

COMHAIRLE CHONTAE UÍBH FHAILÍ

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
OF OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL ON
PRE -DRAFT OFFALY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021 -2027:**

**HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, CHARLEVILLE ROAD, TULLAMORE ON
MONDAY, 13TH JULY AT 10.30 A.M.**

PRESENT	Cllr. J. Carroll (Presiding), Cllrs. C. Claffey, J. Clendennen, E. Dooley, E. Fitzpatrick, J. Foley, M. Hackett, D. Harvey, J. Leahy, T. McCormack, F. Moran(R), S. O'Brien, P. Ormond, D. Owens, L. Quinn and K. Smollen [(R) denotes remote access]
APOLOGIES	Cllrs. N. Cribbin, N. Feighery and R. McDermott
IN ATTENDANCE	Ms. A. Delaney, Chief Executive; Mr. T. Shanahan, D.O.S. (R); Ms. S. Kennedy, D.O.S. (R); Mr. M. Connolly, H.O.F.; Ms. A. Dillon, A/D.O.S., Mr. G. Bruton, Meetings Administrator, Mr. R. Bell, H.I.S.; Mr. A. Murray, S.P.; Ms. L. Mitchell, S.E.P.; Mr. J. Condrón, E.P.; Mr. D. Meehan, P.; Mr. J. Egan, A.P.; Ms. K. Gray, C.O. (R) and Ms. L. Carbery, C.O. (R) denotes remote access]
ETHICS AND LOBBYING ACT 2015	Ms. A. Dillon brought the members attention to the Guidelines on lobbying in relation to the development and zoning of land, noting that members should advise any lobbyist to register.
CO. DEVELOPMENT PLAN TIMEFRAME	Ms. L. Mitchell presented a timeline on the making of the Co. Development Plan.
BIODIVERSITY AND LANDSCAPE	<p>Mr. J. Condrón provided the members with a presentation on Biodiversity and Landscape noting the objective to ensure development occurs within environmental limits and having regard to environmental legislation and sustainable management of the county's natural capital.</p> <p>He informed the members on the objectives of the plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• BLO-01 It is an objective of the Council that development occurs within environmental limits, having regard to the requirements of all relevant environmental legislation and the sustainable management of County Offaly's natural capital.• BLP-02 to conserve and protect our habitats and species listed EU Habitats Directive, Birds Directive and the Wildlife Acts (BLP-02) all existing and future Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Nature Reserves, Ramsar Sites, Wildfowl Sanctuaries and Biogenetic Reserves (BLP-04)• BLP-03 with Appropriate Assessment where necessary, that the plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary effects on the integrity of any European site.• BLP-05 to protect county geological sites, mushroom stones

- BLP-06 to increase pedestrian and cycling access
- BLP-07 to consider the potential designation of the north Offaly esker landscape as a UNESCO Geopark
- BLP-18 to support collaboration between Offaly County Council, Coillte, the Bord na Móna Transition Team and relevant stakeholders of a partnership approach to integrated peatland management for a just transition that incorporates the management, rehabilitation and restoration / re-wetting of significant tracts of peatlands.
- BLP-15 to work with adjacent local authorities and relevant stakeholders in promoting a National Park designation for the peatlands in the midlands and a 'Regional Peatway' connecting natural and cultural attractions.
- BLP-17 to support the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in carrying out of an EU LIFE fund supported raised bog restoration project in restoring the following SAC sites in the county to favourable conservation status; Clara Bog; Ferbane Bog; Mongan Bog; Moyclare Bog; Raheenmore Bog; and Sharavogue Bog.
- BLO-12 Preserve groups of trees that contribute to amenity
- BLO-13 Consider making additional Tree Preservation Orders
- BLO-16 Encourage the retention, wherever possible, of hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatment
- BLP -32 to protect and preserve the county's Areas of High Amenity
- BLO-20 to ensure that new development does not impinge in any significant way on the character, integrity and distinctiveness of or the scenic value of these AHAs
- BLP-34 to support the preparation of a masterplan that conserves and protects the Clonmacnoise monastic site and will co-operate with the Office of Public Works and other stakeholders in its preparation and implementation.
- BLP-35 to protect and enhance the county's landscape, by ensuring that development retains, protects and where necessary, enhances the appearance and character of the county's existing landscape.
- BLO-21 to prepare a County Landscape Character Assessment in accordance with all relevant legislation and guidance documents and following the forthcoming National and Regional Landscape Character Assessment.
- BLO-22 to have regard to the Landscape Sensitivity Areas in the consideration of planning applications
- BLO-24 to protect Key Scenic Views and Key Prospects contained in Table 4.22, and Key Amenity Routes as listed in Table 4.23 from inappropriate development.
- BLO-25 to ensure that proposed developments take into consideration their effects on views from Key Scenic Views and Prospects and Key Amenity Routes and are designed and located to minimise their impact on this views and prospects.
- BLP-41 to ensure that rural houses in close proximity to the national rail network are of an appropriate scale and design, and sited sensitively to ensure that attractive vistas of the county's landscape are protected.
- BLO-10 to maintain a riparian zone for larger and smaller river channels based on the Shannon Regional Fisheries Board Guidance Document, 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban

