

10 July 2019

**Submission on Leixlip Draft Local Area Plan 2020-2026**

I wish to lodge a number of concerns with the proposed draft Local Area Plan for Leixlip.

*Traffic and access*

1. Mill Lane is a narrow street with two-way traffic and on street parking along one side. The road is so narrow that often vehicles must pause and let oncoming traffic through as it is too tight for certain types of vehicles to meet in the current two-way layout. It is the only access to the Black Avenue KDA development proposed in the draft LAP. Residents are careful as visitors to St Catherine's Park and the substantial traffic to the Wastewater plant situated at the end of the Black Avenue are unprepared for the narrowness of the access. This requires patience and is currently manageable only as Mill Lane is a very defined cul-de-sac with approximately 50 dwellings using it for daily access.
2. Mill Lane meets Main Street Leixlip at a semi-blind junction and joins the road as it curves sharply to the right heading in the direction of Dublin. This is already a very dangerous junction as views of traffic from the Dublin direction are obscured to the left by a number of Kildare County Council paid parking bays. The camber of the road also makes access from the junction difficult as Mill Lane is situated at a much lower level than the crown of the main road and must be joined by driving uphill on the sweep of the corner making visibility at any proposed roundabout solution lethal when exiting Mill Lane.
3. These access concerns are not addressed either singly or in a combined way within the draft LAP proposal for the construction of approximately 350 additional dwellings in the Black Avenue KDA. The proposed development would require substantial construction traffic for the extended period, following which the resident population using these access points would increase possibly sevenfold.
4. All of these access issues are at their most pressing in consideration that Leixlip Fire Station is situated on Mill Lane at the junction of the Black Avenue and all these access issues may have a life-or death outcome if this emergency service is blocked by excessive traffic as a result of this proposed development.
5. Traffic levels through main street Leixlip also mean that access from Mill Lane/Black Avenue is difficult at the best of times, and near impossible at rush hour. This is based on current levels of traffic through the village before any additional residential development in Leixlip.

*Exiting Leixlip – the Celbridge connection*

1. Access from Leixlip Dublin-bound onto the N4 is via a shared roundabout with Celbridge beside Liffey Valley Par3 Golf Course. During the last 2 years the method of accessing this roundabout from Leixlip was altered reducing it to a single lane while continuing to give

Celbridge traffic two lanes. As a result, traffic from Leixlip wishing to travel to Celbridge or access the M4 to Sligo no longer has a separate slip lane to queue thereby extending the queue for access from Leixlip. As both the Celbridge lanes are situated to the right of the Leixlip entry point these have right-of-way to the roundabout and the N4. In the morning rush hour, traffic is backed up from this round about all the way back to Salmon Leap bridge, through the village at certain times.

2. With no commitment in the draft Leixlip LAP for the creation of an alternative access route from the Confey KDA (1340 extra dwellings), the majority of vehicles will continue to exit Confey via Captains Hill, and will struggle to join the traffic in Leixlip village, which is regularly backed up by the queues for the N4 roundabout. The village is already at standstill most mornings, evenings, even out of school term and during school times traffic levels are more akin to the gridlock on Dublin quays than a small Kildare one-street village.
3. The draft Celbridge LAP proposed an increased residential spread of 3200 dwellings, many of which will use cars to commute due to the distance from Hazelhatch train station in Celbridge. By not considering the proposed Leixlip LAP in conjunction with the proposed Celbridge LAP, the convergence of these two increasing traffic volumes and their effects on Leixlip has not been fully considered.

#### *Water - utility*

1. The water supply to the Mill Lane area is currently of a low-pressure quality. Currently when the Fire Station, (situated on the corner of Mill Lane and Black Avenue), fills its tenders and holding tanks for practice manoeuvres or following a call out the water pressure to other properties in Mill Lane and Castle Park drops substantially to a trickle, and sometimes disappears entirely.
2. Therefore the supply for either the current properties and the Fire Station, or to the new build properties would be non-existent should the proposed Black Avenue development go ahead. The proposed LAP does not acknowledge to the current inadequacy of supply never mind provide proposals for rectifying the current problem and/or providing a solution that would allow future development in the area.
3. On 11 June this year a burst pipe in the antiquated water supply system in Leixlip caused traffic chaos and flooding in surrounding parts of Leixlip.



