

COMHAIRLE CONTAE FHINE GALL

FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

FINGAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023-2029

TUESDAY, 20TH SEPTEMBER 2022

Sheet 5 Skerries

Motion from Councillor Tom O'Leary : 81864

Incremental addition To RC Holmpatrick RC Skerries -facilitate rural generated housing need

That this Council agrees to Zone the area identified on the map attached from HA High Amenity to RC Rural Cluster

REPORT:

The content of this motion is noted. The subject lands equate to 1.2 hectares (5 acres) and are located on the sea ward side of the R128 Skerries/Rush Road.

The subject lands are currently zoned HA-High Amenity, within designated highly sensitive landscape and the Coastal Landscape Character area and with preserved views along the adjoining county road as designated in the FDP 2017-2023. The zoning objective and landscape designations are carried through to the Draft Plan.

There are currently thirty-seven Rural Clusters within the Draft Plan to cater for rural generated housing need. The existing Rural Cluster zoning has a combined total area of 175 hectares (432 acres) throughout the rural countryside. 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 will 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.

The change in zoning of lands to designated RC-Rural Cluster would represent a piecemeal uncoordinated rezoning of lands for which there is no evidence-based

need. Decisions to zone land must be clearly justified on the basis of established need and must support the aims and strategy of the Draft Plan and consider issues such as need, policy context, capacity of water, drainage and roads infrastructure, supporting infrastructure and facilities, physical suitability, sequential approach and environmental and heritage designations. 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 land-use 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.

With regard to the request for a change in zoning from HA to RC, notably, the areas of greatest development pressure within the County coincides closely with these areas of high amenity value. The Draft Plan affords a high level of landscape value and protection to these high amenity areas. The primary objective of the Council over successive Development Plans has been to limit housing development in particular, within areas of high amenity in order to promote more sustainable settlement and protect the most sensitive parts of the County in accordance with the zoning objective and vision for these lands. The Council will continue to concentrate efforts to protect high amenity areas and supportive policies and objectives within Chapter 9 Green Infrastructure and Natural Heritage of the Draft Plan includes policy GINHP28 and objective GINH063 in this regard. The Council is therefore fully committed to the continued protection of these high amenity lands in accordance with the zoning objective and vision as set out in the current FDP 2017-2023 and Draft Plan.

Regarding the proposed extension to the existing Holmpatrick RC, and while acknowledging the limited remaining capacity in this existing rural cluster, the Council will consider small scale incremental additions to existing clusters to

facilitate rural generated housing need. Notwithstanding, the proposed extension to this existing RC is considered extensive and would not constitute a small-scale incremental extension within the spirit of the RC zoning objective and vision to provide for small-scale infill development.

Based on the above, the zoning of these lands cannot be justified on the matters outlined and would be contrary to government guidance at national level. 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 HA zoned lands of which it is Council policy to protect. As such, the motion is considered to be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.

RECOMMENDATION:

No change to the Draft Plan.