

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028

Issues Paper Submission

Ageing Society Housing Provision

Proposal: To develop strategic housing policies and objectives in the County Development Plan to give priority and recognition to the diverse housing needs of the ever increasing numbers of our ageing population and to facilitate a range of housing solutions from Retirement Villages to the facilitation of rural Independent living.

The needs and wishes of the elderly for housing solutions are diverse and this should be supported with enabling housing objectives of the County Development Plan that facilitate and support these needs.

Ageing societies present one of the greatest challenges facing governments around the world today.

The number of people aged 65 and over is now higher than at any time before in history. Our life expectancy has increased from 78.8 years in 2005 to 81.4 years.

In the coming decades, the number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase significantly from 531,600 to 1.42 million (or by 167%) and the oldest population (those aged 80 years and over) is expected to nearly quadruple, increasing from 128,000 to 476,700.

This will pose new fundamental challenges for County Councillors and Public Policy makers in the preparation of County Development Plans. How we respond to these demographic changes will determine the health and wellbeing outcomes and quality of life of people as they age in Ireland.

Chapter 3 of current County Development Plan recognises that “ Specific needs must be considered relating to access, public transport, and provision of local services, medical care, security and personal safety among other issues. In this regard, dwellings and other residential facilities catering specifically for older people should generally be located in close proximity to convenience shops, community facilities and public transport nodes”

Our projected ageing population in need of specific considerations is so large and so varied in terms of housing needs and levels of care and support that a general policy objective that suits one segment of our ageing population may not suit another. Some elderly people may well like an urban feel to their surrounding in very close proximity to shops while others may prefer the gentler surroundings of a retirement village with good transport links to the same.

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Provision Of On-Line M6 Services

Proposal: To consider the need for provision of on-line services in the vicinity of the Galway Airport site along the M6.

The inclusion of Objective RPO 3.6.5 In the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region 2020 – 2032 is welcome.

RPO 3.6.5: Support the delivery of lands for Employment Uses at Knocknacarra, Ragoon, Mervue, Dangan, Parkmore, Briarhill, Airport and Oranmore.

It is noted that the Airport Lands have huge potential for accommodating future large-scale employment with main access for future employees coming by way of the nearby M6 motorway. On this basis I would invite consideration of provision for on-line services near this location, which would also be accessible from the R381 route. The envisaged development of this area as an employment hub as noted in the RSES 2020 will no doubt require robust services in the way of fuel and dining options. This is noted in addition to the utility of such services to the current M6 road-users.