



**Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil:** WFD-C2-124

**Údar:** DFBA Community Enterprises CLG

**Stádas:** Submitted

**Submission:** Submission to Waterford Development Plan

**Comhairliúchán:**

Draft Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022 - 2028

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## Litir Chumhdaigh

Submission by Donal Lehane – Chair: DFBA Community Enterprises CLG.

### Observations:

#### Chapter 6: Utilities Infrastructure, Energy and Communication

**Caibidil:** Volume 1 » Part 3: City and County Policy Objectives » Chapter 6: Utilities Infrastructure, Energy and C...

Submission to Waterford Development Plan

The potential for developing vibrant village communities that can drive economic development, social inclusion and wonderful environments in which to bring-up families is not sufficiently articulated and planned for in the current draft document.

The consequence of apathy, uncoordinated decision making and the inappropriate policies, especially by Irish Water are killing off viable communities, their culture and their traditions/heritage by preventing young families from setting up new homes.

There are 35 villages in Co. Waterford that require ungraded fresh water facilities to allow new houses to get planning permission. There is a dismal future for village schools, shops or sports clubs if young families have to move to urban areas due to Irish Water policies.

Currently over 50 planning applications are on hold in the village of Dunhill. Despite the demand, Irish water is refusing to permit best practice opportunities to solve the issue at minimal cost. Instead it is holding out for a major capital investment that requires significant third party public money. Irish Water's capital intensive proposals are not best practice or appropriate.

Currently families are available for these shovel ready housing developments in Dunhill Village to be delivered within two years if there is a policy change by Irish Water. Money is not the problem. There are alternative solutions that are more cost effective and more environmentally friendly. This technical and administrative mess needs to be challenged.

Bottom-up integrated development plans for villages are required that involve all the stakeholders, service providers and policy agencies.

Our rural economies have a sustainable bright future if policies embrace climate change, remote working, renewable energy, premium clean food production, pristine waterways, biodiversity, eco, activity and cultural tourism. Equine enterprises and angling in a clean natural environment have prospects for growth.

There are significant wealth creation opportunities and new jobs in carbon farming, green energy, forestry, organic and other specialty and artisan foods. Tourism based on our people, a lived-in landscape, our built and cultural heritage, sports and eco activities have an exciting future, if the correct policies are put in place.

A integrated village development plan should be bottom-up and include:

1. Serviced sites for private houses sold to locals at cost
2. Sheltered accommodation for the elderly of the community is important for intergenerational benefits for all. There should be an allocation of social and affordable housing. Dereliction should be significantly taxed and processes to encourage joined up thinking by State agencies should be prioritised.
3. Design of a village hub for local services as part of the local retail offering. (The village shop is a key facilitator but supplementary service must be encouraged.) Examples include: parcel hotel, postal services, health & beauty facilities, internet and business services, mobile library, reading area, café, site for weekly farmers market, community meeting place, tables, sheltered bus stop, services for tourists etc. A weekly farmers markets should be a feature.
4. Pub with snack and dining facilities where local music, song and dance are part of the programme. It should be a centre for cards, darts and other social activities. The social inclusion and the cultural elements of the pub should not be underestimated.
5. Enterprise Park: Serviced sites supplied at cost by the local authority for small business, remote workers, artisan food producers, workshops, studios, arts and crafts. There are opportunities for visitor attractions and retail services to tourists.
6. Village Hall: meals on wheels, respite sessions for vulnerable groups (young and old). Amateur drama and musicals for local and visitor entertainment. Lessons in dancing etc.
7. Sports centre: In addition to local matches and gym facilities, activity tourism with weekend warrior and team building activities can be developed into valuable local enterprises that support accommodation and other services.
8. The traditional national school must plan for early drop offs and after school/home work/physical exercise services. Child minding and early education services are also in demand and a source of economic activity.

9. Constructed wetlands are highly effective and efficient methods for treating waste water. The dividend is a fabulous public park for nature and exercise. Off road walking and cycling trails along wildlife corridors can easily be established as part of new woodland and clean water programme, essential for sustainable, carbon sequestering agriculture. Allotments and a community apiary are features for consideration. Facilities for camping and camper vans can be facilitated.
10. Irish Water to service the people rather than engineering and chemical company interests. Their incentive to build an capital infrastructure that is suitable for privatisations should be questioned. The alternative of local community water schemes that operate to EU quality standards should be considered.

## **Conclusion**

Village life can be vibrant, sustainable and economically viable in a new climate change, green technology environment. Politicians must articulate the vision and the consequences of inaction.

Integrated planning based on local and society needs can ensure optimum results in job generation, social inclusion and wealth creation. Joined up thinking is required from the agencies. The local authority needs to lead this process.

Our social, educational and cultural assets can be enhanced in the interest of all our people.

Carbon zero, healthy living and active lifestyles in communion with nature can be the norm.

Irish Water and other agencies must be challenged to deliver the appropriate services, cost effectively.

We are living in exciting times. Carbon neutral agriculture can be positive for farmers and society if appropriate policies are promoted and delivered. The future can be bright if the right decisions are made in time.

Please contact us if you have queries.

Slán go fóill,

Donal Lehane – Chair: DFBA Community Enterprises CLG.

Ps: Dunhill Village specific issues

1. Fresh water for new houses required by more than 50 young families is a critical concern for residents
2. An Olympic sized spring water swimming pool is ready to be made operational at no cost to the taxpayer if Irish Water administration / legal issues are addressed.
3. A hard stand area for Camper Vans in Dunhill Village is ready for use subject to sign off by Irish Water who have inherited the site from Waterford Co.Council.
4. A self financing project to provide drinking water and waste water treatment facilities for Camper Vans – again, this requires the cooperation of Irish Water.
5. An amphitheater where music and drama events can be held is ready for use subject to agreement with Irish Water on whose land it is sited. A sponsor is available to provide a removable canopy to ensure its use in inclement weather.

Conclusion: The potential for the village of Dunhill as a sustainable, vibrant community is positive if key non-economic issues are addressed. The consequences of inaction could be disastrous. This year the shop was forced to close down and a teacher has been left off, due to impediments to development that do not make sense. History will not be kind to the current decision makers if an integrated development plan for village is not adopted.

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**Documents Attached:** Níl

**Teorainneacha Gafa ar an léarscáil:** Níl