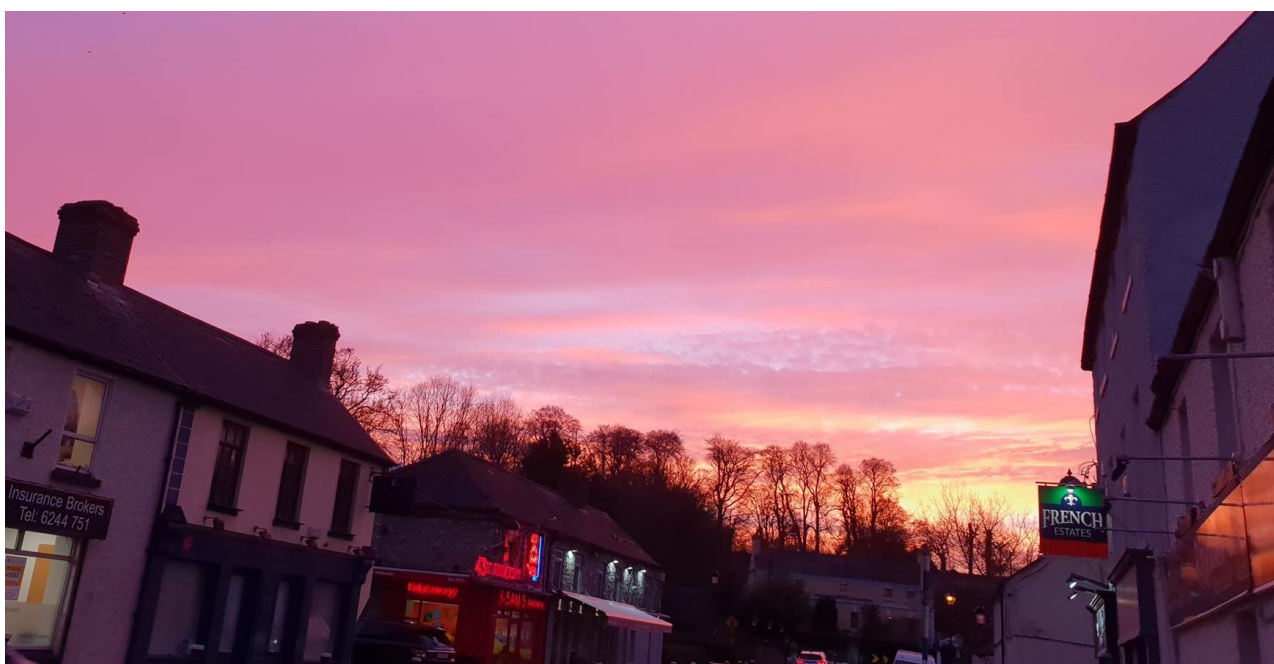


Social Democrats

Draft Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020 to 2026

Submission

Councillor Nuala Killeen



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Submission in respect of
observations on the
Draft Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020 to 2026.

The Main Features of the Leixlip LAP

Four Key Development Area's KDA's together with an Urban Design Framework have been earmarked as the primary area's to accommodate more than 3300 new homes within the Leixlip Local Area Plan (LAP).

With a further 60 hectares of land designated in the Collinstown area for strategic employment within a Business Campus.

KDA1 – The Wonderful Barn area is an active site with planning permission for 450 housing units.

KDA2 – Leixlip Demesne 355 housing units are proposed here. Vehicular access is from the Celbridge Road.

KDA3 – Leixlip Gate 323 houses are proposed here with vehicular access from Easton Road. There are low density housing located here and the plan envisages that "intensification or redevelopment of these properties may occur during the lifetime of the plan"

KDA4 – Black Avenue/Glendale Meadows – 350 new housing units with vehicular access from the Black Avenue.

UDF – Confey – 1340 residential units are proposed in the Confey area over Cope Bridge vehicular access is proposed via an upgraded L1015 together with a new link road provided along the northern extremities of the land.

Collinstown - Almost 60 hectares have been designated for strategic employment within a Business Campus – Intel is also located in the Collinstown Area and has current planning permissions for a major expansion.

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I am a supporter of reasonable, responsible and sustainable development and growth that takes into consideration the needs of the community and respects our heritage and environment.

I believe that all of the Kildare County Councillors should be invited to view the proposed KDA sites to allow them to see the issues that are raised locally and the challenges that present from the draft proposed KDA's in this plan.

