

Name

Rachel, Allis

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to lodge my concerns about the Confey Urban Design Framework and the Draft Area Plan for Leixlip, specifically the proposed development in Confey, the threat to St. Catherine's Park and the general threat to quality of life for residents of Leixlip, Confey and the surrounding area. I acknowledge that there may be a housing crisis in the greater Dublin area but it is not in the best interest of Leixlip/Confey, or the surrounding area, to develop housing on a rapid and large scale to meet the demands of national interest. Any development needs to be planned correctly with appropriate infrastructure in place and with the desired objective to be a model community development that other areas can aspire to.

1) Overall, the volume of units proposed in the Confey Urban Development is excessively high, given the reliance on the Captains Hill road network. At present, the traffic during peak times is busy. Putting additional strain on this network via the volume of units proposed would be totally detrimental to the entire town of Leixlip and surrounding area. Recent traffic diversion down Captains Hill in June/July 2019, due to KCC closure of Kellystown Lane (beside Intel), has resulted in noticeable delays in Confey/Leixlip village during peak times. Captain's Hill is a bottle-neck for traffic and simply could not take the scale of the development proposed.

2) The strategic transport assessment for Confey delivered a number of road infrastructural options. No decision has been made regarding any of these options despite the pivotal importance of them to the entire LAP. The proposed works to Cope Bridge will worsen traffic congestion for residential areas located east and west of Captain's Hill. It will negatively impact on the access for residents in and from their estates. The plan does not adequately factor in the impact of the major expansion of Intel on water, sewage or transport infrastructure. The draft plan does not reflect or acknowledge the complexity of towns the size of Celbridge, Maynooth and Leixlip lying in such close proximity to each other and sharing the same road networks and public transport systems. The scale of the plan does not harmonise with or enhance the existing built and natural environment of Confey.

3) The combined additional traffic from this LAP will bring up to 5,000 additional vehicles on to the local streets which are already experiencing traffic congestion at peak commute times and school start and finish times.

4) Previous objective removed from Plan - 'To protect the amenity of St. Catherine's Park, no road proposal shall be considered by this Council through the park within the Council's ownership or jurisdiction.' In a complete U-turn the LAP is now in fact proposing a road into the park to facilitate a major housing development at Black Avenue. This change is despite 1,021 submissions in 2017 regarding protection of St Catherine's Park from road development. To totally ignore the people is dictatorial and undemocratic. As Blanchardstown, Lucan, Dunboyne and Maynooth all expand out towards Leixlip, it is essential that this green space and amenity for the people of North Kildare and West Dublin is preserved.

5) MT1.4 No ecological analysis has been completed on the effects of this LAP.

6) The new Educate Together School will open its doors in September 2019. As of yet, no site has been designated for the permanent site of this school. It is worrying that a plan for the Leixlip area would not include a site for a school which is opening in two months from now.

7) The "Mixed use units" concept (Section 2.1.6.1) is highly ambitious, given that within 500m at Riverforest Shopping Centre, there is already an array of established businesses. There is considerable risk of not being able to attract business tenants for the many ground floor business units due to commercial non-viability as local market already covered. Empty units can result in increase in anti social behaviour and a look of urban decay. If such a scenario arose, Landlords may be tempted to rent the business units out to lesser favourable business types that would not be of a community benefit but are simply availing of a cheap rental premises opportunity. This could thus magnify and increase risk of antisocial behaviour. Overall, if the cornerstone of the "Community Hub" becomes an unsightly rundown area, this will not attract people or businesses to the area and a downward spiral from there is likely.

8) The 2 proposed pedestrian bridges (in Section 2.1.6.7 Movement and Access Strategy), will bring serious security issues and potential antisocial behaviour problems to existing residents of Riverforest and Glendale Meadows. If the proposed addition of new access at Cope Bridge is to be efficient then why the need also for 2 more additional access points? These would offer no benefit to existing residents of Riverforest and Glendale Meadows, and also with very limited benefit for those who would potentially be using them from the new units on the other side of the canal. Infrequent use and dilapidation highly likely as a result.

9) I have concerns about how the LPA will affect our current community. At the heart of that community, is Confey GAA. It is not just a football club, it is a community centre. There are potential benefits of development in Confey for the GAA club's membership. They are experiencing problems with volunteering at coaching level and a loss of involvement of senior players when they retire from playing. There is no affordable housing in Confey and they must move further away. I ask that the scale of this planning for Confey be altered to a level that matches the actual demand for our community. I ask that these homes are affordable for the younger residents of the community to put down roots and raise families. Every club wants more players but Confey GAA Club is unique in that they compete at senior level in Hurling, Football and Ladies and already struggle for pitch space for these three senior teams. Added to that they have "B" teams and an excellent juvenile structure

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already in place. They have access to a pitch in St. Catherine's Park but this still does not alleviate the problem of lack of playing space. To add more housing to the area of Confey would pose a considerable difficulty for the club to cater for these new families and so it is important that more pitches are allocated to clubs servicing the new members of the community. Confey GAA would require additional playing fields adjacent to their current location to serve any growth in the existing community and playing numbers.

On the issue of the club's relocation in the plan, I would like it noted that Confey GAA club members were disgusted and angered by the statement in the draft development plan stating that the land on which Confey GAA is built is underutilized, considering all the activity that takes place in Creighton Park, considering the success they have as a club, the amount of life skills they hand down to juvenile and adult players, the use of the facility for many community groups and the efforts of the GAA community in coming together in Confey and establishing such a fine facility. Confey GAA is a community club and they facilitate many community groups, such as basketball, old folks meeting, bridge club, winter cards, darts club, pool club, Irish dancing, set dancing. The club was founded in 1989 as people living in this community were spending far too much time stuck in their cars trying to make their way to play with Leixlip GAA. The traffic was very heavy at the time and we are experiencing similar traffic congestion now in Leixlip and Confey. The club was established in its current location so that members, particularly juvenile members, could walk in safety to training and games without having to negotiate the ever increasing traffic. The new proposal would bring more traffic. Practically all their members, playing members, mentors, social and juvenile live within walking distance from the club and they are encouraged to walk or cycle. Confey schools (San Carlo and Confey College) utilise their pitches and facilities for matches, sports days, active school week etc. The classes can walk to the club from the schools currently. Relocating the club to the proposed location makes our facilities inaccessible for the existing schools, teachers and school children of Confey. The existing schools do not have the use of or access to alternative pitches or green space within the existing Confey area. The new proposal shifts the club 800 metres away to the periphery of the new developed community. It would be a minimum of 8-10 years before any children of new families from new homes would be playing members of the club. So why would we move further away from our established community? The L5052 road, which the proposed new site would be located on, is simply not safe for players, particularly juvenile players, to walk on. With the development of a new neighbourhood hub and the potential commercial units that may be built, I would be concerned for the commercial viability of the club bar, if units were identified as potential licensed premises. They have employees in Confey GAA and we should be cognisant of a duty to keep them in paid employment within the community. The club bar is also a valued amenity in respect of the adjacent cemetery. The existing community of Confey, our GAA members and all our community groups who access this facility, are not in favour of the club moving. Confey GAA must stay in its current location where it is best placed to serve the local and existing community and, in time, can serve any members that new development may bring to the area. Regards,
Rachel Allis – Leixlip native and resident.