

Policy RHP14
Unfinished Housing in
Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence

**Proposed Variation No. 5 to Monaghan County Development
Plan 2013 - 2019 (incorporating the development plans for
Monaghan, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Clones and
Ballybay)**

under section 13 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 - 2015



May 2017

The Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities were introduced in 2005 requiring all planning authorities to designate areas which were considered to be under development pressure due to their proximity to the urban areas. The purpose of designating these Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence (RAUSUI) was to limit housing in these areas to that which was generated within that rural area, and thus controlling or prevent housing taking place in these areas that was urban generated. Planning Authorities were also required to include objectives and policies within their development plans to control urban generated housing and facilitate rural generated housing demand in these areas.

These designated areas, and related objectives and policies, were included within the Monaghan County Development Plan 2007-2013, in accordance with the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities. Proposals for dwellings in RAUSUI submitted after the adoption of the development plan were subject to control in accordance with the objectives and policies. The Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019 also incorporated designated RAUSUI and included objectives and policies to control urban generated housing and facilitate rural generated housing demand in these areas.

Permissions for dwellings obtained prior to the designation of the RAUSUI in 2007 were not subject to control, and if a dwelling within these areas was completed within the lifetime of the planning permission, there were no repercussions for these developments arising from the change in planning policy. However, where dwellings in these designated RAUSUI were not completed within the lifetime of the permission, complications arose in respect of their completion. In effect an application for the retention and completion of dwellings within these subsequently designated areas would have to demonstrate that they were in compliance with the objectives and policies restricting development in these areas, where they had not been previously required to do so. In some cases applicants were unable to demonstrate that they met the objectives and policy tests and so were unable to obtain permission to complete the dwelling.

In other instances, the applicant did not complete the development due to a change in personal economic circumstances following the collapse of the economy in 2007/2008. Some of these people subsequently emigrated, or found employment and housing elsewhere in this country, and now have no intention of completing or occupying the development due to their change in circumstances.

These scenarios have resulted in a number of unfinished houses existing in these areas, which have become unsightly with the passage of time. Despite a recovering economy, a limited number of these developments remain unfinished and as such it is considered necessary for the Planning Authority to intervene to remedy this problem. In this regard, it is noted that a number of policy and funding initiatives have been successfully employed to remedy the unfinished housing problem in our towns and villages.

It is proposed to incorporate Policy HDP14 into the County Development Plan to allow the planning authority to take into account economic, commercial or technical circumstances that prevented the completion of the development within the duration of the original permission. (refer to proposed wording below)

This policy will only be applied in exceptional circumstances where the applicant has demonstrated to the satisfaction of the planning authority that there were extenuating circumstances as to why the dwelling was not completed within the duration of the permission and visual/environmental gain will be served by the completion of the dwelling. The applicant will be required to demonstrate that the development is in compliance with all other policies within the Monaghan County Development Plan relevant to the development. To prevent any misuse of this exceptional policy provision, the planning authority in granting planning permission under this policy, may consider it necessary to impose restrictions on future development of lands within the applicant's control having regard to the prevailing circumstances.

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Where planning permission has been granted for a dwelling prior to 2010, in an area that is currently designated as a Rural Area Under Strong Urban Influence, where substantial works have been carried out but the development has not been completed, the planning authority may grant planning permission for the retention and completion of the development, without the necessity to comply with the provisions of paragraph 3.5.1 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013 – 2019. Planning permission will only be forthcoming if the applicant can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the planning authority that economic, commercial or technical circumstances prevented the completion of the development within the duration of the original permission. The applicant will be required to demonstrate that the development is in compliance with all other policies within the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019. The planning authority in granting planning permission under this policy may consider it necessary to impose restrictions on future development of lands within the applicant's control having regard to the prevailing circumstances.