

**Minutes of Committee Meeting of Longford County Council**

**held via Microsoft Teams on**

**Monday, 21st June 2021 at 3pm**

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**PRESIDING**: Councillor Paul Ross, Cathaoirleach.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**: Councillors – Paraic Brady, John Browne, Seamus Butler, Mick Cahill, Mark Casey, Colin Dalton,

Gerard Hagan, Martin Monaghan,

Garry Murtagh, Turlough McGovern, Peggy Nolan,

Pat O’Toole, P.J. Reilly, Uruemu Adejinmi, Colm Murray, Gerry Warnock and Gerard Farrell.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**  Mr. Paddy Mahon, Chief Executive.

Mr. John McKeon, Head of Finance/Director of Services.

Mr. John Brannigan, Director of Services.

Ms. Barbara Heslin, Director of Services.

Ms. Nora O’Farrell, Senior Executive Officer.

Mr. Donall Mac An Bheatha, Senior Planner.

Planning Staff.

**MEETINGS**

**ADMINISTRATOR**: Ann Marie Mc Keon

**DRAFT LONGFORD COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021 – 2027 AND ASSOCIATED CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

Mr. Mac An Bheatha stated that the purpose of today’s meeting is to provide a synopsis of the Draft Plan and proposed amendments. Donal replied to the questions raised by the members. The outline is as follows: -

* Statutory process with strict deadlines.
* Require legal advice on lobbying in regard to a recent email to all Councillors on land zoning.
* Can only deal with the process and submissions received within the statutory time frame.
* Scope of Plan is for 6 years.
* Chief Executive recommended amendments incorporated into plan.
* Public consultation mid-July – All submissions analysed by planning will form part of the Chief Executive Report.
* Looking at Chief Executive Report on last submissions today.
* 94 submissions received and combined into Chief Executive Report.
* Number of in committee meetings to discuss report and at the last meeting discussed the Revised retail strategy/residential reserve zoning and we will discuss further today while considering the Chief Executive Report.
* Revised strategy – In light of submissions received there are three parts:

Part 1 Context

Part 2 Other Submissions

Part 3 Appendices.

Drumlish

* That the old COI burial ground in Drumlish not be zoned for residential purposes but zoned for public utility.
* That the residential zoning for the old burial ground be relocated to the east on the same road.
* That the land zoned residential reserve on the Old Hill Road be rezoned amenity to better facilitate the amenity path through the village and to better align with the amenity path along the Mill Race.
* That a bridal path be included in the Zoning map for Drumlish similar to the amenity link path and connecting the potential cross-Country link to Corn Hill.

Strategic Residential Reserve

* That the existing exceptional circumstances for development in residential reserve zoning lands be reinstated in the new proposed Draft County Development Plan 2021- 2027 and not be excluded as advised by the Office Public Regulator and Chief Executives Report.

The Office Public Regulator (OPR) has recommended (under Recommendation 5) that the Planning Authority:

Reconsider and appropriately reduce the provision of all zoned residential land, and land zoned for a mix of residential and other uses, to align with the quantity of land necessary to accommodate housing supply targets in the (revised) Core Strategy.

Review the quantity of land zoned strategic residential reserve to reflect the longer term NPF population targets to 2040, with all land zoned *‘Strategic Residential Reserve’* located in an area subject to flooding omitted in accordance with the provisions of The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

Adopt a sequential approach to the zoning of lands in accordance with RPO 4.2, such that lands in proximity to the town core are zoned for new residential use, with particular emphasis on lands in Edgeworthstown and Ballymahon, where land in proximity to the town core has been identified as Strategic Residential Reserve and land further removed has been zoned as new residential.

Given the extent, nature and location of these lands, the Office Public Regulator considers that the wording supporting the Strategic Residential Reserve objective in Volume 2 Appendix of the Draft Plan be clarified to ensure that no residential development proposals will be considered by the planning authority, on lands identified as Strategic Residential Reserve until after the full lifetime period of the County Development Plan 2021-2027 (Observation 1).

Strategic Residential Reserve:

To provide for the longer-term housing requirements of the town. Residential development, other than that set out below, will not be permitted on these lands during the lifetime of the Plan (It should be noted that lands zoned for the purposes of strategic residential reserve may be released for development over future plan periods). The following residential type development may be considered acceptable;

1) Where there is a live permission for residential development that has not been activated. The life of these permissions may be extended in accordance with the provisions of Section 42A of the Planning & Development Act 2010, as amended. Proposals for new developments will not be considered over the lifetime of the current plan period.

2) A proposal for a single dwelling house may be considered under this zoning where: a) the unit to be provided will serve as the permanent place of residence of the landowner or a member of his/her immediate family b) and where it can be clearly demonstrated that the provision of such a unit would not compromise the ability of the wider area of zoned land to be developed in the future, c) and the dwelling would easily integrate with the existing and future development of the lands and those in the vicinity.

3) In exceptional circumstances where it can be clearly demonstrated by the developer that there is a significant difficulty in the release or identification of lands for a specific residential type development, consideration will be given to the release of lands zoned Strategic Residential Reserve, subject to established planning criteria and including in particular; 23 a) The requirement to remain within the overall residential land use targets as set out in the Core Strategy; b) The lands are being developed in a sequential manner; c) It has been clearly justified and demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, that there is a clear discrepancy between the supply and release of residentially zoned lands and the demand for residential units. Certain developments that can demonstrate a strategic element, (e.g. a significant commercial or social element), may be deemed acceptable.

Revised Retail Strategy

Submissions from Office Public Regulator, North West Regional Authority and EMRA querying large floorspace forecasts.

The now proposed changes in floorspace requirements come as a result of the significant forecasted decline in GDP over the year 2020 (-9.4%) which will impact on the projected available retail spend within the county, based on various forecasting by numerous sources referenced in the revised Retail Strategy.

