

Roscommon Town Draft Local Area Plan
Forward Planning Section
Roscommon County Council
Aras an Chontae
Roscommon
F42 VR98



2nd February 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Submission to the draft Roscommon Town Local Area Plan 2024-2030

I welcome the publication of the draft Roscommon Town Local Area Plan 2024-2030 and wish to make the following submission in relation to the zoning of my lands for residential development. This submission follows my earlier submission at the pre-Draft stage in July 2023.

1.0 Roscommon Town in the County Plan

Roscommon Town is identified as one of two Key Towns in the County Development Plan. Together with Athlone and Carrick-on-Shannon these three towns are planned to take the bulk of future growth in the county envisaged in the National Planning Framework.

2.0 Need for additional zoned land to accommodate the anticipated housing need.

The draft LAP notes that the population of Roscommon Town has grown strongly over the last 20 years and is now, at 6,555 persons, almost 50% larger than it was in 2002. This rate of growth is extremely strong and shows no sign of slowing down.

Table 4.1 of the draft LAP estimates that 600 new homes will be needed to satisfy the projected future population growth to 2030, with 180 of these units to be delivered in infill/brownfield sites and the remaining 420 units to be delivered on greenfield sites. The draft LAP estimates 17.15 ha of zoned land is required which, if it is all fully developed at an average density of 35/ha would yield 600 units.

Section 5.5 of the draft LAP identifies seven 'opportunity sites' in the town centre that may be capable of redevelopment for residential use. While I fully support this idea, I note that the combined areas of these seven sites is 4.7 ha. It would require all of these sites to be developed out

in full at an average density of 35/ha for the target of 170 units on infill/brownfield sites to be realised.

Most of these sites have been undeveloped for years. Ownership is often fragmented. The sites are awkwardly shaped and will often have archaeology, older buildings, bats, mature trees, asbestos and other constraints that prevent their development. If they were easy to develop, they would have been developed by now. Moreover, the Planning Authority will be aware that there is very limited demand for apartment type develop in Roscommon Town. Densities of 40+/ha, as recommended for town centre sites in the recently published *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines* are simply not realistic.

Similarly, the bulk of the 'greenfield' sites that are proposed to be zoned for New Residential Development have been zoned for many years but have yet to come forward for development. The combined area of these eight sites is approximately 14.7 ha. Again, even if all of these zoned sites are developed at an average of 30/ha they will only yield 440 units.

Thus, the housing need for the anticipated population target will only be met if all the sites currently proposed for zoning in the draft Plan are brought forward and developed in full in the life of the plan.

I believe that this is an unrealistic assumption. A failure to zone enough land in the town will lead to increased pressure for one-off housing in the countryside and in smaller towns and villages that do not have the capacity for increase development and/or inflated house prices and shortages of housing.

The Council will also be aware that the review of the National Planning Framework that's currently being undertaken is likely to identify a need for a significant ramping up of housing development to meet the needs of our expanding population. While its not known at this stage the extent of this need, it would be prudent for the Council to err on the side of over-zoning rather than under-zoning. In short, more zoned land for housing is needed in the plan.

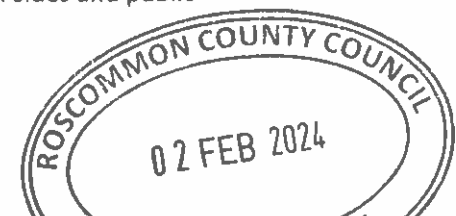
3.0 Suitability of subject land for housing development

Map 3 of the draft LAP 'Constrained Land use Zoning', overlays the Flood Risk map on the proposed zoning map. This map clearly identifies the fact that the future growth of the town is severely constrained to the north and south by flooding risk while the rail line limits potential for expansion to the west. The logical direction for the town can grow is to the northeast, along the N63.

I suggest the block bounded to the north by The Walk, to the east by Blackstick Road and to the south by the N63 is the logical place to target the bulk of future growth of the town in a planned and orderly manner. This block has large, regularly shaped fields that are free from flood risk and serviced by sewers. It is an ideal location for future growth.

In particular, I believe my land is very suitable for housing development. The land was previously zone for residential development and planning permission was granted in 2006 for 34 no. houses and 14 no. apartments (Planning Ref. 06/600). Unfortunately, due to the economic downturn this scheme couldn't be built out.