I am in favour of additional housing provision in the Leixlip area as we all recognise the need for houses. We are in the middle of a major housing emergency, the worst in decades. No substantial development has happened in Leixlip for over a decade. We need to use public lands to build affordable housing.

We need to ensure our communities can respond to new housing developments with adequate social infrastructure. At the moment in Leixlip there is a huge issue with water supply, roads transport, both kinds of public transport.

A well-balanced plan for the successful development of Leixlip into the future is imperative. A health place check list should be used to see if this development is delivering to enhance the life for residents of Leixlip (used for measuring Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASPs)).

Within Kildare's County Development Plan 2017-2023 one third of Kildare's total housing development was allocated to Celbridge (10%), Leixlip (10%), Maynooth (10%), and Kilcock (5%).

Geographically we are located in the upper North section of North Kildare and currently the most populated. Unsustainable development runs the risk of turning these areas into dormitory towns.

National Planning Framework (NPF) was published in February 2018 in tandem with the National Development Plan (NDP). The NPF sought to prioritize growth in the urban centres of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford. One of the main aims was to achieve compact growth and also to balance regional development.

The intent of the publication of the NPF and NDP was to achieve proper planning of the delivery of infrastructure alongside housing and industrial development. There has been no revision to the Kildare County Development Plan settlement strategy since the adoption of the NPF/NDP.

This compounds the concerns in respect of adequate infrastructure in tandem with Leixlip growth and development in housing. There are deficiencies in the road transport provision for Leixlip village.

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It is a huge concern in the community about the capacity for the current infrastructure to cope with planned

Leixlip sits within the Dublin Metropolitan Area, because of the proximity to the Maynooth Railway Line and with Leixlip having two Railway Stations at Leixlip Louisa Bridge and Leixlip Confey.

I am of the opinion that the shoe horning of 3,315 homes into Leixlip as part of the North Western Corridor growth target and doesn't take into account the complexities of the geography of the Leixlip area.

The geography of the village must be taken into consideration when considering how the additional allocation to Leixlip of 10% growth and the provision of 3,315 new housing units is taken into account. Leixlip borders Fingal; Meath and South Dublin and is also constrained by the River Liffey and the River Rye together with the Royal Canal – The M4 motorway – St Catherine's Park and the Liffey Valley itself.

Our village is in a valley. It is clear that the mathematics of assigning 10% of the growth as an allocation simply doesn't add up when the geography is considered. The transport upgrades that are required also border Meath and SDCC and Fingal County Councils.

The most recent census of population tells us that there are 5,524 households in Leixlip and also recorded a total population 15,504.

This population growth occurred over several decades.

Our current draft Local Area Plan provides for up to 60% growth over a ten year period, and some proposed locations have significant infrastructural deficits that will be difficult and expensive to overcome. The quality of life for existing residents will disimprove.

This level of growth will totally transform Leixlip as a place to live and work and go to school.

Consideration needs to be given to the type of development, Quality of life, recreation and heritage.



Planned Population growth

The plan allows for a greater population than previously estimated (i.e. ranging from 19,794 to 24,433 people), Leixlip is located within the Dublin Metropolitan Area and there is a Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) has been prepared and which forms part of the RSES. The draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region was put out for public consultation up to January 2019.

The Draft RSES is a strategic plan which identifies regional assets, opportunities and pressures and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives.

At this strategic level it provides a framework for investment to better manage spatial planning and economic development throughout the Region.

The growth target for Leixlip is set out in the Settlement Hierarchy of the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (CDP) in Section 2 'Core Strategy' and Section 3 'Settlement Strategy'.

The Strategy allocates 10.2% of Kildare's housing growth to Leixlip over the period 2017-2023. Table 3.3 of the CDP identifies a dwelling target of 3,315 no. units for Leixlip over the plan period.

*The 2023 population projection figure for Leixlip (of 19,794) is extrapolated from the County Development Plan (**Table 3.3** refers), and is based on Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG) assumptions of housing vacancy and household occupancy².*

The household occupancy rate in the 2016 Census (2.78 for Kildare) is higher than the RPG and the County Development Plan assumptions. The housing projections assume that Leixlip can accommodate a greater population than assumed in the CDP Settlement Strategy. Based on CSO data, the dwellings forecast for Leixlip, could result in a total population of 23,433 people³.

