

COMHAIRLE CONTAE FHINE GALL

FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

FINGAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023-2029

TUESDAY, 20TH SEPTEMBER 2022

Sheet 4 Balbriggan

Motion from Councillor Brian Dennehy : 82374

Rezone from RU to RC as Shown on Map Attached, Sheet 4

That the lands at Blackhills are located immediately to the west of the existing Blackhills RC, and are currently zoned RU. This RC is largely developed with little no potential for additional housing. The area is served by public mains drainage and by a limited county road network.

There is merit in permitting this extension, given there is little or no potential for additional housing development within the existing RC, the availability of services in the area and the need to facilitate rural generated housing need.

REPORT:

The motion which seeks to rezone lands to the south of and adjacent Blackhills Rural Cluster (RC) from RU to RC.

Blackhills RC is located immediately south of the entrance to Ardgillan Demesne and to the south-east of Balrothery. The accompanying map appears to indicate 4 no. additional sites with an overall area of c.0.5Ha (1.2 acre).

There are currently thirty-seven Rural Clusters within the Draft Plan to cater for rural-generated housing need. The Rural Cluster zoning has a total area of 175 hectares (432 acres). These Rural Clusters have a strong residential focus and are based on a limited number of individual dwellings, typically taking the form of between 5 and 15 homes. This zoning offers an alternative to one-off housing in the open countryside by providing for consolidation of residential development within smaller settlements. For the most part, Rural Clusters provide opportunities for family members of existing households to build a new home, re-use and adapt an existing structure or subdivide large sites etc.

It should be noted that the Draft Plan currently proposes the extension of the Blackhills RC to the west and the motion would see a second extension to the RC to the south.

The proposed extension presents in a linear format to the southern boundary of the Rural Cluster, fronting the local road. An extension to the land use zoning in the manner proposed would exacerbate the pattern of ribbon development in the area, stretching from the entrance to Ardgillan Demesne southwards for approximately 500m. (including the subject lands and limited gap sites) with a similar pattern emerging on the eastern side of the local road, opposite the subject lands.

Such spatial and radial patterns of growth are typically characterised by low density car-dependent spread which is difficult to serve by active and public transport options and is generally unsustainable in nature and would be counterproductive to the consolidation of the Blackhills RC.

The recently published Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities June 2022 relating to zoning for residential development acknowledges the spatial pattern of the growth of settlements, often along radial access routes, characterised by ribbon and low-density development, has served to 'lock-in' extremely high levels of car dependence and render settlements too spread out and incoherent to pursue active travel and has resulted in the decline of town and village centres.

In undertaking the zoning function for new residential development at individual settlement scale, Planning Authorities are required to adopt a sequential approach whereby the most spatially centrally located development sites in settlements are prioritised for new development first, with more spatially peripherally located development sites being zoned subsequently which reflects the compact growth, utilisation of existing infrastructure and regeneration based on national and regional policy guidance of the NPF and RSES. In developing landuse zoning and policies for rural areas, these guidelines also note the importance of considering the mandatory Development Plan objective in respect of climate change action under S.10(2) (n) of the Planning and Development Act, which relates to the promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas to reduce energy demand.

Furthermore, 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 and vision and supportive policy and objectives set out in Chapter 7 of the Draft Plan relating to the rural economy.

Accordingly, it is recommended that the lands should not be rezoned from RU to RC.

The extension of the Rural Cluster, taken together with the extension currently proposed under the Draft Plan would cumulatively be excessive and would be contrary to proper planning and sustainable development.

RECOMMENDATION:

No change to Draft Plan.