COMHAIRLE CONTAE FHINE GALL

FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023

Tuesday, 27 September 2016

Motion from Councillor Paul Mulville: Sheet 7. AI028880

Change zoning of lands outlined on map at The Burrow, Portrane , from RU Rural to RC Rural Clusters.
This motion is in the name of Cllr Adrian Henchy also.

REPORT:
Motion Nos. **AI028878, AI028881, AI028398** (Councillor Mulville)**, AI029112** (Councillor Henchy), and **AI029129** (Councillor Butler) also relate to the rezoning of lands at The Burrow, Portrane.

This motion seeks to rezone lands at The Burrow, Portrane from Objective 'RU' (Rural) to Objective 'RC' (Rural Cluster).

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 reuse and adapt an existing structure, in proximity to their family home, by subdividing large sites.

This proposed Rural Cluster zoning at The Burrow is located close to the large area of undeveloped 'RA' zoned lands (included within Donabate LAP) which has the potential to provide an additional 4,000 residential units on the Donabate-Portrane Peninsula. Furthermore, there are existing rural clusters in Balcarrick, Donabate and The Quay in Portrane, which have capacity to cater for additional dwelling units in this general area.

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 RU zoned land within the Burrow and such a change in designation would result in the erosion of the rural character of these sensitive lands. The lands are located close to the estuary and coast and the loss of same would contribute to a significant diminution of the area's landscape value.

The unique character of the Burrow lands at Portrane is recognised within the Draft Plan. Accordingly, any development in this area must be sensitively designed and must respect the unique character, landscape and visual amenities of the area, having regard to the local issues of coastal erosion and the significant landscape and biodiversity sensitivities in the area including a Flora Protection Order, Special Protection Area (SPA), Natural Heritage Area (NHA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and designated Ecological Buffer Zone.

Recommendation CE CH4.12 of the CE Report recommended that a Study be carried out to decide on the optimal future development of lands in the Burrow area of Portrane. Recommendation CE CH 4.12 states:

'Objective Portrane xx
Prepare a study to decide on the optimal future development of lands in the Burrow area, having regard to the local issues of coastal erosion, flooding, drainage and the significant landscape and biodiversity sensitivities in the area including a Flora Protection Order, Special Protection Area (SPA), Natural Heritage Area (NHA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and designated Ecological BufferZone.'

In conclusion, the rezoning of these lands would be premature until such time as a study has been prepared for the Burrow lands to decide on the optimal future

development of lands. To rezone these lands from Objective 'RU' to Objective 'RC' at this time would facilitate the uncoordinated, 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 necessary in this instance and that CE CH 4.12 be upheld.