This is not sustainable development and adds a third to Leixlip's population. Leixlip has grown immensely since the seventies and Leixlip has always had a great sense of community. Developing by such a large quotient in such a short space of time poses a risk to the fabric of our community and needs to be managed.

KDA1 - The Wonderful Barn

Construction has already commenced for 450 housing units and includes an alteration to the entrance to the site.

This site hosts a well-used public park and allotments. The Wonderful Barn ought to be put into wider use and successful community events organised by the community have attracted large numbers. The community is of the opinion it should be utilised more effectively. A detailed and ambitious plan needs to be rolled out for this.

Also a visitor centre or shared commercial space for small community businesses with some parking should be planned for in detail.

The Wonderful barn is a structure of historical, archaeological and cultural significance to Kildare. A listed building and should be enhanced and protected and used by the community. The Leixlip Town Plan should contain objectives to develop a conservation and management plan for the entire Wonderful Barn site.

Activities permitted should be in accordance with this plan. A bridge link between the Wonderful Barn Lands and Castletown Demesne should be included as an objective. Pitches should be allocated to the Rugby club to develop their community offer.

KDA2 - Celbridge Road (Leixlip Demesne)

This KDA should not be included in the Draft Leixlip LAP

355 New Residential units are proposed for this site in the draft Leixlip LAP. The plan indicates that road access be assigned to Celbridge Road opposite the new Wonderful Barn site. The joint use of this site at the new Wonderful Barn development indicates an increase in road capacity to about 700 in addition to the current road use.

Existing infrastructure needs to be enhanced sufficiently to cope with any proposed development.

There is no detail on pedestrian access and it should be noted the proximity to the local School.

Leixlip Castle/Demesne

Separately, Leixlip Castle and Leixlip Demesne are protected in the LAP page 66/67.

This KDA should be removed from the Leixlip LAP and highlights the difficulty in trying to fit a specific number of homes into the geography of Leixlip with its challenges. If a housing development occurred here it would impact negatively on the Leixlip Castle/Demesne area as the Historic Centre of Leixlip.

The Demesne Lands are listed as protected in the LAP which conflicts with the proposed rezoning.

The Demesne wall runs to the rear of Leixlip Park and Wogansfield which indicates the boundary of the Demesne.

The protection of all structures and the immediate surroundings including the curtilage and attendant grounds of structures contained in the *Record of Protected Structures* is covered by Policy BH1 on page 68. The development of a housing estate within its boundaries significantly reduces the lands adjoining the Castle.

A vote was previously taken by all 40 councillors on the 20th November 2017 to remove the residential zoning for lands at Celbridge Road East (KDA2). The vote was unanimous and it is therefore very disappointing to the community to see these lands back on the Draft Leixlip LAP 2020-2026, seeking the zoning of these lands for residential development. The zoning of these lands should not be permitted on cultural and heritage grounds. Leixlip Castle and Demense are both listed for protection in the County Development Plan.

KDA3 – Leixlip Gate

Proposed housing units in this KDA re now 323 homes, instead of the 200 initially proposed. For such a small area I can only imagine these will be incredibly high density and totally out of character with the area as it currently accommodates low density housing.

The Plan indicates an “intensification or redevelopment of these properties may occur during the lifetime of the plan”.

The existing road entrance/exit from Easton Road will require significant improvement, and it is not possible to imagine how this will be rolled out should the development happen.

There are already road safety concerns and traffic calming measures have been installed as a consequence of safety concerns such large scale development would also produce a need for further safety amendments.

KDA4 – Black Avenue/Glendale Meadows

Residential Development– 350 new housing units with vehicular access from the Black Avenue

Difficult to see how this can be justified on planning grounds and it should be removed from the plan.

This is the only vehicular access to the site and is the start of St Catherine’s park and is known as Black Avenue. The avenue leads into the

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park and also to Kildare's Waste Water Treatment Plant. The plant attracts large volumes of HGV's which conflicts with resident's peaceful enjoyment of the park. At the end of the avenue a car park was constructed to serve the parklands, it is the only vehicular access to the park on the Kildare side.

Developing a new entrance to our park will require the removal of historic and mature trees that the LAP seeks to protect. The land the trees are located on is on a steep incline so the levels do not easily facilitate what is proposed. It is single lane traffic.

