

Cork Environmental Forum

Position Paper 3 – Planning and Development



Built Environment:

The physical planning system can achieve a certain amount of integration of Sustainable Development (SD) on an area basis. But those developments in Agriculture, Aquaculture, Forestry, Energy, Transport, which lie outside the planning system, cannot be easily integrated. It is difficult to envisage the integration of all sectors without the **Resource Management approach** (developed in New Zealand) being built in the planning system or even superseding it. The Cork Environmental Forum (CEF) would generally support the provisions of the Planning and Development Bill, and particularly the observations of the Heritage Council (HC). We join them in urging:

- 🌿 **the provision of adequate resources to make the legislation effective,**
- 🌿 **the adoption of a National Landscape policy,**
- 🌿 **serious provision for Nature Conservation outside designated areas.**

Stream-lining the planning system can only be achieved where:

- 🌿 **well-researched and prepared Development Plans are in place;**
- 🌿 **where suitable serviced locations exist for major projects;**
- 🌿 **where no substantial conflict occurs with other land uses or values;**
- 🌿 **where the environmental impacts are fully understood and acceptable to all parties.**

Interpretation. In the new Bill “Sustainable Development” should not just simply be defined, but its thirteen Principles should be clearly stated.

Exempted Development. In relation to Forestation, only thinning and selective felling should be exempted development. In addition, hedgerow / scrub removal should not be exempted.

Planning Register. Planning Register information should be computerised and Web-accessible.

Development Plans. These should be co-ordinated between neighbouring Planning Authorities and Nationally, to incorporate Sustainable Development criteria/principles.

Development Plan Content. Local Biodiversity Plans should be included in CDPs.

Draft Development Plan. The display period should be extended, and the DP should not only be made by the Councillors / Manager – but affirmed by An Bord Pleanala at an oral hearing.

Local Area Plans. We support the provision for Local Area Plans, and Plan reviews every 5 years. The provision for sub-contracting aspects of the Plan preparation is welcomed.

Content of Local Area Plans. This should include village and town Design Statements. Minimum objectives in LAPs should be consistent with the 13 Sustainable Development principles. Surveys of local heritage / conservation at suitable scales should be included in LAPs.

Ministerial (DoE) guidelines. Policy guidance documents from the DoE are particularly needed for:
- Sustainable development;

- Rural housing provision;
- Eco-tourism;
- River catchment management;
- Development control.

Control of Development.

We are of the view that consistent standards in development control are only possible where assessment is explicitly based on sustainable development criteria.

Environmental Impact Assessment. EIAs should be commissioned by the Planning Authorities, and the fees levied on the Developer to ensure independence of assessment.

Development by Local Authorities. Local Authority Development should be assessed as other development. Site Notices should be displayed, and decisions made subject to the Appeal system.

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To foster, promote & implement sustainable development within the Cork region