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**Planning Department
 New Road
 Ennis
 County Clare**



21st March 2022

Re: Submission on proposed revisions to Clare County development plan 2023 to 2029.

Dear Sir/Madame,

On behalf of my client Ms Mary O'Donnell of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] we wish to make the following submission in respect of the proposed revision to the Kilmurry Local Area Plan under the Killaloe Municipal District section of that plan.

My client's lands are outlined in the below indicated figure 1 being an extract from the proposed local area plan.

The previous plan for Kilmurry had indicated the entirety of the land as being zoned for **low-density residential development** with the exception of a small portion of the land zoned for open space.

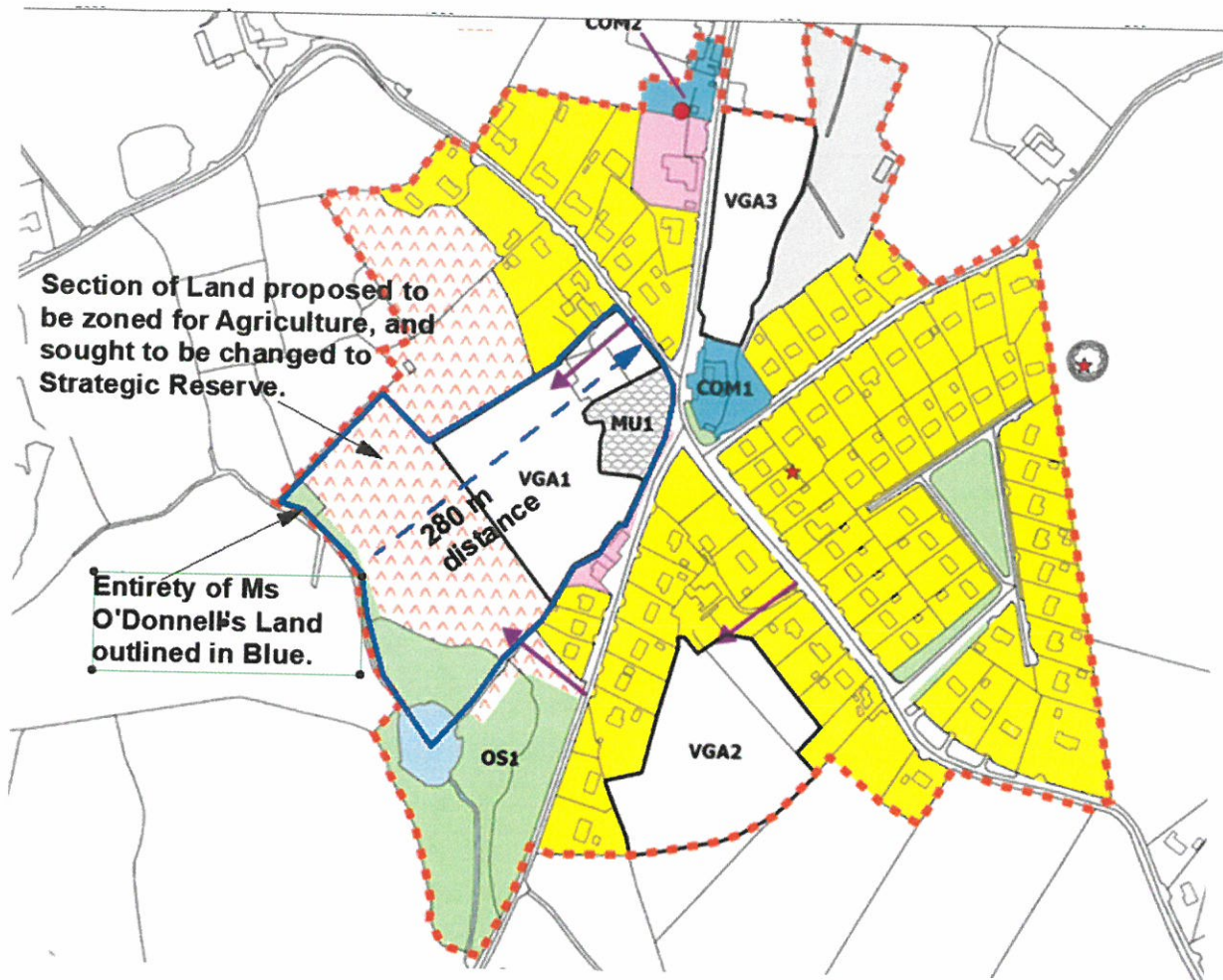


Fig 1. Extract from proposed 2023-2029 Development Plan with Ms O'Donnell's land outlined in Blue.

It is now proposed to effectively dezone the majority of this land by indicating it as being suitable for agricultural development only.

It is difficult to understand why this change has been proposed. The entirety of Ms O'Donnell's landholding is immediately adjacent to the central crossroads point of the village of Kilmurry, and it represents the only substantial area of land capable of housing development which is so centrally located. It is immediately adjacent to the church, school and local shop/pub.

We would point out that while the village of Kilmurry does not have a specific housing allocation under the Core Strategy, nevertheless the Core Strategy contained in the proposed plan indicates a housing requirement for the period of the upcoming development plan for 955 houses for those locations outside the main urban areas. These must be provided for the most part in the small villages of the county.

