

Treanor, Bronagh

From: noel mcguigan [noel.mcguigan@cspringle.com]
Sent: 25 May 2018 18:32
To: ldevplan
Subject: General Submission CSPringle
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Hi,

Please find a general submission from C. S. Pringle onto the Draft Development Plan 2019-2025.

Regards

Noel McGuigan

For



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Our ref: NMCG/MMcG/gen

Date: 3rd May 2018

Attention,
Laura Nulty,
Devplan
The Glen
Monaghan

Re: C S Pringle Submission in relation to the new Monaghan County Council Development Plan for 2019 to 2024.

Dear Laura,

The following are some proposals and ideas that we would like you and your colleagues to consider when preparing the new Development Plan.

Zoning of Lands.

It is becoming increasingly apparent when reflecting on the last two Development Plans that the strategy for zoning high density lands for housing development, strategic residential reserve lands and lands within the settlement boundaries of villages needs to be revisited.

During the lifetime of the previous two Development Plans we have had developers who have been ready to go with their developments on their lands only to find that they were removed from the subsequent plan while other landowners were added but many of these have no intention of developing their lands for housing. We believe that there must be a better way of doing this. The following are suggestions:

One possibility might be to ensure that lands zoned for Strategic Residential Reserve and which have already available to them the services required be upgraded to Higher Density Lands. This should be

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C. S. Pringle Ltd. trading as C. S. Pringle

done prior to other lands without such facilities being zoned. Lands on the outer perimeter of towns and villages with full services already in place should be allowed to infill and thus take full advantage of these services. The previous Development Plans have shown that 75% of the existing Higher Density Stock is unlikely to be built upon within the lifetime of the succeeding plan. The existing strategy should be changed so that lands that are shovel-ready are encouraged to go.

In Tier 4 and Tier 5 Villages we suggest that a relaxation of the existing policy. Sites not located in the centre of these settlements yet having access to full services and are virtually shovel ready should be given preference to proceed over centre sites that are not shovel-ready. We submit that such a relaxation would be significantly better than having to deal with applications for once-off rural houses which I'm sure you have noted are once again on the rise in the environs of such towns and villages.

People living within these towns and villages do not necessarily perceive developments as the cohesive land masses that we see on maps. It is not always perceived that undeveloped pieces within villages are vital missing pieces of a puzzle. From a planning perspective, we believe that there will always be some small parcels of land within the centre of some villages that remain undeveloped often adding to the overall character to our villages providing that they are not allowed to become hoarded off or derelict. The presence of such land parcels remaining undeveloped should not have a stagnating effect on the overall development of the villages. Indeed, such small undeveloped parcels of land might well be developed into something totally different in the future resulting in the enhancement the overall development of the village.

We have assessed the development provisions with the Tier 4 villages. In Appendix A, we have highlighted in blue the sites that we believe have the potential to be developed into both single and multi-unit residential developments. Within Appendix B we have carried out our own assessment of the sites within ten Tier 4 Villages. It is our opinion that currently within the development plan there is provision for 16 No single sites that could be developed and 11 No multi-unit sites that could be developed. However, much of this land will remain undeveloped due to lack of interest in development from the landowners. Many sites that were previously zoned within the development limits of the villages and have since been de-zoned should once again be considered for zoning. This would increase the supply of viable land parcels so that the development of economically viable, sustainably designed sites can commence once again

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National Roads

We feel that it is vital from a safety perspective that all minor road junctions off the N2 Motorway should have decelerating lanes leading into these junctions. The Shercock road junction off the dual carriageway is a case in point where numerous accidents have already happened because there is no place for a car to safely decelerate in order to negotiate the 90° turn off the road. The junction entrance at present is only marked by two small vertical marker posts. Drivers who wish to turn on to the Shercock road and who are not familiar with the exact location of the turnoff are obliged to decelerate quickly upon finding that they have reached the turnoff or alternatively they proceed slowly along the road for some time prior to the junction either of which risks the car behind driving into the back of them. There is also little space on the outside for drivers behind to overtake the vehicle negotiating the turn.

Motorists are often confused by this two-plus-one layout of part of our N2 roadway and perceive themselves on a dual carriageway only to find at the last moment that they need to make a hasty and often dangerous manoeuvre back into a single lane. Additional legible signage indicating the length of the overtaking lane and also signage in the central reserve closer to the end of the overtaking land would be a help to inform these drivers.

The 100-meter rule for Agricultural Buildings.

At present if someone wishes to build a dwelling house within 100 meters of an existing agricultural building, Policy RDP16 applies. We fully understand the intention of RDP16 to protect the farmer's rights over their lands. We are of the opinion however that it should be the applicant (and not the farmer) who gives an undertaking accepting that building a dwelling within 100 metres of a farm building may impact on their enjoyment of their property, for example, noise, smells and possible expansion and development of the farmer's lands. This could be done in the form of an affidavit by the applicant signed and sealed by a solicitor with an accompanying certified map indicating the farm and the proposed dwelling affected. If the applicant wants the farmer to give them a legal permission to build then the applicant should give a reciprocal legal letter stating that they will not object to the existing farm building use and they will not object to any farm buildings being constructed on these lands as long as they comply with the General Planning Guidelines already in place.

