

18th November, 2019

TO: Administrative Officer
Review of the County Development Plan
Forward Planning Unit
Longford County Council
Áras An Contae
Great Water Street
LONGFORD N39 NH56

Notice of Review of existing Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021 &
Preparation of new Longford County Development Plan 2021-2017

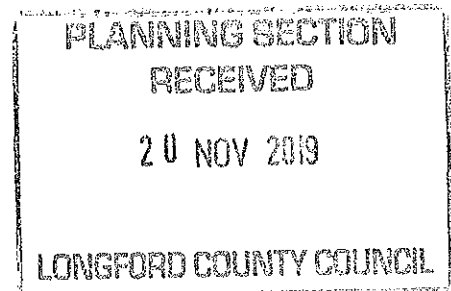
“Public Consultation Issues Paper - September 2019”

Please find attached Comments and related requests from residents of Granardkille, Granard, Co. Longford on the above-mentioned Issues Paper.

A list of our signatures is attached to the submission on page 4, as per instructions.

Thank you in advance for your help and assistance.

(List of Signatures on page 4)



Residents of Granardkille, Granard, Co. Longford

9th November, 2019

**Notice of Review of existing Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021 &
Preparation of new Longford County Development Plan 2021-2017**

“Public Consultation Issues Paper - September 2019”

COMMENTS ON THE ABOVE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ISSUES PAPER – September 2019

The ‘Notice of Review’ states that submissions or observations may be made “from Thursday 26th September 2019 until 4.00 pm on Friday 22nd November 2019”, meaning that the Notice was posted to be viewed by the public from 26th September 2019. However, it only came to attention quite recently.

There is a fault in the communication process that needs to be addressed.

The above-mentioned Notice of Review did not appear in the Longford Leader.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ISSUES PAPER – SEPTEMBER 2019

1.0 INTRODUCTION (P. 2 of above Issues Paper)

“The Plan outlines the Local Authorities policies and objectives with regard to its own development and that of others. It also prescribes the parameters and standards against which applications for planning permission will be assessed. There is a specific duty on planning authorities to ensure that the objectives set out in the Development Plan are secured.”

COMMENTS

- The “objectives set out in the Development Plan” can only be democratically secured if all citizens/people concerned are fully aware of the objectives referred to above. They therefore need to be kept aware of the objectives referred to and the proposed stages of the County Development Plan 2021-2027, and any reviews of 2015-2021, as well as any/all related or peripheral matters.
- Many citizens/concerned people do not have computers or easy access to Longford County Council website, nor do they have time/opportunity to examine on a weekly basis Longford County Library Noticeboards.

Therefore, we request that this information gap be immediately closed and that all such Notices/Announcements be unfailingly published in our local newspaper, ‘The Longford Leader’. The greatest possible number of citizens/people must be reached and be seen to be included in a democratic decision-making process that affects their lives and that of their children.

- It is highly noteworthy that:

QUOTE The legislation specifies that there is no presumption in law that any land zoned in a particular development plan shall remain so zoned in any subsequent plan.¹ **UNQUOTE**

Therefore, p 19, last paragraph of Issues Paper under comment here needs updating.

Notice of when “consideration of zoning of land” will be announced must appear in *The Longford Leader*, our local newspaper, if all sections of the community are to be democratically afforded the opportunity to be informed of when such “consideration of zoning of land” will be open for discussion, on into the rather distant future.

WHY IS A DEVELOPMENT PLAN IMPORTANT? (P. 2 of Issues Paper)

“The Development Plan is important as it sets down a guide as to how development should progress in the areas where the population lives.”

“The policies and objectives can be critical in determining the appropriate location and form of different types of development as the development plan is one of the factors against which planning applications are assessed.”

COMMENTS

- The above two excerpts are extremely important because residents of any area, particularly those in already pre-designated residential areas, are entitled to safety, including road safety/safety of inhabited homes, as well as rights of pollution-free (noise, lights, air) enjoyment of their homes.
- The second excerpt mentions the development plan as being one of the factors against which planning applications are assessed. This is a vital point both from a backward-looking perspective as well as for the future. Citizens need to be carefully given the opportunity to be kept fully in the loop. Again, public Announcements of any such matters or matters peripheral thereto must be published in ‘The Longford Leader’.

2.0 National and Regional Strategic Context (Page 4 of Issues Paper)

This subheading lists a bullet point: “Healthy placemaking by promoting people’s quality of life.”

¹ Grist, Berna. ‘An Introduction to Irish Planning Law’, Second Edition, IPA Institute of Public Administration, Dublin 4, 2012, p. 16.

COMMENT

- The above point fits well with the preceding points that we have raised in this response. It would also point toward developing many already existing blackspots in the Granard area which are listed as industrial zones. This would be helpful in reducing ugly blackspots and render the area more attractive from a local point of view, as well as improving the locality from a tourism point of view, something much highlighted in the Issues Paper under review. It would further avoid infringement on already pre-existing residential areas and their associated rights.

5.0 Settlement Strategy and Housing (Page 5 of Issues Paper)

From 'Key Questions': "How can we ensure the sustainable use of residential zoned lands?"

COMMENTS

- Respect the dignity and entitlement of those green residential/agricultural areas already existing (so necessary from a climate change point of view too) and avoid infringing on them or surrounding them by unhealthy and, perhaps dangerous, industrial development/associated road/home safety concerns, particularly when there are already pre-existing black spots within a short distance which were and are zoned to industrial, and where no residential area exists.

Good communication is simple and direct. It aims to reach out to everyone. It is the basis of healthy democracy. Again, public Announcements in the local Newspaper reaches the greatest number of people. Without fully informed citizens and their informed and concerned input, transparency, accountability, and good governance are put at risk.

Thank you for your help and assistance.