



Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil: WFD-C2-215

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Stádas: Submitted

Submission: Housing - Restrictive Occupation Conditions

Comhairliúchán:

Draft Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022 - 2028

Chapter 7: Housing and Sustainable Communities

Caibidil: Volume 1 » Part 3: City and County Policy Objectives » Chapter 7: Housing and Sustainable Communities

An issue arose recently involving homeowners in the Willow Wood housing development on Faithlegg estate, originally permitted with conditions restricting the use of houses to short term accommodation, being served with Enforcement Notices to stop them occupying their houses as their permanent homes. Attempts to apply for permission to lift the occupancy restrictions were unsuccessful. These houses were built to the same high standards as conventional housing in terms of the size of rooms, range and quality of accommodation, separation distances between dwellings, garden sizes, parking etc.

The consequences of evicting permanent residents from their homes in order that the houses be returned to short-term letting use are:

- Homelessness (some occupants are known to have come off the Council housing list, others are in long-term rental)
- Increased pressure on the rental sector in a housing crisis

In the settlement hierarchy and typology of the Draft Development Plan Table 2.1 Faithlegg is identified as a Rural Node. Rural Nodes are defined as follows:

Small clusters of development usually focused around a community or commercial use and which have potential to function as a centre for a small number of additional housing units.

Section 7.11 of the Draft Development Plan states:

To strengthen the structure and resilience of rural communities, the Council will:

- Maintain a stable, secure and growing population base through a strong network of rural settlement nodes, villages and small towns
- Support the achievement of critical mass in our rural towns, villages and settlement nodes, by ensuring that these are a focus for local housing, community support services and employment growth;
- Sustain and renew established rural communities by facilitating those with a rural housing need to live within their community;
- Discourage urban generated housing in the open countryside which should normally take place in our rural

settlement nodes, towns and villages.

Faithlegg does indeed function as a rural node with a commercial hotel and leisure centre, golf course, church, thriving primary school and football club. There are already 38 no. permanent houses within Faithlegg estate. If the plan will consider the addition of housing units in an existing rural node then it should also allow for the change of use of existing houses, which currently have restrictive condition for short term letting, to permanent residences where the houses satisfy the development plan standards for permanent residential.

It is considered there is a strong case to allow houses in housing estates such as Faithlegg, to allow the lifting of short-term occupancy conditions.

It is requested that consideration be given to additional text in Section 7.11 (Housing in Rural Villages and the Open Countryside) of the Draft Plan and an additional policy under the heading of "New Homes in Small Towns and Villages and Rural Cluster Policy Objectives" along the following lines:

"Objective HXX - The Council will support, in principle, planning applications for change of use of permitted short term housing within housing estates to permanent housing in the City and County where it can be demonstrated the houses generally meet the residential development standards for permanent houses, to assist address the ongoing housing crisis, reduce homelessness and increase the permanent housing stock. In rural situations, rural housing policy will not be applied to applicants and occupants".

At a time when there is a National housing emergency it will become a public scandal if the many families who have secured a home in Faithlegg and are now threatened with enforcement proceeding in the courts are made homeless while the same properties lie vacant for the lack of tourists.