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Subject: submission - New County Development Plan
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Submission/ Observation - 2022-2028 County Development Plan

Indeed The County Development Plan review has come at a time of change globally, nationally and locally. A lot has been learnt in the last 6 months in this era of pandemic especially regarding public health, a lot is unfolding regarding Climate Change and currently there is a large focus on the spending of much sought after public monies.

With all this in mind and to make the most of tax payers money- the location of ‘Sewage Treatment Plants’ in the county should be very carefully considered and reconsidered in the case where permission has recently been granted.

Location of Sewage Treatment Plants:

In light of the Corona Virus and all the worries that parents, school goers, workers and residents have to deal with, the location of the new An Spidéal’s Treatment Plant seriously needs to be reconsidered. At present it is proposed that the plant with 2 open tanks be constructed adjacent to the National school in An Spidéal, next to the new G-teic building and other businesses and houses and very close to An Spidéal’s Craft Centre which are all in the heart of the tourist village.

Public Health:

Given the large focus on Public Health at present, I and many others believe that locating a sewage plant very close to young children, workers, residents etc and in the eye of the tourist village beggars belief and is very concerning. At present children are understandably spending more time than ever outdoors. Imagine the additional worries parents and our young people would have if the sewage plant is built in the proposed location.

Public Monies:

The proposed plant doesn’t have room for any significant expansion as the footprint is set out and very limited. Therefore it is questionable why a big slice of public monies should be allocated to any project of this nature that isn’t targeted on a significant growth in population and in turn cater for the many generations to come. Value for money and solid future proofing is paramount.

Climate Change:

It is widely spoken of in An Spidéal (in terms of disbelief) that the holding tanks would be located underground in the green area in front of the Craft Centre. If this is still the plan – is raises grave concerns. This tourist centre is located adjacent to the beach on the main Spidéal to Galway road. Climate change over the last few years has left its mark on An Spidéal. The force of one of the storms ripped up footpaths at the beach and left a trail of destruction. Indeed each storm (winter and most recently summer) throws up a mix of stones, seaweed (still on the side of roads) and plenty of seawater which ultimately results in massive flooding on the main road. Surely - given what we have learnt about climate change and rising tides – a question has to be asked regarding the locating of holding

tanks so close to the sea.

Set Back Distance:

Many Local Area Plans in county Galway have a minimum set back distance of 100m from the boundaries of sewage treatment plants however this wasn't the case in An Spidéal.

It is extremely concerning that there are plans to build a treatment plant in the field adjacent to the school grounds where the children of the area play on a daily basis. One would imagine in the interest of fairness across the county that the new County development plan should have a uniformed set back distance of at least 100m from treatment plant boundaries. A distance much greater than this should be in place where children and sensitive receptors are located.

From 2006 (& onwards) Galway County Council found that it was acceptable that a 100m buffer zone was allocated to the follow Local areas.

Minimum - 100m buffer zones in place in the following LAPs

Oughterard LAP 2006-2012

Gort LAP 2013-2023

Maigh Cuilinn LAP

Headford LAP 2015-2021

Athenry LAP 2012-2022

Portumna LAP 2016-2022

Tuam LAP 2011-2017


Why then are public monies being spent on building a sewage plant in the heart of An Spidéal, a village which isn't afforded a buffer zone equal to the areas mentioned above? This is extremely unfair on many levels.

Vast open space with no sensitive receptors:

Connemara has vast amounts of open spaces that stretch for as far as the eye can see. Why then build a sewage treatment plant in the heart of An Spidéal so close to the communities most vulnerable people. The necessary infrastructure should be built in an area that has potential for significant expansion and indeed far away from a unique seaside village that is heavily reliant on tourism.

I appreciate you taking the time to read the points in this submission especially in the interest of public health, fairness and the spending of public monies.

Le gach deá-ghuí,

S.P. Ó Cuinn,


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