



Forward Planning Team,  
Planning Department,  
Laois County Council,  
Aras an Chontae,  
Fintan Lawler Avenue,  
Portlaoise,  
Co Laois

**Our Ref:** 200224  
**Your Ref:**

27<sup>th</sup> February 2020

**Re: Review of County Development Plan**

Dear Sirs,

On behalf of our client, Glenveagh Properties PLC, we wish to make a submission regarding Stage One (Pre-Draft) of the **Laois County Development Plan 2017 - 2023** review process. In response to the questions outlined in the Issues Paper, the content of our submission relates to Compact Growth & Sustainable Communities.

- *How do you suggest we make our towns and villages more compact and avoid undesirable sprawl, making the most of brownfield lands?*
- *How do we ensure the most effective use of land, infrastructure and resources?*
- *How can Laois contribute to addressing national housing issues?*
- *Are the current standards for public open space provision associated with new developments appropriate?*
- *Are the needs of different cultural, ethnic, youth, elderly and persons with a disability being accommodated in our community?*

*Public Consultation Issues Paper - Extract*

**Compact Growth and Sustainable Communities**

Our client is taking an innovative approach towards the planning, design and building of high-quality homes at densities consistent with the National Planning Framework (NPF). Such an approach is key to ensuring that suitable lands are developed in the most efficient and sustainable manner feasible, to meet known housing shortages and the aims and objectives of national policy and guidance to address same.

A new and innovative housing model which drives high-quality, high density residential developments must be adopted which achieves more compact growth and undesirable sprawl. Residential units must cater for the needs of different age profiles from those buying their first home to retirees all within the same development. MKO respectfully submits that Laois County Council engages with developers, delivering high quality innovative design solutions, which may necessitate flexibility in development management standards, to align with the delivery of compact growth, whilst prioritising residential amenity.



The *Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly – Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2019-2021* (RSES) directs the policy response at a regional scale on how best to achieve the shared goals set out in the National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) of the NPF.

National Strategic Outcome 1 (NSO 1) in the *National Planning Framework* (NPF) sets out a clear objective on compact growth targeting a greater proportion of future housing development to be within and close to the existing ‘footprint’ of built-up areas.

National Policy Objective 3a, 3b and 3c of the NPF sets out the urban development targets for the delivery of new homes within the footprint of existing settlements;

- *National Policy Objective 3a: Deliver at least 40% of all new homes nationally, within the built-up footprint of existing settlements.*
- *National Policy Objective 3b: Deliver at least (50%) of all new homes that are targets in the five Cities and suburbs of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford, within their existing built-up footprints.*
- *National Policy Objective 3c: Deliver at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements other than the five Cities and their suburbs, within their existing built-up footprints.*

Other relevant objectives of the NPF which relate to delivering high quality compact growth include:

- *National Policy Objective 4: Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.*
- *National Policy Objective 13: In urban areas, planning and related standards, including in particular building height and car parking will be based on performance criteria that seek to achieve well-designed high-quality outcomes in order to achieve targeted growth. These standards will be subject to a range of tolerance that enables alternative solutions to be proposed to achieve stated outcomes*

The *Urban Development & Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities* published in December 2018 includes specific planning policy requirements (SPPRs) relating to compact growth, densities and building typologies as follows:

*SPPR4: It is a specific planning policy requirement that in planning the future development of greenfield or edge of city/town locations for housing purposes, planning authorities must secure:*

- 1. the minimum densities for such locations set out in the Guidelines issued by the Minister under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), titled “Residential Development in Urban Areas (2007)” or any amending or replacement Guidelines;*
- 2. a greater mix of building heights and typologies in planning for the future development of suburban locations.*



Section 7.10 and 7.11 of the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines published by the Department in 2009 makes clear how design should be utilised to achieve a strong development response:

*“Qualitative standards should be the real test, and innovative design solutions which achieve good performance standards should be considered on their merits”.*

*“Innovative dwelling design should be encouraged in order to facilitate the potential future provision of adaptable and accessible accommodation”.*

Some of the key principles to achieving compact growth of urban settlements are outlined within the RSES. The RSES will be implemented in policy by way of the County Development Plan and therefore requires a focus on efficient use of serviced land and delivery of appropriate densities within urban settlements.

In order to deliver the target of 30% of all new homes within the existing built-up areas to achieve the compact growth called for, Laois County Council must consider the following:

- Looking beyond the conventional 3/4 bed semi-detached and apartment model Ireland has become accustomed to.
- Consider innovative design principles to own door houses that facilitate higher density, appropriate levels of public and private open space provision, car parking, bike and bin storage ensuring that residential amenity is maintained.
- The need to provide market and affordable homes that meet the varied needs of our communities, from students to families to older people.
- The need for more homes that are flexible in terms of their accessibility and adaptability.
- How housing design responds to changing lifestyle demands e.g. working from home.
- Building new communities in which people want to live requires considerable master-planning to ensure the appropriate mix of homes in terms of sizes, types and tenures.

New ways of developing high quality housing presents an opportunity for local authorities to consider more innovative ways of promoting and delivering through their own development plan policies and standards. New homes need to be flexible to meet the needs of a range of household types and sizes, and to meet individual households' changing needs over time.

The provision of appropriate densities and urban design can facilitate the framing of streets, enable the creation of a sense of place and community through the inclusion of shared surfaces and can serve to give priority to the pedestrian. The design and layout of individual dwellings should provide a high-quality living environment for residents.

A new approach to innovative design standards will result in a high-quality residential area while at the same time facilitating higher densities with own door housing providing for better consumer choice and a more viable product. The use of contemporary and innovative design solutions should be encouraged with a flexibility in the application of development management standards.

A provision within the Development Plan is requested that facilitates this innovative design and that meet the following suggested performance criteria:

- Privacy/Protection of Residential Amenity;



- Acceptable level of quality private and public amenity space;
- Appropriate management of shared spaces within a residential development;
- Removal of cars off the streets while maintaining Local Authority quantitative standards;
- Appropriate bin storage and cycle parking locations within the curtilage of the unit.

This submission requests that Laois County Council considers the development management standards applicable to residential schemes in the context of layout, separation distances and private open space requirements, in order to achieve the policy objectives, set out in the statutory RSES.

In conclusion therefore, we respectfully request Laois County Council to include the proposed recommendations with respect to the development management standards.

If you require any further detail or discussion relating to the enclosed submission, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,



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Clíodhna Bourke  
Planner  
MKO