This must be coupled with the allocation of 1383 houses for non-urban areas which was provided for in the last plan, many of which may not have been taken up. It is important for the council to determine what portion of that previous allocation has now in fact been used and to add that section which was not taken up to the allocation provided in the upcoming plan.

If the decline in small villages is to be avoided, it is necessary that sufficient housing allocation be provided to enable them to make use of the services and facilities which they provide. In any event, it is difficult to understand why, in an area which has existing social infrastructure and during a time of expanding population, the amount of land zoned for development should be reduced.

It is fully understood that development in Kilmurry is going to be at a low level of density. Indeed this is the pattern of recent development which is already well on display within the village.

We would however point out that villages such as Kilmurry do have the potential to provide for a viable and suitable alternative to urban generated rural housing. The principal document issued under Section 28 of the Planning Act dealing with the design of smaller towns and villages is ***Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, 2009***, Issued by the Department of the Environment, and in particular Chapter 6 of that document. This chapter stresses the importance of

ensuring that development in such towns offers alternatives to urban generated rural housing. (Page 49). The site belonging to my client is ideal for this purpose. In addition to being centrally located, it is easily accessible and is to a large extent fronted by an existing footpath. In the event of allowing development take place this footpath can be substantially widened and extended all the way to the church and to the forecourt area in front of the church. In addition to the ready access points from the centre of the village, the southern section is also accessible immediately adjacent to the church.

It may be the opinion of the council that making provision of part of my client's land as a village growth area, VGA1, this will be sufficient to meet the immediate requirements of the village, particularly given the fact that wastewater treatment is not at present available.

However, we would point out that it is necessary to have a long-term strategy in respect of the entirety of my client's land in order to make it suitable to a potential developer, and that that strategy should be indicated in the proposed zoning. It must not be assumed that if these houses are to be developed at a low-density, that they will not be comprehensively developed by a developer working to master plan. It would not be at all suitable if the site were to be developed as individual sites on a piecemeal basis.

That is, after all, recommended under government guidance documents: that all developments at the edge of small towns and villages should be plan-led (see paragraph 6.3.(a) of *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*, 2009). However, if a comprehensive plan is to be prepared for this section of land, then it seems obvious that it should include the entirety of the land including that which it is now proposed to de-zone.

We would suggest therefore that the section of land proposed to be zoned for agriculture should be zoned as a ***Strategic Reserve for Residential Purposes***. This will protect the village against piecemeal development and will enable a proper sequential type of development to be carried out radiating from the central point of the village crossroads.

It is much more desirable from the point of view of a housing developer, if he can see into the future that there is an opportunity for expansion and a long-term sequence of work. This enables significant economies of scale to be achieved and, from a logistical standpoint, is much more suitable to the process of building development, provision of services etc.

This proposal to include the land as Strategic Reserve would in no way affect the Core Strategy, as this land is only likely to come on stream towards the very end of the period of the plan proposed, but it does give comfort to a future developer that he will be able to work into the future.

The availability of a long-term landbank, which is likely to come available for development once the first portion has been completed, makes for a much more orderly type of development and facilitates greater integration of the housing into a small village such as Kilmurry.

We would point out that the entirety of the land in question is within 2 ½ minutes' walk of the central part of the village (maximum direct distance 280m).

This ties in to two further key objectives of *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*, in that chapter 6 of that document, dealing with smaller towns and villages, advocates for the development of Compact Towns and that development should be Plan -Led. The development of my client's land would therefore represent a significant consolidation and improvement of the village.

That section of land that has been zoned for mixed use is unlikely to be developed for any kind of commercial or institutional use unless it is backed up by a reasonably substantial housing development with the possibility of that development being extended over a number of years.

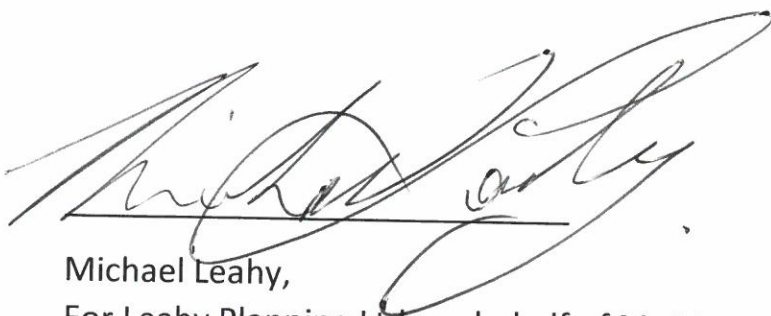
In many ways, the village of Kilmurry represents a very desirable alternative for those people seeking low-density housing with access to village facilities, but with relatively easy access also to the hub town of Ennis and the metropolitan area of Shannon - Limerick. While it has seen housing development over the years, this has been done in a tasteful fashion centred around the 5 crossroads which forms the centre of the village.

My client's land is central to the continuation of this pattern, but if it is to be comprehensively developed then it is necessary to have regard to the needs and requirements of a developer who may come to develop the land.

In summation our recommendation is that the area of my client's land zoned as Mixed Use and VGA1 be maintained as proposed, and that the area proposed to be zoned for agricultural use be zoned for **Strategic Residential Reserve**.

I would be obliged if you would acknowledge receipt of this submission together with reference number to the undersigned at the above address.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Leahy', written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Michael Leahy,
For Leahy Planning Ltd. on behalf of Ms Mary O'Donnell.