

To whom it may concern,

I wish to express my concern over the proposed changes to the development plan, with specific reference to the drastic changes to the Rural housing policies.

- I feel that implementing zone 1 will essentially close off a whole section of the countryside. The qualifying criteria to build in this zone is out-dated and prejudicial to the large majority of people. Given that the numbers engaged in full time farming is falling every year, very few people will qualify to build under option 1.
- To qualify under option 2 a person must own 3 hectares of land for a minimum of 10 years. This is very restrictive given that the majority of landowners will have small landholdings, essentially disqualifying them from building.
- These limitations on rural housing will also put further strain on Louth County Council housing lists, as currently applicants can use the site gifted as collateral, along with their income to obtain a mortgage.
- Implementing these changes will have detrimental effect on rural communities. Our elderly will be completely isolated with no family in the area to look out for them. Our schools will be forced to close with no children growing up in these rural areas – essentially decimating these very communities you have vowed to strengthen and rejuvenate. Sport clubs will also be decimated with reduction in numbers and funding available to them.
- Lastly, given that we are in the middle of a global pandemic, it appears rushed and opportunistic to proceed with changes to the development plan without proper consultations within the communities it affects.

With Regards,

Sheenagh Dunne