We also feel that this rule should be relaxed in cases of Protected Structures or Heritage Buildings. The successful rejuvenation of such buildings depends largely on finding a suitable use for them. For example, there are many old schools lying abandoned in our countryside. Many of these are Protected Structures and would be very suitable for conversion to residential accommodation if handled in a sensitive manner. However, in some cases the 100m rule has stopped such development taking place and for such buildings this 100m rule should be relaxed.

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"Abandoned Use"

The wording in this policy needs to be more fully defined. The word "abandoned" is used in the RDP16 policy but abandonment is only considered so when the owner declares it as so. This should be revised so that Abandoned Use is governed by a clear set of rules which when satisfied results in a property being considered abandoned. At present, some agricultural buildings which are known to be derelict for many years are still not accepted or classed as abandoned. When such exist on the outskirts of towns they detract from the aesthetics and amenity of these areas. Further, such disused agricultural sites have prevented logical development adjacent from happening just because such farm buildings could potentially be used again for farming purposes. If such were declared abandoned because they matched the criteria for abandonment then it would not disproportionately impair the development of the adjoining area. Thus, the criteria for Abandoned Use should be carefully revisited balancing the rights of the property owner with the rights of the community adjacent.

Rural Derelict Houses.

We would promote a policy that would allow derelict sites to be developed even in areas under strong urban influences. Such sites are a blot on the landscape and wouldn't it be better that these sites be developed by persons willing to take them on without being subject to a Local Needs restriction. Many of these sites enjoy:

- Existing entrance onto public roads.
- Existing laneways along existing mature hedgerows.
- Mature landscaping and trees in most cases already in place.
- Existing wells.
- Existing power supplies.
- Location on disused areas of a farmer's lands upon which he cannot claim grants.
- Location on disused areas of a farmer's lands which when developed prevents alternative good farm lands from being used as sites.

It is our opinion that this should be considered regardless of how long the house has been left unused.

Area Action Plans and Lough Muckno Park

We suggest that Area Action Plans are vital to the proper planning and development of towns in County Monaghan. For example an Area Action Plan has been suggested but not delivered upon for many years for Castleblayney. I refer to the lands that stretch from Lakeview through the undeveloped lands to the rear of Muckno Street and on to the Lough Muckno Estate. The Lough Muckno Estate is in our opinion the most important underdeveloped tourism entity in County

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Monaghan. Lough Muckno Park is located on the eastern side of Castleblayney Town yet most tourists who visit the town have no knowledge of its existence.

To develop this Lough Muckno Park successfully, Monaghan County Council needs to engage a top quality Town Planning Consultant, who will meet and consult with all interested parties and compile an Area Action Plan that will allow for the planned development of Lough Muckno Park and its environs for the next 5 to 20 years. At present small local groups are trying to obtain funding for this development but the only way it will be properly developed will be through the implementation of a fully resolved Area Action Plan which will attract proper investment to successfully execute this plan and which will allow local groups to apply for larger grant aid.

It is noted that the original entrance to the Hope Castle Estate was from the coach road that runs alongside the Dundalk Road into the town. As Monaghan Co. Co. are the owners of this Lough Muckno Estate at present, might we suggest that the original entrance and access be redeveloped so that one could drive into the Lough Muckno Estate from the Dundalk side. Imagine entering from this side and driving or cycling along the old golf course with the lake on your right and driving up to what was the original front door of the Hope Castle. We believe that the housing estate planned for the site adjacent to this original entrance is now in receivership. It may be possible to purchase enough land to the rear of the first few houses built on this site to allow for the reconstruction of this avenue to the Hope Castle. This would add enormously to the value of the estate and open new ideas for investment in the rejuvenation of the Hope Castle itself.

“Landscape Policy”

It is our opinion that a line of landscape protection should be drawn around Lough Muckno Park all the way from Corracloghan Lakes, along the Crossmaglen road from Frankford Bridge to the Lough Ross basin. It maybe possible to join up with our Northern Counterparts for development thus linking the two areas together in the interest of generating more tourism. This area is already used by canoeing parties, fishermen and, as the Monaghan Way passes through this route, walkers. The significance of Mulandoy Graveyard should not be underestimated and we propose that it should be designated as a Protected Structure.

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Sports Facilities.

The importance of sports facilities in towns should not be underestimated. It has been proven that Castleblayney is undersupplied with sports fields. The existing GAA fields are oversubscribed and overrun. Even the development of the new pitch at St. Mary's Park will not be sufficient to match the needs of the town. Clubs like the Castleblayney Hurling Club and the Castleblayney Camogie Club have no facilities of their own yet, together, they have upwards of 250 members with teams at all ages from 6-year olds to senior level. These clubs are surviving by borrowing from other clubs but this is not always possible and matches sometimes need to be cancelled or rearranged as a direct result of lack of facilities. We therefore respectfully suggest the Monaghan County Council identify suitable lands for such future facilities.