Special mention should be made to the fact that Leixlip is not a town, it's a village and the Main Street is 400 meters long. Significant development planned to Mill Lane / Black Ave will require significant enhancements to the road junction there.

A retained fire station is situated there all the land from the fire station back into the park belongs to the people. This was purchased in 1996 for the community and was given to Fingal County council South Dublin County council and Kildare County council to manage.

The proposal to use this route to access a private residential housing estate is an encroachment into Saint Catherine's Park. It poses a risk to pedestrians as they walk their dogs they take their families they take exercise with their children. The proposed linear parks re-inserted back into the park to replace Parkland removed doesn't make any sense and this needs to be removed from the plan.

There is large opposition in the community and this proposed KDA should not have been reinserted into the Leixlip local area plan

Riverforest Park

Bridge and proposed Strategic Pedestrian & Cycle Route

The proposed location for the bridge at Riverforest Park linking the greenway is not welcomed by the community as it will; encroach on their available recreation ground, The only question is which side of the estate will fare worse in terms of loss of recreational space;

The maps are vague and make it complicated to visualise. The cycleway / greenway goes through Riverforest bowl area and then down at the end of Riverforest and toward the Rye river. This leads on to a road access to a nursing home and the old hill area is very tight for vehicles. Exact drawing would be needed and care taken to create a barrier for cyclists to prevent road accidents occurring when cycling out on to the site.

Funding and efforts by the Riverforest Residents Association were made to make this park usable it is essential that KCC Planning Department engage with the Association should this link be adopted.



I would like to see services being put in place before developments happen, services that are already deficient and do not support the current population. Leixlip needs playgrounds, schools, creches, more green spaces and infrastructure.

The community has repeatedly asked for the provision of a public swimming pool and for decades this was promised. It has been a high profile ask for the last 30 years.

The application was never made on behalf of Leixlip. The community saw the sod being turned on a site for a swimming pool in Leixlip in 2006 (by a former Taoiseach) with delivery of same promised for 2009. A decade later we are still waiting for Kildare County Council to make an application on behalf of Leixlip. The current Minister Transport, Tourism and Sport is reported as stating that there is no barrier to Kildare County Council applying for a second swimming pool in the County for Leixlip. Where the Urban Development Framework for Confey provisions such ingress in new households, surely the argument is stronger for the provision of a swimming pool.

Also we need to ensure future proofing of the infrastructure of the town and not leave this to future populations to fight for.

Utilities / Sewerage / Water Infrastructure

To really plan for such a huge growth in Leixlip over the next few years immediate and urgent attention must be given to the upgrade to the sewerage system which is at capacity and also deals with Celbridge which is also expected to take 10% of the region's growth.

It is only a matter of time before the system is in peril. Also, the water infrastructures need urgent upgrading. Irish Water has recently dealt with many outages and Leixlip went almost 5 days without water. This is a massive inconvenience to the public and is an essential need for daily living. Long term water outages have health implications.

Irish Water and KCC have not yet displayed that the upgrade works are being prioritised in advance of property development and road networks.

The most recent repair being planned is at design stage and will not be replaced until Q4 2019, at this level of repair / upgrade, longer term up[grades are unlikely to be delivered in the medium term of this LAP.

Other utilities including adequate electricity supply need to be confirmed. There is a planned business park at Collinstown and a huge expansion of the factory at Intel alongside development of so many housing units for the population, it really needs to be mapped out in detail.

What provisions for the upgrades to electricity needs and uses. Leixlip has experienced an inordinate number of electricity blackouts recently and that is prior to any of these proposed developments. More detail needs to be released to explain where the additional capacity will come from and specifically when this will be detailed.

Social Infrastructure

Earlier this year, we conducted a social infrastructure audit and found the need for creche facilities, after school facilities and club areas need to be explored and developed in more detail. There is a lack of supply of these and Ireland has the highest number of children aged 0-5 in Europe. Parks are also sought after and most recipients sought provision of a swimming pool.