	<p>Environment, a Guide to the Protection of Watercourses through the use of Buffer Zones, Sustainable Drainage Systems, Instream Rehabilitation and Recreational Planning’.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLO-11 to investigate the feasibility of and cooperate with relevant agencies in providing a Linear Park based on the River Shannon from Banagher to Meelick, which takes account of the sensitive ecological nature of the Callows area. <p>Mr. J. Condrón informed the members that Draft CDP will protect existing green infrastructure within the county and provide additional Green Infrastructure where possible. It will seek to increase investment in green infrastructure provision and maintenance by accessing relevant EU funding mechanisms and national funding opportunities. Also a Green Infrastructure Masterplan for developments in excess of 20 dwellings, business parks & industrial parks will be required. He noted that plan will also support the aims and objectives of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020, the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021 and the Offaly Heritage Plan 2017-2021.</p> <p>Cllr. M. Hackett raised the possibility of appointing a Biodiversity Officer to work alongside the Heritage Officer. Ms. A. Delaney responded that this is not in the remit of the County Development plan but could be considered by council.</p> <p>Cllr. E. Dooley requested clarification whether the re-wetting of peatlands require planning permission.</p> <p>Mr. J. Condrón responded that such developments are normally subject to Section 5 declarations where relevant exempted development provisions would be examined.</p> <p>Mr. A. Murray responded that the IPC licence for Bord na Móna are exempt and specific objectives for cycle ways throughout peatlands.</p>
<p>BUILT HERITAGE INCLUDING THE RECORD OF PROTECTED STRUCTURES</p>	<p>Mr. D. Meehan provided the members with a presentation on Built Heritage and Protected Structures. He advised the members that this includes Architectural Conservation Areas, Vernacular Buildings, Industrial Heritage, Country Houses, Gardens, Demesnes, Follies, Archaeological Heritage and Monastic Sites. He outlined the objectives with regard to Protected Structures to ensure their protection, sympathetic enhancement and sensitive re-use. This will include a review of the Protected Structures on an on-going basis and the promotion of best practice using skilled practitioners.</p> <p>He informed the members that further Areas of Architectural Conservation would be investigated along with continued preservation of current areas. This will require planning applications to be accompanied Architectural Heritage Assessment Report for any development within the areas. He noted that the protection, retention and appreciation of Vernacular Building, Country Houses, Gardens and Demesnes will be encouraged to preserve their character and setting - focusing on repair, retention and sensitive refurbishment. He outlined the industrial heritage of the county including mills, industrial buildings, canals and bridges and the objective to encourage development of potential Town Heritage trails in line with other tourism assets. He highlighted the importance of protecting the county’s 4,000 archaeological sites and to examine the further designation of</p>

