

COMHAIRLE CONTAE FHINE GALL

FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

FINGAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023-2029

TUESDAY, 20TH SEPTEMBER 2022

Sheet 6 Lusk-Rush

Motion from Councillor Jimmy Guerin : 81969

Lands At Knockdromin House (Beau Farm)

"This Council resolves that the lands at Knockdromin House (Beau Farm), Beau, Lusk, as outlined in red on the attached map, be re-zoned from "RU – Rural" to "RA"- Residential Area in the forthcoming Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029"

Planning Rationale:

- Rezoning is required to facilitate the restoration of this vernacular dwelling and associated farm buildings of local historical importance
- Lands are situated in a well-connected, sustainable location for residential development less than 500m from Rush-Lusk train Station and the nearest bus stop
- Residential development on the subject lands will help to accommodate the 9,095 people expected to be living in Lusk by 2029
- There is an extremely limited amount of land available for development within the existing development boundary of Lusk and as such it is submitted that lands in a sustainable location such as the subject lands should be considered for residential use to facilitate growth
- Re-zoning lands within the development boundary to accommodate residential development would also take away from important existing land uses such as community infrastructure and open space – providing residential development on the subject lands would avoid the loss of such lands while still enabling growth
- An 'Inter-Urban' cycle path and Greenway are proposed for Lusk as part of the Draft Development Plan – these run in close proximity to the subject lands and

will increase their connectivity and integration with the surrounding areas and amenity spaces

REPORT:

The content of the motion is acknowledged. The subject lands are located on the southern side of the R128 Station Road, approximately 1.2 kilometres east of the development boundary for Lusk and 1.5km west of the development boundary of Rush.

The lands, which are all zoned RU – Rural have an approximate area of 10.1 hectares (25 acres) comprising:

- A parcel of land of ca. 2.3 hectares (5.7 acres) on the western side of the overall lands which is currently in agricultural use;
- A largely wooded area of ca. 2.8 hectares (6.9 acres) to the centre of the site which has a number of with derelict structures including the ruins of Knockdromin which is a protected structure (RPS number 284, 18th century detached house (badly damaged by fire in 2017) and outbuildings, walled garden, gate lodge and gates)
- A parcel of land of ca. 5.9 hectares (14.6 acres) which makes up the eastern and southern portion of the overall lands and which is also currently in agricultural use.

The subject lands are surrounded by agricultural or horticultural uses with a large horticultural/greenhouse business adjoining the lands to the east. The lands are also situated approximately 400m to the north of the Rogerstown Estuary which is a protected European Site.

A planning search for the subject lands indicated that Fingal County Council planning permission in November 2007 for a development including the conversion of the protected Knockdromin House as well as the change of use and alteration of existing farm buildings to provide for a total of 8 dwellings. This planning permission was not implemented.

The motion requests the rezoning of the subject lands from RU – Rural to RA – Residential Area. The motion includes a number of planning rationales in support of the rezoning and these rationales outlined are duly noted. However, it is not considered that they provide a sufficient basis for the proposed rezoning and it is considered that the rezoning of the subject lands for residential as proposed by the motion, would be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Firstly, the Draft Development Plan demonstrates that adequate lands have already been zoned for the provision of additional housing in Lusk and Rush during the period of the Draft Development Plan 2023-2029.

The Draft Plan's Core Strategy has identified that there is a sufficient quantum of zoned lands within the county to meet demand over the Development Plan period. The zoning of additional lands at this location is not required on the basis of need and would be contrary to the Core Strategy and national and regional planning policy as set out in the NPF and RSES.

This is reflected in the updated Table 2.14 shown on page 69 of the Chief Executive's Report on the Draft Plan Consultation which indicates that there is currently 27 hectares of land zoned residential within the existing development boundary for Lusk and 53 hectares in Rush, which have the potential to provide significantly in excess of the dwelling units that will be required during the life of the Draft Plan.

As stated previously, the lands have an approximate area of 10.1 hectares. If the site was rezoned to RS, the potential number of units which could be delivered on the subject lands at densities allowed for in government guidelines at such locations (35-50 hectares per hectare) would amount to between 354 and 505 units.

This number of additional units would far exceed the total projected housing demand of 300 additional units for Lusk for the period 2023-2029 as set out in the amended Core Strategy table. Based on the figures outlined above, the number of units would represent 118% to 160% of the current total projected housing demand for Lusk.

Given the excessive level of additional residential rezoning proposed by the motion, as well as the location of the subject lands outside the development boundaries of Lusk and Rush it is clear that the proposed rezoning would be contrary to the overall vision for the towns.

Secondly, the proposed rezoning would also be contrary to the core principles of the NPF and RSES in relation to compact, consolidated growth and also to the vision for Lusk as set out in the Draft Plan. As set out in the Settlement Strategy for Fingal in Section 2.7 of the Draft Plan, both Lusk and Rush are designated as a Self-Sustaining Town which require contained growth, focusing on driving investment in services, employment growth and infrastructure whilst balancing housing delivery. This growth is to be achieved by encouraging infill development and compact growth rather than greenfield development and by intensification at appropriately identified locations.

It is clear therefore, that the rezoning of the subject lands would militate against the overall goal of “encouraging infill development and compact growth rather than greenfield development and by intensification at appropriately identified locations” as provided for in in Draft Development Plan Policy CSP33 – Consolidate Growth of Self-Sustaining Towns.

Such ‘compact growth’ policies are a key part of the overall approach adopted in the Draft Development Plan and are in compliance with the recently published Development Plans Guidelines relating to zoning for residential development. These Guidelines require Planning Authorities 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.

According to the Guidelines, this approach is required in order to support compact growth, utilisation of existing infrastructure and regeneration based on national and regional policy guidance of the NPF and RSES. The subject site located almost centrally between Lusk and Rush is detached from the existing zoned land and development boundary and to zone these lands would not follow the sequential approach advocated in national guidance. The leapfrogging of land would be contrary to proper planning and sustainable development.

With regard to the remaining ‘planning rationales’ outlined in the motion, it is not considered that a new residential rezoning is necessary to restore Knockdromin House, which is a protected structure. In this regard, the Draft Development Plan is explicit in acknowledging and supporting the protection, enhancement and re-use of the County’s built heritage assets for sympathetic and appropriate uses. Of particular relevance in this instance is Objective HCAO26 which states that:

“Where required to support active use or facilitate suitable adaptive re-use of Protected Structures the Council may in certain circumstances consider the relaxation of site zoning restrictions to secure the preservation and conservation of the Protected Structure where the use proposed is compatible with the existing structure. This will only be permitted where the development is consistent with conservation policies and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.”

It is considered, the policies and objective set out above including the application of the Development Management process are considered sufficiently robust to protect and enhance the built heritage of the County and guide any future development proposals for the restoration and reinstatement of Knockdromin House having regard to its Protected Structure status and its existing RU zoning.

Additionally, while the lands may be within 500m of Rush-Lusk Railway station, they are more than a kilometre from the boundary of Lusk along a relatively rural regional road. Furthermore, the proposed new cycleway and greenway is to improve the overall active travel and sustainable movement network across the county, but not to facilitate additional residential developments in peripheral locations.

Lastly, it is important to note, 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 RA.

Having regard to the above and 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 our requirements for the Development Plan period.

The inclusion in the Draft Plan of zoning objectives facilitating the provision of additional housing without due regard to the Core Strategy and its approach is contrary to national and regional direction and to the provisions of the Draft Plan relating to the protection of agricultural lands and as such, would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.

RECOMMENDATION:

No change to the Draft Plan.