surrounding the medium-long term impacts of the pandemic it is anticipated that the opportunities for economic growth and investment in the immediate future will be limited. It is essential that the Development Plan attempts to limit the adverse consequences by properly zoning the subject lands.

Economic projections following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic indicate that the economy will shrink in 2020/2021 and fall into recession. This is in contrast to the projections prior to the outbreak of the pandemic, which had projected a continuation of growth, albeit on a more modest trajectory than previous years. Due to the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic, it is difficult to predict its long term economic impact. However it is widely accepted it will take a significant period of time to return to a normal functioning economy. The proper zoning of the land will identify opportunities for Dundalk to strengthen its economic base and continue to attract investment and support job creation for both indigenous and international businesses.

The locational advantage of Dundalk and in particular the Inner Relief Road along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor with excellent access to Dublin and Belfast City Centre, Airport, Port, and surrounding Key Towns in the Region means Dundalk is well positioned to attract economic investment.

The Economic Development and Employment Chapter presented as part of the Draft Plan is comprehensive. It focuses on key drivers including the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. It sets out the areas identified for employment related growth which are to be concentrated in the Regional Growth Centre of Dundalk and recognises its strong employment base, capacity to accommodate further investment and ability to support and promote economic development along the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor.

**CONCLUSION:**

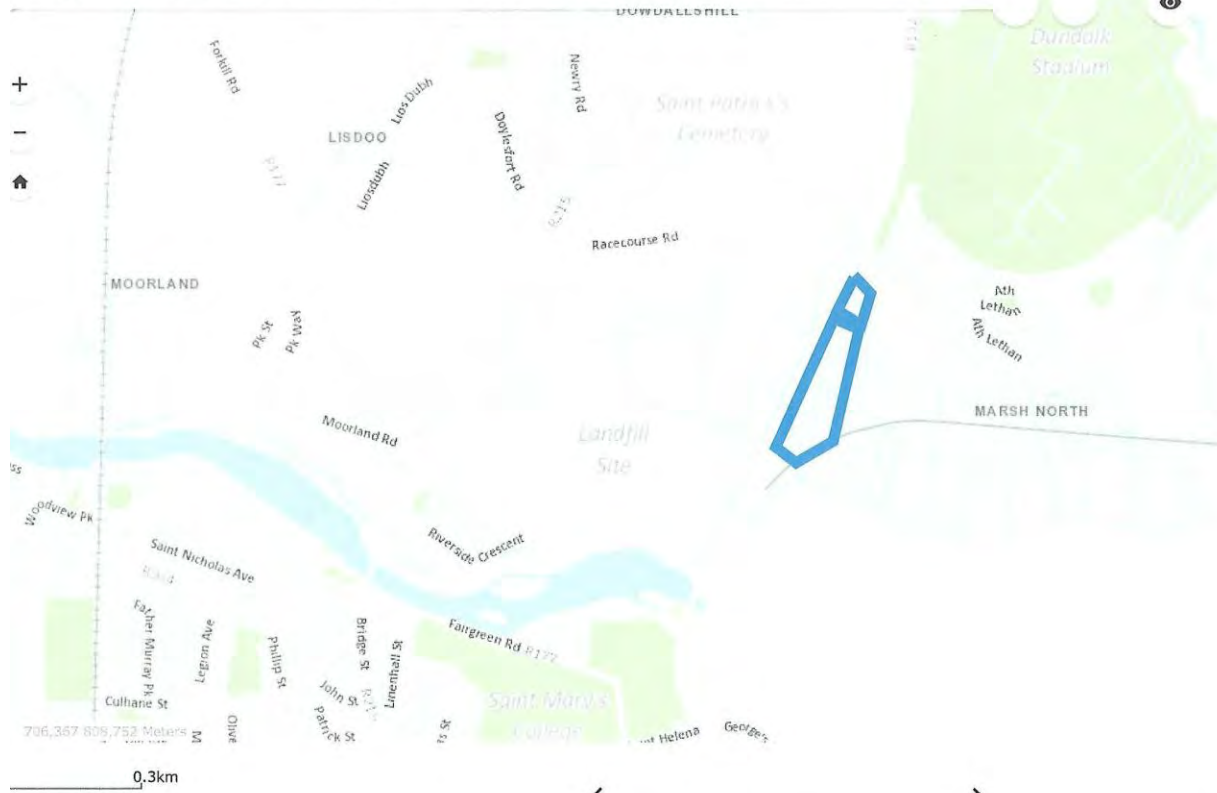
It is axiomatic that the zoning of the referred to land should be corrected and/or zoned

**C3 and /or B5.**

Yours faithfully

Eamonn Carroll  
Freehold Owner





Find address or place