Community structures, there are no provisions in the Local Area Plan for retirement homes or residential homes suited for the elderly. The Local Area Plan acknowledges that the elderly need homes of a certain type and location however it doesn't allocate lands or list any actions or objectives to be carried out between 2020 and 2026 for them. The CSO Census data shows that 25% of Leixlip's population is 55 years or over and 15% of the population is over 65, so there is quite obviously a need. A bespoke supported living development needs to be developed for the aging needs of the population and there needs to be some specialized residential care planning for these residents. Provision also needs to be given for training the workforce that will care for these people this planning needs to commence now in conjunction with the main training sites it would make sense to develop a training program in the proposed community hub to develop these skills for future planning

The Primary school for Leixlip West is to be set on 1.6 hectares of land but the Local Area Plan has no location determined for it yet. An additional secondary school site ought to be determined now before there is no site left develop.

it is imperative that we consider the future needs of the town and in doing so create some cultural social spaces in respect of young people and teenagers. We should be fostering a climate of pro-social behavior rather than anti-social behavior if there remains a lack of recreational spaces for young people to congregate in a safe setting.

For quite some time there has been a dearth of social facilities for young teens, preteens and younger children. There are open spaces and green amenities that are at risk from the current plan and in particular, there is no single play park for children in Leixlip. Thought needs to be given to

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the provision of a skate parks and it is proven that street art improves the area. A site should be assigned as a designated graffiti space as a community project.

Kildare County Council must ensure that they consider pro social activity in respect of children and young people. There are some good activities in private clubs and in sports clubs and also activities in the library.

There needs to be a social hub to allow for young people in Leixlip as part of the development of the Confey Urban Area. It is imperative that a new play park is planned for and installed to accommodate the needs of the children.

Ireland has one of the highest rates in Europe of children aged 0 to 5 Kildare County Council should be ambitious for our community and should plan for a community space, a community hub and a Community Center with a community childcare facility a wider use of this could also be to develop the skills of a child care workforce. There are many drama and theatre groups in Leixlip providing entertainment over the years. It would be meaningful to the community to have a shared resource to utilize especially if our overall population growth is expected to reach 24,000 persons.

The people of Leixlip have always been culturally ambitious and have always been community minded and where there were gaps in services or provisions for services the community came together and developed them themselves. Kildare County council needs to reach out to the community, which is very strong and seek and stakeholders to develop social enterprises to develop community organisations.

It has always been very clear that when the community comes together great things happen in Leixlip .

The attendances at community events like the Saint Patrick's day parade, family fun days at the wonderful barn, demonstrates how the community works together is and it also gives a congregated setting for the community to come together and celebrate things. A solid plan for a schedule program for activities at sites like the wonderful barn, led by the community. The Wonderful Barn site could and should accommodate a range of day and evening time uses. This would be an ideal location for a cultural, arts and performing centre to be located within Leixlip assisting with the fulfilment of Policy EDT3.13 with regard to evening time use.

Kildare County Council needs to be ambitious in its development of social enterprises and develop and bring together some of the talents and skills in Leixlip.

Any high density development will become problematic if there are no recreational facilities for the residents and for young people as Leixlip grows. A rise of up to 24,000 population, a growth of a third in 7 years.

It is really important to us that the needs and the voices of the community are going to be heard as part of this process. I believe that from making public announcements, doing public stalls from consulting with the public but the community has shown that they can come together and reflect their needs.

Transport

As part of the transport planning process really needs to be considered where the allocation of electric vehicle charging points are going to be. There's a growing trend in people utilizing electric vehicles in hybrid vehicles on his part of our strategy to mitigate climate damage. It's a gap in the local area plan.

Also as part of the program the rail capacity issues are an issue. During 2018 there was a growth of 5.5% in rail passenger numbers across the rail network so this shows increasing demand across the rail network.

The additional rail fleet that is being ordered as part of the National Development Plan 2018 to 2027, which includes the Dart extension program. The Dart service is going to be extended so Irish rail intends to proceed with the acquisition of a bi mode hybrid fleet which can operate in full electric mode along sections of the line. The full electrification of the line has to be commenced so the purchase of the new fleet will be during 2023.

Over reliance on the rail links up to 2023 is foolhardy as in Confey at peak times it is difficult to get a space on the trains.

This creates a risk in the Leixlip local area plan where reliance on both Louisa bridge and Confey stations and the assumption in Confey Urban Development framework area will be using rail transport where the improvements are another 3 to 4 years away is a risk to the plan and needs to be considered further

Health

It is imperative to progress a Primary Care facility for Leixlip. This project needs to be developed as a matter of urgency should so much growth in population be coming to Leixlip.

Sports & Social

Additionally if growth of population to Leixlip is expected at 34% and Ireland has the highest proportion of children aged 0-5 in Europe, indications are that the population is growing it would indicate that a planned increase in the provision of sports and social is urgently required.