	<p>Clonmacnoise and Durrow as prospective UNESCO World Heritage Sites.</p> <p>Mr. D. Meehan updated the members on the record of Protected Structures with 16 additions and 10 deletions. He noted the proposed changes will increase the total by six. (A total for draft RPS 21-27 of 1429)</p> <p>Mr. D. Meehan briefed the members on the Built Heritage Investment Scheme and the Historic Structures Fund.</p> <p>The members thanked him for his presentation and raised queries on the steps of Kilroys, Geashill and the costs of insurance for inhabitants of protected structures. Cllr. E. Dooley queried if the school in Banagher is included in the list.</p> <p>Mr. D. Meehan responded that core of Geashill village includes a number of protected structures. Ms. R. McKenna confirmed that the steps of Kilroys are separate to the house and the list was proposed in advance of the plan and will be agreed at the same time. She outlined the NIAH process and agreed to send the members a more detailed report.</p> <p>Cllr. J. Carroll said that submissions can be made during the public consultation stage of the draft Development Plan.</p> <p>Ms. Ann Dillon confirmed that the Record of Protected Structures will not be looked at during the making of Local Area Plans.</p>
<p>CLARIFICATION OF LAND USE ZONING OBJECTIVES</p>	<p>Mr. D. Meehan updated the members on the clarifications for land use zoning. He outlined the objectives as per chapter 12 and the additional designations for Constrained Land uses, Strategic Employment Zones and Strategic Community Services Facilities. He outlined the four general zone types – New/proposed residential, existing residential, residential/mixed residential/other uses and strategic residential reserve. He provided the members with an example from the Tullamore Town and Environs Zoning Plan 2010-2016. He explained the terms <i>Existing Residential</i> as land where there are existing houses or residential accommodation within the boundary of the settlement and <i>New Residential</i> as vacant land which is proposed for residential use in the lifetime of the plan.</p> <p>Mr. D. Meehan confirmed that the previous Texas Site has been revised to be included within the Core Retail Area.</p> <p>On the proposal of Cllr. E. Dooley seconded by Cllr. Harvey that Cork I.T. should be incorporated into the policy ENTP-22.</p>
<p>WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS BY ELECTED MEMBERS THAT WERE CARRIED OVER FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION FROM THE</p>	<p>In response to Cllr. R. McDermott submission with regard to Clonbullogue (submission ref EMPD – 4), Mr. J. Egan noted this would require removing the recommended ‘New Residential’ zoning adjacent to the Village centre resulting in leap-frogging available lands directly adjacent to the village centre. He advised that this is contrary to NPF’s National Strategic Outcome for Compact Growth to prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location.</p>

**SECOND
SPECIAL
COUNCIL
MEETING OF
6TH JULY**

He noted the preferred approach is to zone 1.77 hectares to provide 26 houses adjacent to the village centre on serviced land.

On the proposal of Cllr. L. Quinn seconded by Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick it was agreed not to zone it new residential.

Mr. J. Egan outlined Cllr. McDermott's submission with regard to Rhode (submission ref EMPD-4) to extend the new residential zoning to 4.2 hectares adjacent to proposed North new residential zoned and remove from South proposed zoning. He advised that the scale of new residential schemes for development should be in proportion to the pattern and grain of existing development. Because of the scale of smaller towns and villages, it is generally preferable that overall expansion proceeds on the basis of a number of well integrated sites within and around the town/village centre in question rather than focusing on rapid growth driven by one very large site. Also that no one proposal for residential development should increase the existing housing stock by more than 10-15% within the lifetime of the development plan. Therefore, the submission to extend a single area to 4.2 hectares would equate to approximately 63 houses (would increase existing housing stock by 20%) and this exceeds the core strategy allocation for Rhode.

The alternative option is to increase the site at North by 0.8 hectares, resulting in 14.6% increase. On the proposal of Cllr. L. Quinn, seconded by Cllr. E. Fitzpatrick this was agreed.

In response to the submission by Cllr. P. Ormond (submission ref EMPD-6) to zone land on a site accessed by the R490 in Moneygall, as Enterprise and Employment, it was noted that the wastewater mains do not extend to this site, vehicles would have to drive through the village to access the site and it is detached from the development boundary, therefore does not constitute compact growth. On the proposal of Cllr. P. Ormond, seconded E. Dooley it was agreed to accept as per-the submission proposal.