Landscape Protection Policy

It is our opinion that Landscape Policy has been used in certain areas of the last Development Plan to block development on areas proposed for new roads. Areas identified as being liable to flooding have been designated as coming under Landscape Protection. We feel that such areas be given its own designation. It is also felt that in some locations, land have been identified as Landscape Protection/Conservation areas effectively blocking future development of these lands for new housing stock. This new decision, Article 43 European Union will no doubt affect this whole area of sensitive landscape protected areas.

Local Needs

I refer you to two recent articles published by The Sunday Business Post and Self-Build Magazine in relation to **Article 43 (Freedom of Movement of People)** of the Treaty on the function of the European Union. We believe that this will impact hugely on the current Local Authority policy relating to Local Needs. I presume that a meeting will be organised with the Local Councillors and the Planning Office to see what the best way forward will be for Monaghan to comply with the provisions of the Treaty. If the Department come forward with a National Policy then I presume Monaghan will follow this.

Can I suggest that a Planning Forum Meeting be used to discuss this issue before September or will we have to wait to see what the Minister is going to do?

Garages associated with Private Houses.

Policy RDP14 applies to this at present. We respectfully submit that this policy should be changed to allow applicants to construct garages to the front of the building line providing that they are well designed and that they do not detract from the amenity of the area. Courtyard type developments are a traditional part of rural Ireland with all types of chicken houses, cart garages, car garages and other small farm buildings built in front of and around the curtilage of houses. This rule should be relaxed.

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Rural Design Guide

A draft Rural Design Guide was produced in 2008 by Architect Mary Kerrigan and Colin Buchanan for Monaghan County Council. It is understood that this Guide was not accepted by the Local Councillors and was not incorporated into the Development Plan. We would recommend that a new Design Guide be drafted in conjunction with the Planning Forum which will help guide architects and applicants in the right direction when designing new homes in the rural areas of County Monaghan. We know that this will not be an easy task but we believe that it will create a more consistent opinion on what will or will not be allowed. At the moment the regulations are too strict with regard to fenestration and this is curtailing the design options of Architects. In certain circumstances where the orientation of a proposed dwelling faces the public road and the sun and the views are also on this side then a relaxation of the vertical alignment of windows should be allowed. Good architecture is about creating a unique space where people can live and enjoy the benefits of the view and the sun. If the choice of materials is kept to a minimum on such houses and they are well designed then they will not have any adverse effect on the public view of same.

Sight Distances.

We suggest that the whole issue of sight distances be revisited in particular in quiet rural areas on minor roads. Large sections of beautiful mature trees and hedgerows are being removed to achieve sight distances that are, in many situations, unnecessary. In areas where there are high level hedges and trees at the exit from a lorry depot or similar then the requirement for sight distance must also be at a higher level as drivers in lorries are sitting at a higher level in their vehicle than those in cars.

Impaling hazards in some road upgrades

There are several recent instances within the county of road upgrades being carried out where the road is at a higher level than the field adjacent. These upgrades usually occur after an accident where a vehicle has entered the grass margin and ends up tumbling on its side in the field below. Such repairs often involve placing a steep embankment along the road at the bottom of which a row of fence posts are placed. There should be a policy forbidding the placing of posts in a location where a repeat of the incident might result in a car or truck with its occupants being impaled by the posts as it tumbles from the road.

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Design Guidelines.

In relation to the Housing in the Rural Area Table 15.4: Design Guidelines for Rural Housing, it is our opinion that the proposed methodology for the form of buildings is too restrictive.

"Form

Simple plan form of modest scale and vertical emphasis to gables should be used. Generally dwelling frontage should not exceed 14m for two storey, 18m for single storey or 20m where the roofline is broken or the frontage is set back.

External gable depth should not exceed 9m (6.5m for narrow plan form) Roof pitch should be 35 to 40 degree pitch except where the gable depth is below 7.5m, then 45 degrees is acceptable.

Generally two storey dwellings should not exceed 9m in height above ground level.

Any projections or returns should be simple form and pitch. Two storey dwellings should have a central projected porch."

It is our opinion that whilst this may prevent the design and construction of large over-scaled and bulky buildings in the rural area it has a more counter-productive effect which will result in stifled design and a sameness of house types within the countryside. No allowance is made in the above policy for flat, mono-pitch or curved roof styles which are prevalent in contemporary design.

The current development plan 2013-2019 already has policies which ensure that proposed dwellings in the countryside are of an appropriate scale and form and which respect the vernacular style of previous generations and these were adequately enforced by the Planning Authority. The above represents an unnecessary addition of rules on the subject.

In relation to Policy LZP1 – *"Table 9.3 – 5: Strategic Residential Reserve - Single houses for landowners or their immediate family members will be considered on these lands provided that they do not compromise the overall objective of comprehensively developing the lands for sustainable urban housing in the future.*

Justification for a dwelling in this instance will have to be demonstrated by the applicant including documentation to show that the landholding has been in family ownership for at least 5 years."

We would request that the requirement for the land to have been in ownership be reduced from 5 years to 3 years. We feel that 3 years would be sufficient to negate the chances of larger land banks being broken up into smaller land holdings for sale.

Signed Noel Mc Guigan


Director on behalf of C S Pringle

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