

Draft Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027

t hamill

Sent: 23 December 2020 11:00

To: LouthCDP

Name: Therese Hamill

Address:

Forward Planning Unit
Development Plan Review
Louth County Council
Town Hall
Crowe Street
Dundalk
Co Louth
A91 W20C

Date: 23 December 2020

SUBMISSION – DRAFT LOUTH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2027

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to make the following submission in relation to the County Development Plan 2020-2026.

I wish to object in the strongest terms to the proposed “Rural Housing Strategy”.

There is a need for the local authority to make better and realistic accommodations for families/persons that currently reside in rural Louth and who are intrinsically connected with their local communities. If the current draft of the Louth County Development plan is adopted in its current form, it will have a hugely negative impact of rural communities like the electoral area of Creggan Upper/Sheelagh.

Creggan Upper is currently sustained and enriched by the local community that live in the rural area. Any change that would occur would only seek to diminish and damage the existing services and indeed the numerous community and voluntary groups.

It is my contention that this area it is facing a serious crisis in the next decade and this will be exacerbated if the draft CDP becomes a reality later this year. The proposal to strictly restrict development in rural areas of the county and to those involved in farming or rural enterprise will devastate our community. Housing demands in rural areas have arisen from a range of factors, including: increased mobility (including increased commuting from accessible rural areas); the demographic recovery of many rural areas; the effects of in-migration (counter-urbanization, people retiring to the countryside); and increasing second-home ownership in the countryside.

My argument against restricting development in rural areas, would be that:

- It is a constitutional right to build on private property; .
- There is already traditionally dispersed Irish settlement pattern and these measures can't change that; In fact, the traditional form of rural settlement in Ireland is highly dispersed, with small farms and villages spread all over the country (Brunt, 1988; McGrath, 1998).
- Rural development support rural communities from declining (depopulation).

Farming represent the bedrock of the rural economy. Farmers and their families need a simplified planning system that promotes the rural economy, reduces risk and allows them to react to the external challenges faced by their businesses. It should support them in maintaining sustainable rural businesses and deliver new efficient buildings, operations and homes.

Regrettably, economic pressures are forcing many farmers to leave our sector. However demand for rural homes to support the wider rural economic development can provide an income that will retain farm viability by supplying an additional source of income.

Where possible there has also been a rise in diversified activities on farm to support the wider farm enterprise and contribution to the rural economy. These activities include food processing, agricultural engineering and renewable energy production as well as re-using farm buildings for office, light industry and tourism uses. These uses can all generate jobs and the need for new workers on farm. A very common concern is getting people to actually work on farm, because they cannot afford to live locally. The rural economy needs homes to sustain economic growth where people can work and live in close rural proximity. Rural workers choose not to commute long distances if they can avoid this. In addition, from a welfare, security and safeguarding investment viewpoint, it is essential that farm workers live close to farm. For example, poultry keepers must live on site to provide 24 hour cover and at short notice in response to an environmental alarm being triggered.

The overall plan also spells out clearly how the council intends to restrict housing development in rural areas by approving permissions for once off rural housing to very specific categories of people engaged in agriculture and rural enterprises and who have ties to that local area. The strict implementation of this policy will severely affect local and rural communities including Sheelagh.

I believe Louth County Council need to put in place a policy that facilitates the settlement of local people in their own local community who are actively engaged in farming.

There are other categories of people from a local area that should be facilitated with housing in their community such as

- People who are originally from the local area but have left the area previously for employment or other reasons and would like to return
- People who are originally from the local area but are not involved in farming or a rural enterprise
- People who are intrinsically involved in the community
- People who are involved in the community and/or sporting organisation in the area
- People from the area who cannot afford to purchase houses in urban areas

If Louth County Council want to restrict housing in this way they need to facilitate the provision of alternative housing opportunities in local areas like Sheelagh separately.

I would respectfully ask you do not adopt this draft plan in its current form and to please make provisions for local people to continue to live, work and grow up in the communities they love and nurture.

Yours Sincerely,

Therese Hamill