In response to the submission by Cllr. P. Ormond (submission ref EMPD-6) to zone land adjacent to the school in Shinrone, as Community Facilities for playing fields and to zone 1.9 hectares to the south as new residential, it was agreed that zoning at the school as mixed use allows majority of uses that are allowed under the Community Services/Facilities. It was noted that zoning to the South would require the removal of new residential zoning elsewhere in the village. On the proposal of Cllr. P. Ormond, seconded by Cllr. J. Leahy it was agreed to zone the land around the unfinished housing estate, Rathbaun, existing residential, reducing the area and zoning the south site for new residential.

In response to the submission by Cllr. P. Ormond (submission ref EMPD-6) to extend the Sráid boundary to land on the southern side of old N7 of 0.5 hectares in Dunkerrin, Mr. J. Egan advised that there is sufficient land in the Sráid to cater for incremental growth and due to access restrictions and the contours of the site, it is not favourable. On the proposal of Cllr. P. Ormond, seconded by Cllr. E. Dooley the members agreed to the submission proposal.

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Clendennen (submission ref EMPD-9), seconded by Cllr. C. Claffey to zone part of the Birr Rugby Club at Scurragh to allow consideration for a primary care centre. Mr. J. Egan

advised that zoning as Community Services/facilities would protect, provide and allow expansion of a wide range of different community facilities, civic facilities and social services ranging from education and health facilities to places of worships, community centres and childcare facilities. And that ancillary facilities such as dedicated open space or sports facilities will normally be facilitated within this zoning objective. Cllr. E. Dooley proposed no change to the current zoning on this site, seconded by Cllr. J. Leahy. In response Ms. A. Delaney advised that this would be addressed through the public consultation stage. Accordingly, both proposals were withdrawn.

In response to the proposal by Cllr. F. Moran to extend the boundary in Ballycumber for new residential by 0.11 hectares - updated flooding maps indicate it is not in a flood area and accordingly Mr. J. Egan advised that the zoning of it for new residential use was acceptable.

On the proposal of Cllr. T. McCormack, seconded by Cllr. K. Smollen, the members agreed to the Proposed Amendment from Planning Authority relating to boundary correction and incorporation of 'Open Space, Amenity and Recreation' zoned area at Cluain Abhainn residential development into Clara Settlement Plan

On the proposal of Cllr. F. Moran for the insertion of objective regarding the provision of a boardwalk on Clara Bog to the east of the public road into Clara Settlement Plan, it was agreed that the provision of an additional walking trail around Clara Bog would support and compliment the establishment of a Clara Heritage Trail incorporating the towns industrial heritage, ancient abbeys, cemeteries and nature walks (EDO-08). On the proposal of Cllr. T. McCormack, seconded by Cllr. K. Smollen it was agreed. Cllr. F. Moran thanked the community of Clara for their efforts in developing the bog walks.

In response to the query within the Clara Settlement Plan, in relation to the Monastery, Mr. J. Condrón advised the meeting that while the site was not included as 'Residential' in the existing CDP 2014-20, this building and its curtilage can be considered residential in nature and can be correctly proposed as 'Existing Residential' in the zoning map.

Mr. J. Condrón confirmed the site in Erry Armstrong is a backland site surrounded by boundary walls from the Armstrong Grove housing development on 2 sides and fencing to the backs of detached houses on the New Road. While two of detached houses were not included as 'Residential' in the existing CDP 2014-20, this building and its curtilage can be correctly considered 'Existing Residential'. The site is well maintained and has GAA goalposts on it. The site appears to be used for communal private amenity space for two residences with no public access and as such can be correctly considered for 'Existing Residential' zoning.

In response to the submission by Cllr. F. Moran (submission no. EMPD-1) to zone Old Clara GAA Pitch as new residential, Mr. J. Condrón noted that Irish Water may have potential concerns regarding the proximity of site to the towns WWTP – EPA Manual sets out that 50 metres is minimum recommended distance that a WWTP should be located from sensitive receptors – in order to avoid odour & noise nuisance. Also it was noted that the site does not support compact growth, sustainable

