

Brian McCarthy

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In relation to the proposed draft of the Clonmel Local Area Plan 2024-2030, I wish to submit my serious concerns regarding several policies.

Housing:

My first and greatest concern is with regard to the negative and restrictive policy around one-off housing in the environs. If this plan is adopted then building in the Clonmel environs will only be possible in ‘exceptional circumstances, with consideration on a case by case basis’. This will effectively sterilise all of the lands surrounding Clonmel in relation to the construction of new homes, and lead to the continued demise of the town through forcing young local families to live away from the area. The description of those eligible to build a house in the Clonmel environs area presently states that the applicant must be a child of a farmer of the land per policy HSG 10 – ‘individual houses in the environs’. This statement needs to be amended within the new area plan to include provision for a **son/daughter of a landowner**, as would be accommodated by the new Tipperary County Plan (2022-2028). A new forward-thinking outlook is urgently required in relation to this new local area plan, to prevent the same mistakes from the past being repeated which have driven local young families out of the Clonmel area due to the inability to obtain housing. The existing local area plan has created a severe crisis in the supply of houses in the Clonmel area, as for the last number of years there have been little or no houses available for sale or rent in the Clonmel area, and yet it is impossible for anybody outside of the farming community to build in the area.

One-off housing in the environs should be permitted for descendants of long-term landowners on the assumption that certain key criteria are met by the applicant. I believe that applicants who are a **direct descendant of a long-term landowner, where the site has been in the ownership of that immediate family for over 10 years** should be allowed to build. This seems particularly relevant when the applicant has grown up in the area, gone to school in the local area and been part of the community most of their lives. This could be captured by the policy requiring the applicant to have **resided within 10km of the site where they intend to build for a substantial period of their lives, perhaps > 10 years**, in addition to the site being family-owned land. In my personal situation I am in possession of a gap site, ██████████ ██████████, that I am unable to let ██████████ ██████████ ██████████ ██████████ and remain in the Clonmel area. All of this despite the fact that ██████████ ██████████ grew up in the area and now works in the area, ██████████. Building a house on this site will certainly not impact any future growth of the Clonmel town and so it seems wrong that the policy as written does not allow this. I strongly request that changes are made to the draft policy in line with the above. It allows for local people to continue to live in their home area without having to leave Clonmel, but blocks people from building on these lands who would be re-locating to the area, thereby ensuring that this will be a limited number of cases, for well-warranted and deserving applicants.

In a country with an ageing population, it would seem important that this local area plan implement some forward-thinking, innovative policies that will pre-empt some of the issues

and opportunities that this demographic will present the country. One obvious inclusion that would help to address this impending issue would be to create policies that will facilitate elderly home-owners to downsize their homes by building a smaller property on their own land, and allowing a family to avail of the existing larger property. This will also have environmental benefits as more people would end up living in right-sized properties to their needs. This would prevent situations occurring where one or two elderly people are living in large houses with multiple bedrooms, while young families with multiple children are forced into small rental properties.

Maps:

The map provided is not to scale but in checking the area on the 6 inches:1inch mile map, the area is equal approximately to the land area of Limerick city, which is incredible. Clonmel was designated a key-town per RPO 11 in the Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020 meaning that local authorities are supported in targeting growth of more than 30%, but the map for the environs as drawn currently protects lands completely disproportionate to any realistic or targeted growth.

Transport & Connectivity:

I suggest that you immediately construct the link roads 1 to 2, from the Cashel Road at Ardgeeha to the existing roundabout at The Paddocks on the Fethard road, onwards to the existing roundabout at Carrigeen on the existing Clonmel inner-relief road. as proposed over the last two development plans (2008 & 2013), but which were never constructed. This would immediately solve the traffic chaos on the existing Clonmel inner relief road at the Cashel and Fethard road roundabouts. The land areas north and south of this link road can then be developed because of enhanced accessibility, thus giving immediate positive impact in addressing the current housing crisis. Kilkenny county council have effectively developed their link roads with immediate visible impact. It would be nice to see a similar effective policy followed in Clonmel, when it has been successful locally in the South-East already.

Yours faithfully,

Brian McCarthy