

COMHAIRLE CONTAE FHINE GALL

FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

FINGAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023-2029

TUESDAY, 20TH SEPTEMBER 2022

Sheet 2 Fingal North

Motion from Councillor Tony Murphy : 81715

Courtough

Fingal County Council resolves that the lands at Courtough, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin as outlined in red on the attached map be zoned Objective 'GE' – General Employment: 'Provide opportunities for general enterprise and employment' in the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029, to facilitate the timely delivery of employment generating land-uses on lands which are strategically located within the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and are accessible and well connected via existing transport infrastructure.

REPORT:

The content of the motion is noted.

The subject lands equate to c.42.4 hectares (104.7 acres) and comprise an extensive parcel of existing agricultural lands located to the south/east of an existing landbank of employment zoned lands at Courtough and that runs parallel to the R132 and to the east of the M1. The subject lands are in agricultural use. No recent relevant planning history pertains to the subject lands.

The subject lands are currently zoned RU-Rural in FDP 2017-2023 and this zoning objective is carried through to the Draft Plan.

The Council is fully committed to the continued protection of the agricultural sector and the preservation of agricultural land within the County in accordance with the RU zoning objective, vision and supporting policy and objectives in the Draft Plan. Specifically, Chapter 7 Employment and Economy, Section 7.5.3 and Policy EEP23 of the Draft Plan, is explicit in the protection and promotion of

agricultural lands within the County, a valuable resource that cannot be inconsequentially exhausted.

In addition, the key strategic employment aims and objectives of the Draft Plan seek to facilitate and channel employment growth within key strategic and accessible employment areas of the County, whilst having regard to the sequential approach as advocated at national level.

This approach is supported by an evidence based quantitative analysis, which shows there is a more than adequate quantum of employment zoned lands including general employment lands within the County to accommodate any future employment growth in readily accessible locations where necessary infrastructure is at an optimum, for the plan period and beyond. There is an undeveloped landbank of GE lands within the north County area including Courtlough and Balbriggan, equating to c. 130 ha. These figures represent a substantial provision of GE zoned lands readily available for development.

In addition, the NTA, TII and OPR in its submission to the Draft stage of the Development Plan process, highlight the need for the continued protection of the strategic transport function of the national road network which includes the M1. Critically, the OPR in its submission to the Draft Plan stage, emphasises the need to ensure that the location of land zoned for employment use is consistent with the national and regional policy framework and that land is not zoned in locations where it would be in conflict with the principle of compact growth, the sequential growth approach and the implementation of sustainable transportation objectives.

Furthermore, OPR Recommendation 11 to the Draft Plan contends that the Planning Authority is required to provide robust justification for the extent and location of employment zoned land and to demonstrate that the criteria of the aforementioned national and regional policy have been satisfied, in respect of the adjoining lands zoned as General Employment (circa 73ha) south of Balbriggan as set out in the Draft Plan which extends across both sides of the M1 and includes the lands subject to this motion.

Given a significant portion of the existing zoned land remain un-developed, there is no rationale for zoning further lands at this location.

The proposed change in zoning from RU to GE would be contrary to the policy and objectives relating to the protection of valued agricultural lands in the Draft Plan.

In the absence of the sequential approach and any coherent evidence-based need or planning rationale for this change in zoning, the proposal would result in an

un-coordinated, ad-hoc provision of unsustainable employment lands, contrary to the key employment aims and objectives of the Draft FDP 2023-2029 and NTA, TII, OPR policy, which seeks to protect strategic transport corridors and channel employment growth within key strategic employment areas of the County, aligned with existing and planned infrastructure.

As such, the proposed motion is contrary to proper planning and sustainable development.

RECOMMENDATION:

No change to the Draft Plan.