

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to make a submission to the County Louth Draft Plan 2021/2027. I believe that the closing date for submissions should be extended, as we are in the chaos of a world pandemic, which is unparalleled in living memory. The way this plan has been taken to this point undermines Local Government and its relationship with the public. The vast majority of the People of the County were not aware of the Draft Plan and have not got the opportunity to discuss this plan in the manner which it deserves. Our Local politicians had planned meetings in different areas, within the county but because of Covid 19 this could not happen. An opportunity has been lost by not engaging the public during the construction of the Plan. Must these procedures always begin from the top down, only bringing in the public when its content is a fait accompli.

Another reason to have the plan postponed is because we still do not know the consequence of “ The Flemish Decree” and its effect on the Draft Plan . It does not make sense to proceed with the ratification of the plan until we are all aware of the fallout of this judgement from The European Court Of Justice.

The Section of The Plan which deals with Rural Housing has implications and repercussions far beyond planning. It is setting the blue print for a unprecedented social and economic upheaval not known since the clearances in Famine times. It will isolate Farmers , the Elderly , the Vulnerable, divide communities, close schools and social and sporting clubs. This will create an artificial imbalance in our society. It is discriminatory against all members of our community. Older People and People with a disability will suffer. It creates a landless group which will be displaced no matter how much they contribute to the area . It stops people investing their efforts in their community. It is unfair, biased and unjust and will not achieve what it sets out to do. The criteria in Zone 1 must be completely changed and Zone 2 reviewed. It is essential that a social and economic study must be carried out to research what the effect of these proposed laws would have. This must be done by a sociologists .

The criteria in the plan ,with regard owning a house or selling it in the last ten years will only cause more anxiety . If a person from Zone 1 or 2 are working outside these Zones and are thinking about buying a house, this law

would make them think twice. It would make them ineligible for planning permission in Zone 1 or Zone 2 . This would create the scenario that people would not commit themselves to a new area or to a career. This would be counterproductive. In Zone 2 the geographical area stated is County Louth . In Zone 1 there is no geographical area stated .

I have a Special Needs Child. Why is he to be discriminated against by these laws . Have we not moved on from this in Ireland? Are we still neglecting the needs of the vulnerable and less well off?

This Plan will inhibit job creation in Zone 1. This will further impoverish the community and will only lead to longer commuting from Zone1 to gain employment . This section must be completely reviewed and changed to help people create jobs in our community.

The Anxiety, which this plan has created in Young People is evident in the area. The plan will push house prices up in Zone 1 and land prices higher in Zone 2 making it completely impossible for young people to buy or build their own home.

Are these proposed planning laws legal? In the light of the Flemish Decree have the Council taken legal advice on these laws . No vote should be taken until sound legal judgement is obtained and published so as the public are kept informed.

I would sincerely hope that this submissions will be allowed a fair hearing and my concerns brought on board,

Sincerely.

Peter O'Reilly.