

Cork Environmental Forum

Position Paper 4 – County Sustainable Housing Policy



Under the new Development Bill, Cork County Council's Planning Authority is required to draw up a Housing Strategy, which will form part of the **County Development Plan**. This must provide for the housing needs of the County area, which include:

- 🌿 those who would normally require Local Authority housing (Social Housing);
- 🌿 people on different levels of income;
- 🌿 an adequate mixture of house types and sizes to meet different demands such as families, single persons, the elderly, and the disabled;
- 🌿 measures to counteract social segregation.

The Planning Authority should assess the need for affordable housing and set targets for meeting that need. The County Development Plan should indicate the intention to negotiate with developers accordingly – ideally to insist that no market housing can be provided until social housing needs have been met.

The **County Development Plan** can and should:

- 🌿 conduct **Social Audits** to identify the variety of social needs in local communities;
- 🌿 maintain and support **Local Services** including public transport, shops, schools, and post offices;
- 🌿 use **Legal Agreements** to secure community provision and affordable housing;
- 🌿 use **Local Area Plans** to identify appropriate housing locations across urban and rural areas;
- 🌿 maintain the **Rented Housing Stock** through facilitating Housing Associations;
- 🌿 set quotas for the provision of **Affordable Housing** on identified sites;
- 🌿 encourage **energy, water and waste efficiency** in housing designs and layouts.

Sustainable settlement options could include:

- 🌿 new settlements on *Brownfield* sites;
- 🌿 consolidation of small town and village boundaries;
- 🌿 new types of Rural Housing including group housing and farm accommodation;
- 🌿 incentives for Building Conservation and Reuse.

Other housing measures that could be addressed in the new **County Development Plan** include:

- 🌿 the publishing of a **Developers' Green Guide** for sound environmental building;
- 🌿 the publishing of new **Sustainable Housing Estate Guidelines**;
- 🌿 the monitoring of Housing Starts, Ownership Patterns, Council Housing Provision, and Housing Need in the sub-regional areas with their Planning implications;
- 🌿 the clarification of **Coastal Housing Policy** in the County;
- 🌿 the development of **Sustainability Assessment Criteria** covering siting, design, environment, infrastructure, landscaping, and social need;

- 🌱 the use of the above in a **Checklist Rating System** as the basis for Planners' and Engineers' Reports to bring consistency and clarity to Development Control;
- 🌱 a survey of the quantity, distribution, occupancy rates, and services provision of **Second Homes in the coastal zone** of County Cork;
- 🌱 the provision of **Refurbishment Incentives** for the existing Housing Stock of the islands and peninsulas of West Cork.

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