The land is a flat, regularly shaped field of approximately 2.7 ha (7 acres) that is located approximately 1.2km east of the town centre. It is serviced by a sewer and has direct vehicular access onto The Walk to the north. This road is a quiet suburban road with development on both sides all the way from my lands to the town centre. It has footpaths on both sides and public



lighting. The land is bounded to the north by The Walk, to the south by the N63 and is contained within land registry folio RN23282.

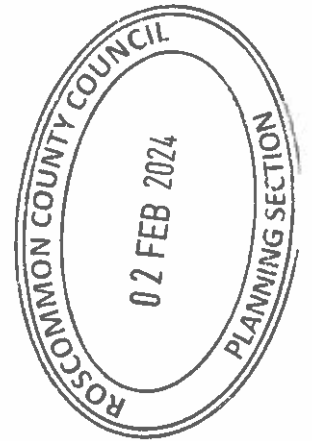
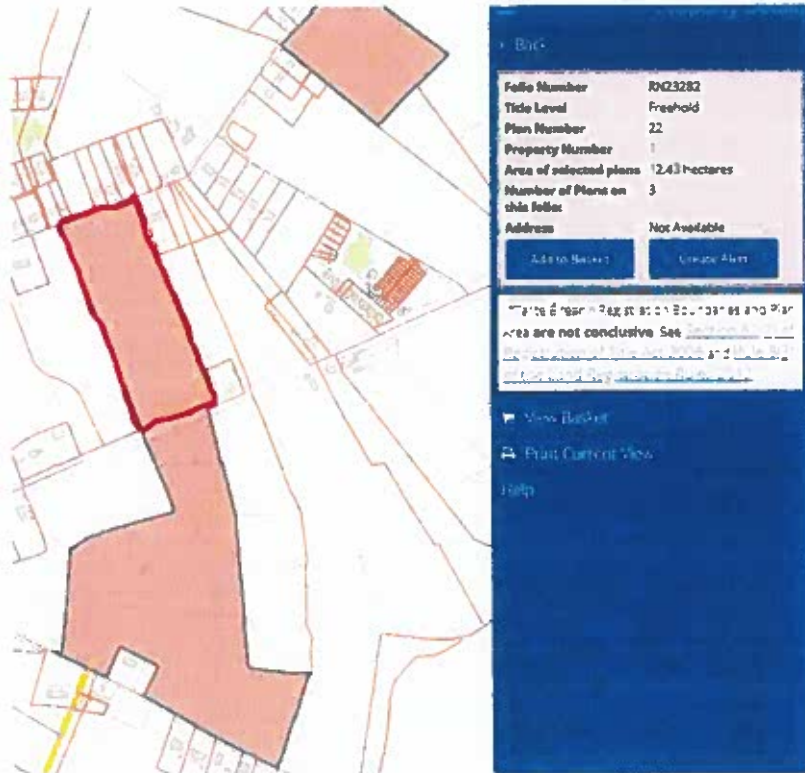


Fig 1: Extract from LandDirect.ie identifying folio RN 23282. The area proposed for zoning is outlined in red.

While there is a ringfort to the south of the site, this can easily be preserved in situ to form an attractive public open space. The remaining land is approximately 2ha and could easily accommodate 60-70 much needed family houses at a density of 30-35/ha.



Fig 2: Aerial view of Roscommon Town with subject site proposed for zoning outlined in red (Google Earth image). Lands already proposed for New Residential zoning in the draft LAP are shaded brown.

4.0 Summary and Conclusion

In short, while I welcome the publication of the draft Roscommon Town LAP 2024-2030, I believe that it has significantly overestimated the capacity of the lands proposed for zoning 'New Residential' to deliver much needed housing. Moreover, the numbers of houses needed is itself probably going to increase in the context of the upcoming review of the National Planning Framework.

Given that Roscommon Town is a Key Town in the county and the county town, zoning additional land is entirely in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the county. Roscommon Town is ideally located to absorb any increase in population the county may experience.

My lands are flat and regularly shaped and serviced and outside any flood zone. They could accommodate 60 -70 houses at sustainable densities of 30-35/ha and would be an ideal location for the future expansion of the town.

I therefore respectfully request that they are zoned 'New Residential' in the Roscommon Town Local Area Plan 2024-2030.

I trust that this is in order and remain,

Yours sincerely,



Seamus Hayden