* The previous draft Retail Strategy was based on positive economic growth forecasts from the ESRI as this was conducted in Oct 2019 prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Planning also reviewed the retail vacancy levels and found a significant reduction in vacancy, particularly in regard to large floorplate units through occupation or change of use planning permission away from retail use

Revised Retail Strategy

* Protect Town centres
* Encourage take up of existing space
* Encourage town centre development
* Prevent leakage to out of town
* Rejuvenate our towns.

On the proposal of Councillor Paraic Brady and seconded by Councillor Pat O’Toole it was unanimously agreed to insert the Infrastructure Assessment Report (IAR), used to identify the existing and projected level of infrastructure provision within settlements and the subsequent amendments to the zoning maps as a result of further iteration of the IAR to accommodate additional development, into the amended Draft Plan as Appendix 1 G. A working draft of the Infrastructure Assessment Report is provided in Appendix 10 of this report. (Chief Executive Report).

On the proposal of Councillor Peggy Nolan and seconded by Councillor John Browne it was unanimously agreed to accept the amendments to the Revised Retail Strategy as outlined to the meeting.

On the proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler and seconded by Councillor Paraic Brady it was unanimously agreed to accept the amendments to the Strategic Residential Reserve as outlined to the meeting.

**Errata (A) - CE report recommends the removal of RPS No. 269, however, on review the correct RPS no. is 360**.

On the proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler and seconded by Councillor Uruemu Adejinmi it was unanimously agreed to acceptErrata (A) - CE report recommends the removal of RPS No. 269, however, on review the correct RPS no. is 360.

**Errata (B) – CE recommends the response to Submission 89 be included in the Chief Executive Report**

On the proposal of Councillor Seamus Butler and seconded by Councillor Peggy Nolan it was unanimously agreed to acceptErrata (B) – CE recommends the response to Submission 89 be included in the Chief Executive Report.

**Notices of Motions, submitted by Councillors, as listed hereunder –**

**Office Public Regulator Submission**

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Seamus Butler and seconded by Councillor Garry Murtagh -**

‘That Longford County Council does not accept the Chief Executive recommendation

following on from the OPR submission in regard to Strategic Residential Reserve and that it

reverts to the previous wording in the draft County Development Plan which includes the

addition of an exceptional circumstance rider. This is in the interests of the proper planning

and sustainable development of the area as exceptional circumstances in the future may

require some of these lands to be developed to deliver housing in Longford’

**Burial Ground Drumlish**

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Padraic Brady and seconded by Councillor PJ Reilly -**

That the old Presbyterian burial ground in Drumlish not be zoned for Residential purposes

but zoned for public utility and that the residential zoning for the old burial ground be

relocated to the east on the same road.

**Residential Reserve**

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Paraic Brady and seconded by Councillor Colin Dalton -**

That the land zoned residential reserve on the Old Hill Road leading to the Old School Road be rezoned amenity to better facilitate the amenity path through the village and to better align with the amenity path along the Mill Race.

**Bridal Path**

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Paraic Brady and seconded by Councillor Colin Dalton -**

That a bridal path be included in the Zoning map for Drumlish similar to the amenity link path and connecting the potential cross-country link to Corn Hill.

**Social, Community and Utility use**

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Pat O’Toole and seconded by Councillor Mick Cahill -**

I propose that Longford County Council change the use of the former Convent Building and grounds at Upper Main Street Ballymahon from residential use to social, community and utility use.

**Danesfort House**

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Colm Murray and seconded by Councillor Mick Cahill to include amendment to the reference number -**

I propose that Danesfort House, reference number 212 on the list of protected

structures be removed from the said list.

**Thatch Cottage**

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Colm Murray and seconded by Councillor Mick Pat O’Toole to include amendment to the reference number -**

I propose that the Thatch Cottage, Keenagh, reference number 357 on the list of

protected structures be removed from the said list.

**Notice of Motion below withdrawn by Councillor Garry Murtagh**

Lands in Ballinalee to be removed from Zoned Residential Reserve to Zoned

Agricultural/Blank in the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area’.

**Residential Reserve Zoning**

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Garry Murtagh and seconded by Councillor Paraic Brady** -

That the existing exceptional circumstances for development in residential reserve zoning lands be reinstated in the new proposed Draft County Development Plan 2021- 2027 and not be excluded as advised by the OPR and Chief Executives Report.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Meeting of the Council was adjourned for ten minutes to allow the Cathaoirleach time to review an urgent notice of motion which was submitted by Councillor PJ Reilly during the course of the meeting.

Under Standing Orders Number 21 the following Councillors Colin Dalton, Pat O’Toole, Seamus Butler, Mick Cahill, Gerry Hagan, John Browne, Peggy Nolan, Uruemu Adejinmi and Paraic Brady voted in favour of a proposal to consider the Notice of Motion.

**Notice of Motion**

**Protected Structure**

**The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor PJ Reilly and seconded by Councillor Turlough Mc Govern.**

Could the Old RIC Building in Abbeylara, Jimmy O Hara’s Building Main Street, Granard and Houricans, Granard be removed as listed buildings.

On the proposal of Councillor Colm Murray and seconded by Councillor Paraic Brady it was unanimously agreed by all the members to accept the amendments and notice of motions and to progress to the next stage which is public consultation stage.

The members thanked Donal for his informative presentation and acknowledged the work of the planning staff.

**This concluded the business of the meeting.**

**Ann Marie Mc Keon**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Ann Marie Mc Keon,**

**Meetings Administrator.**

**Confirmed and adopted at Monthly Meeting of Longford County Council held on the 8th September 2021.**

**Peggy Nolan**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Cathaoirleach.**