

Noel Chambers,

8th July 2019

Draft Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020-2026,
Planning Department,
Kildare County Council,
Áras Chill Dara,
Devoy Park,
Naas,
Co. Kildare.

Kildare County Council
Planning Department

10 JUL 2019

RECEIVED

RE: Draft Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020-2026

A chara,

I am writing to you in respect of the "Draft Leixlip Local Area Plan 2020-2026". I am objecting to the scale of rezoning of development lands north of Cope Bridge, Confey, Leixlip, Co. Kildare for new housing.

R149:

Regional Route R149 runs east/west along the north of the Royal Canal. The road as it currently stands is a poor road for the traffic volumes currently operating on it. The road features a number of dangerous bends, dips, little or no verging and has poor sighting points at junctions with other routes operating to/from it.

Creating additional housing on the scale proposed would result in heavy traffic volumes on a road network not suitable for purpose. Due to a lack of amenities in the area, most traffic will be directed towards the Main Street in Leixlip via Cope Bridge and Captain's Hill.

COPE BRIDGE:

Cope Bridge operates on a one way signalled system. Currently where R149 approaches Cope Bridge from the north, a standing space of approximately 115m exists for traffic to queue in the event of a red light. During peak times traffic volumes in this area are currently very high where the queue spills back onto the east/west part of R149.

To the south of Cope Bridge, traffic moving north from Captain's Hill have a standing space of approximately 80m (to entrance of Glendale) and 135m to entrance of Riverforest. During peak times, traffic currently blocks access to these estates when waiting at a red light.

With a proposed new development north of Cope Bridge, traffic congestion will worsen, especially blocking entrances to established estates such as Riverforest and Glendale.

Cope Bridge also has a 3.5 tonne limit (excluding buses). By creating a new community north of Cope Bridge, it would result in additional traffic flows putting extra pressure on an aging bridge.

If an option was explored to widening this bridge in the future, it would reduce Confey GAA's pitch and an open green area in Glendale. This would represent an unacceptable removal of public amenities. Widening the bridge would only encourage even more traffic towards the Main Street and would lead to bottlenecks along Captain's Hill and the junction at Main Street.

CAPTAIN'S HILL:

Traffic volumes on Captain's Hill will increase significantly. Accessing Captain's Hill from the already established estates will become extremely difficult during peak times in the morning and evening. Currently it can take 20 minutes to get from Riverforest to the M4 motorway (Leixlip East Junction). There is little scope for road improvement works on R149 along Captain's Hill. Widening the road is not an option due to the location of housing along the route.

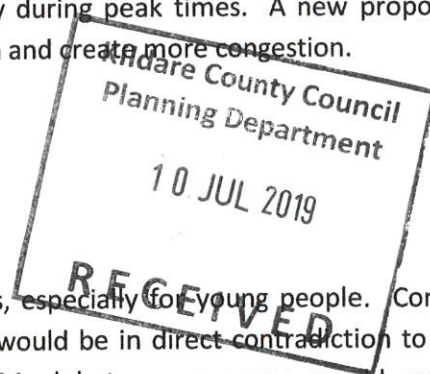
MAIN STREET, LEIXLIP

Car parking along the Main Street is already limited and operating at capacity during peak times. A new proposed development north of Cope Bridge would increase traffic flows towards the town and create more congestion.

AMENITIES:

CONFHEY GAA:

A major concern in all communities is the provision of local amenities, especially for young people. Confey GAA's location beside Cope Bridge needs to be protected. Any move would be in direct contradiction to the Council's desire to increase public amenities. Relocating Confey GAA club to a new area would create considerable distance with the existing core Confey GAA members.



THE BOWL, RIVERFOREST:

One of the features of the new development in Confey is the creation of "Open Space". By creating a cycle path into Riverforest, it reduces the main Open Space ("The Bowl") in Riverforest for a cycle path that the Transport Plan demonstrates is not really required. Due to the low volume of bicycle traffic (admittedly due to the poor road network), a cycle way into an existing estate would serve no purpose due to its proposed route and would therefore not encourage increased bicycle use. It would also present a safety risk to children playing there.

ST. CATHERINE'S PARK:

St. Catherine's Park is also another vital amenity to all Leixlip residents. Any efforts by Fingal County Council to remove or alter this existing green area should be strongly objected to by Kildare County Council. I **strongly** object to any development that would promote building a new road through any part of St. Catherine's Park.

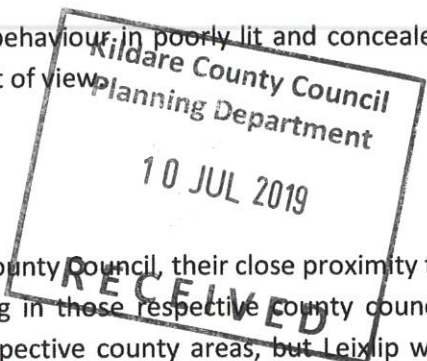
INFRASTRUCTURE:

Large electrical faults are common in Leixlip, particularly affecting Riverforest. While remedial works have recently taken place, it illustrates that the existing infrastructure is aging and in need of constant maintenance. When ESB supply is interrupted, in the majority of cases bad weather is not a factor. To me this suggests the existing ESB infrastructure is just about adequate to cope with existing demand in the area. The creation of a new community north of Confey would require substantial investment in the existing ESB infrastructure to cope adequately with future demand.

FOOTPATH / CYCLE ACCESS:

It is proposed to introduce new access points from the proposed new development into the estates of Riverforest and Glendale via new overbridges. These will give access from the new community over the Royal Canal and railway line into existing estates. It is debatable what advantages these will bring as most people from a new community will want to access the main part of Leixlip via the most direct route, Cope Bridge and Captain's Hill.

Introducing these new access points may also lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour in poorly lit and concealed areas. Having additional access points into an estate is not desirable from this point of view.



FUTURE REZONING:

If the lands north of Cope Bridge are rezoned for residential purposes by Kildare County Council, their close proximity to the Dublin (Fingal) and Meath borders could potentially lead to similar rezoning in those respective county council areas. This would potentially increase the residential area further into their respective county areas, but Leixlip will suffer the most from such decisions. As a Kildare resident, I don't have sight of such proposals and it would be unwise for Kildare County Council not to take that scenario into consideration.

I am appealing to you not to rezone lands north of Cope Bridge for residential purposes for the above reasons.

A lot of the issues raised and to be overcome will require significant funding; the sources of which is not clear, or even guaranteed. If Kildare County Council has funds for Leixlip, these should be used to improve the existing infrastructure, town centre and amenities in the town before consideration is given to expanding the town.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission and taking my points into consideration.

Yours faithfully

Noel Chambers