**COMHAIRLE CONTAE FHINE GALL**

**FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023**

**Tuesday, 27 September 2016**

**Motion from Councillor Adrian Henchy: sheet 7. AI029133**

CVQ 2445
This Council resolves that the lands at Balcarrick , Donabate as outlined in red on the attached map, be rezoned from OS – Open Space to RC – Rural Cluster

**REPORT:**
This motion seeks to rezone an area of land which lies adjacent to the existing Rural Cluster at Balcarrick, Donabate. The motion notes that the land is currently zoned OS (Open Space). However, from the attached map, the subject lands are included within Objective HA – High Amenity.

In this regard it should be noted that there are currently thirty four existing Rural Clusters within the Draft Plan to cater for rural generated housing need. These Rural Clusters have a strong residential focus and are based on a small number of individual houses and typically take the form of between 5 and 15 dwellings. They provide an alternative to one-off housing in the countryside through the consolidation of rural residential development within existing small clusters. For the most part, they provide an opportunity for family members of existing households within the cluster to build a new home, or re-use and adapt an existing structure, in proximity to their family home, by subdividing large sites.

This proposed Rural Cluster zoning seeks to extend the existing RC zoning at Balcarrick, Donabate. The existing rural cluster at Balcarrick has capacity to accommodate additional dwelling units. Furthermore, there is a large area of undeveloped 'RA' zoned lands to the west and southwest of the subject lands (included within Donabate LAP) which has the potential to provide an additional 4,000 residential units on the Donabate-Portrane Peninsula.

The *Ministerial Planning Guidelines on Development Plans*, issued under Section *28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended),* state '*zoning that is not responsive to or justifiable by reference to reasonable needs, or that substantially*

*exceeds such needs, is not consistent with proper planning and sustainable development.'* The Guidelines also make clear that in order to support public confidence in the planning system and the development plan, decisions to zone land must be clearly justified on the basis of established need and must support the aims and strategy of the plan taking the following specific matters into account:

• Need
• Policy Context
• Capacity of Water, Drainage and Roads Infrastructure
• Supporting Infrastructure and Facilities
• Physical Suitability
• Sequential Approach
• Environmental and Heritage policy, including conservation of habitats and other sensitive areas.

The zoning of these lands cannot be justified on the matters outlined above. This submission seeks residential development beyond the outer edge of the existing RC, RS and RA zoned lands on the Peninsula, while considerable development opportunities currently exist within these areas in the vicinity of the subject lands. Such a development pattern would result in deficiencies in terms of the provision of basic infrastructure and public services, in addition to unsustainable travel patterns and the loss of agricultural and high amenity lands.

The allocation of housing unit numbers for the entire County area has been thoroughly analysed and addressed in the context of the Core Strategy of the Draft Plan 2017-2023 based on the directions contained in the RPG's. The quantum and location of zoned land in the County is directly influenced by the Development Plan's Settlement and Core Strategy. The *Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010* introduced the requirement for an evidence based 'Core Strategy' to be provided in Development Plans. The Core Strategy identifies the quantum and location of development for the plan period that is consistent with the regionally defined population targets and settlement hierarchy, and, which reflects the availability of existing services, planned investment, sequential development and environmental requirements. The Core Strategy sets out the specific population targets and housing requirements across the County and the elements of the settlement hierarchy thereby act as a clear framework for amendments to existing zonings. The Core Strategy must demonstrate that the development objectives in the Development Plan are consistent with the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines.
Government policy as articulated by the National Spatial Strategy and the *Sustainable Rural Housing: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, April 2005*, classifies

the rural area of Fingal as *"an area under strong urban influence*" where the housing requirements of the rural community should be facilitated but urban generated housing should be directed to areas zoned for residential development in cities, towns and villages. The approach is reflected in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. The inclusion in the Draft Plan of objectives facilitating the provision of additional housing without due regard to the Core Strategy and its approach is contrary to the national and regional direction.

Based on the evidence-based approach adopted in the Core Strategy for the County, it is clear that Fingal has a significant and sufficient quantum of zoned land to meet the RPG targets for the Development Plan period. This motion proposes the rezoning of HA zoned land in a strategic high amenity area close to the coast. Such a change in designation would result in the erosion of the rural character of these sensitive high amenity lands.

Allowing certain individuals to be excluded from this policy would contradict this overall approach and be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. Furthermore, there is a significant area of 'RA' zoned lands (approximately 138 hectares) included within Donabate LAP (March 2016), which has the potential to provide an additional 4,000 housing units on the Peninsula. There is therefore no justifiable need to rezone any additional high amenity lands to provide for additional housing in this area. Such a change in designation would result in the erosion of the high amenity value of these lands.

To rezone these lands from Objective 'HA' to Objective 'RC' at this time would facilitate the un-coordinated, ad hoc provision of unsustainable urban generated housing detached from existing designated settlements for which there is no evidence-based need or planning rationale, therefore, contrary to proper planning and sustainable development of the County.

**RECOMMENDATION:**
It is recommended that no change is made.