Relocating the current GAA site at Confey and relocating that does not indicate the requirement for growth in provision for GAA.

Soccer pitches are also a requirement in the immediate term.

When provisioning for a healthy p[population where well-being is prioritised, it is essential to provide sports groups as part of sensible planning.

Some analysis has been undertaken by Barnhall rugby club in respect of the requirements of their players there are 39 teams of young people and 850 players in total across all age groups male and female. In respect of the requirements and the development of the planned population development some of the amenity lands at the wonderful barn KD8 be allocated for the provision of rugby pitches. MU Barnhall RFC's grace historical connections with the wonderful barn the club itself was founded in 1969 by the employees of the Irish meatpackers who at that time owned all of the lines at the wonderful barn in fact the house at the wonderful barn was used by the directors. At least 3 additional pitches are urgently required in respect of Rugby pitches.

In respect of GAA and Soccer pitches a large proportion of the community are engaged with both of these clubs and provision must be made for additional pitches and spaces for the growth of access to these clubs. A sports development plan should be developed with assigning resources and spaces for Leixlip's existing popular sports to develop and thrive and

for future growth. Leixlip United ought to be allocated space for at least 5 or 6 pitches to develop and cope with demand and similarly Leixlip GAA.

Absence of detailed documented planning regarding anticipated Public Transport demands, capacities and the expected timelines for delivery in the Leixlip, Celbridge and Maynooth areas. The Strategic Transport Assessment and its summary in the Local Area Plan show that a robust and enlarged Public Transport system is vital (especially at peak travel times) for the increased population in our towns. By the end of the County Development Plans life cycle 38% of the homes in Leixlip will be new builds, Maynooth having 42% and Celbridge having 33%. Expected increases in demand on Bus and Rail services for those commuting to work in Leixlip, Celbridge and Maynooth will be in the order of 55%, 42% and 30% respectively.

Parking

Town centre – parking plans I ought be made develop these. Also KCC should insist on a common store front or colours to give town centre a unified feel. Additional parking needs to be designed into plan to assist with town rejuvenation.

CONFHEY UDF

The lands at Confey comprise of a flat and rural landscape located to the north of Leixlip and are also strategically located c. 1km to the north of Leixlip Town Centre and adjacent to Confey Railway Station. The residential development capacity of the Confey lands is c. 1,340 units. The delivery of new dwellings on these lands will be carried out in accordance with the Confey Urban Design Framework (UDF) as detailed in **Section 12** of this Plan. The Confey UDF sets out a detailed framework for a phased programme of development which includes the timely provision of the necessary physical, social environmental and economic infrastructure.

There is no detail in respect of the planned transport upgrades to roads and specifically Cope Bridge. The traffic n the Captain's Hill I a regular problem and capacity needs to be addressed. The Draft LAP assumes that Bus Connects will be implemented, despite the results of the public consultation phase not coming out until September 2019. The Bus Connects plan suggested a change to the 66a bus service to turn right at the end of the Captain's Hill and to go a totally different route, This cuts off the access to transport to Dublin City Centre, via Lucan from the Captains Hill and to all of the 1,314 residential units at Confey UDF. AT

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the time of the Bus Connects proposal we conducted a survey of thousands of residents of Leixlip who objected to the change to the 66a and sought to retain the service totally and to enhance it. The response to this in September by Bus Connects needs to be assessed prior to any assumption that the proposed changes will go ahead.

The plan assumes that Bus Connects will be rolled out as per the initial detail in the first public consultation phase. Bus Connects locally held no public consultations focusing on Maynooth and Celbridge as a site for public consultation. That Bus Connects plan re-routed the 66a. Where the local Area plan relies on public transport to accommodate the new population growth they will need to consult more directly with Bus Connects in order to facilitate the proper transit of residents into Central Dublin, Celbridge and Maynooth. Planned outcomes of the public consultation phase are expected in September.

Additionally, the transport plan assumes that the 66e bus will be re-routed down the Green Lane in Leixlip. This would not be a very good idea. The bus link 66B is servicing the Celbridge Road and the bus is used by workers in transit and locals. Also, the 66e was hard fought for over a number of years and is now an occasional service. This service needs to be increased and enhanced. If the assumed new bus service is driven through the Green Lane, this will be hugely impacted by the three primary schools which are very well attended and during school run times, smooth public transport transit is impossible.