Figure 1 Water flowing down Old Hill Leixlip



Figure 2 Emergency services pumping out floods from leak

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The difficulty managing the returning pressures following its repair exposed numerous weak points and caused a chain of other bursts and water outages right across Leixlip. Many areas were without running water for the best part of a day. Others were without water for over three days. This is not a system adequate to support a further 3500 dwellings.

#### *Water – flooding*

1. I live in Castle Park, a small estate of 15 houses just off Mill Lane in Leixlip. Mill Lane is a cul-de-sac bounded on one side by the River Liffey, at the base of the hills that Leixlip is built on. In the past parts of Mill Lane have experienced flooding as the water table is generally quite high and in heavy rains water naturally flows down Silleachain Lane to the natural basin formed near the fire station along the Lane.
2. Currently residents on Mill Lane or adjacent areas are unable to obtain flood insurance for our homes. Individual properties in the area have been required to manage development or redevelopment of their properties sensitive to the flood risks of the area.
3. The proposed Black Avenue KDA appears to suggest the construction of 350+ dwellings above the Mill Lane area without a broader consideration for the significant increased flood risk for the existing properties below the proposed development. The sinking of foundations, parking requirements and road developments for this KDA would absolutely alter the soakage and thereby the water run-off from the area.
4. The reference to the known flood risk in the draft LAP for this area is very narrow. It also states the review was based specifically on the proposed development lands. As there has been no consideration of the adjacent lands that will be affected this incomplete review suggests that the draft is at minimum incomplete, at worst – factually misleading.

#### *St Catherine's Park*

1. Proposals for a largescale development (350 dwellings) plus associated works in the Black Avenue KDA seem entirely at odds with the fact that the boundaries of St Catherine's Park extend down to the Fire Station on Mill Lane. The park is an ecological necessity to the area counterbalancing the industrialised outputs on the western side of Leixlip.
2. The park is shared equally between Lucan and Leixlip but the proposed development in the draft LAP would have a serious environmental impact of the Leixlip side of the park and the situation of such a large residential development on its edge would threaten the fabric of the park with an increase in traffic and other pollutants both during development and through continual overuse of the Black Avenue. This is an area of natural amenity for the current population that would become almost inaccessible to pedestrians and cyclists from the Leixlip side seriously diminishing the green areas the Council states it supports under policy GI1...There also appears to be NO environmental impact surveys supporting any of the proposals in the current draft LAP.
3. I applaud our councillors for previously adding an assurance that no through road would be placed through St Catherine's Park in earlier versions of the plan but wish to highlight that their intentions appear to be thwarted by that statement being silently removed from the latest draft LAP.

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### *Joined up processes*

The draft LAP makes numerous proposals based on assumptions and expectations –

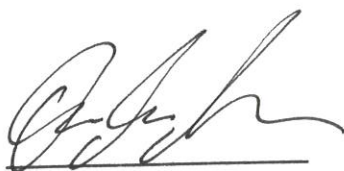
- that light rail will be extended to Maynooth (not currently a time- bound proposal);
- that residents of new properties in Confey will not require the same level of car-ownership as current residents and will instead use the rail service (no evidence to support this);
- that 20 extra childcare places will meet the needs of an increased 3000 residences (64% increase) to Leixlip area;
- that an ageing population would be able to attend walk in services in a possible health care centre that might be situated at the farther reach of Leixlip boundaries (Collinstown);
- that Cope bridge will be upgraded (currently not linked to any plans or associated funding);
- that flood plans need only extend to the boundaries of the grounds you wish to develop;
- that roads may be developed north of Leixlip that may alleviate the traffic issues currently and support the increased traffic from the proposed new developments;
- that numerous individual property owners will for some reason work together privately to support and facilitate the community-improving elements of the draft plan;
- that the people of Leixlip do not require a swimming pool and will still not require a swimming pool when the village has extended its population by a further 60%;
- that facilities will magically follow to support the heart of the draft plan - which is to deliver large scale developer-focused building to increase residential spread of Leixlip by **two thirds**;
- that the current infrastructure needs little or no upgrading.

If any of these assumptions prove to be unfounded, the draft LAP needs to have amended language that ensures that any development cannot proceed until the assumptions on which its design is based have been fully supported and can actually be delivered.

### *Conclusion*

The scale of the proposed developments in this draft LAP will be so enormous on a geographically enclosed town, where there is little room to expand, that the only possible outcome is the destruction of environmental and societal amenities for the community as it currently exists. Unless the plan is altered to rebalance the scale and pace of that development and to make it contingent on fully supported and integrated planning.

Many thanks for your consideration,



Orna Maguire-Goh

