



Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil: KCC-C55-325

Údar: Ravi Prasad

Stádas: Submitted

Aighneacht: So called "Gallops Avenue" Objection

Comhairliúchán:

Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029

Objection to Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029 in respect of Gallops Avenue

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Objection to Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029 in respect of Gallops Avenue

Our opposition and enormous concern regarding the proposed forced infliction of this unwanted and completely unsuitable road through the racecourse behind the Woodlands houses - one of the most beautiful, mature parts of Naas - has not altered one bit in all the years that we have been fighting against it. Our earlier submission outlines in detail our objections to both the road itself, and the completely underhand means by which you are attempting to force it through - over the objections of all the affected communities and in opposition of a clear democratic mandate.

Our outrage has only been increased by the over ruling of our local councillors (who voted 6-1 against this road immediately after an election where this road was a key issue) by bringing in those who know nothing of the area, and clearly care about it even less. Let us be clear, we will continue to oppose this road by every means available to us. We believe there is sufficient material for a useful examination, in either court or the media, or both, of how local government, local democracy, and local planning appears to work in this country. We believe this to be of national interest.

We continue to await a response addressing the specific points raised below.

Detail

We are extremely concerned to see yet another attempt to push through a so-called "Gallops Avenue" as part of the

Naas development plan. We have made completely clear on numerous previous occasions our objections to this road; nothing in the proposed “alterations” to the proposal changes this. They are akin to your previous attempts - such as renaming the road an avenue - consisting of superficial, cosmetic tweaks to what is a fundamentally flawed proposal. (You can see that these elements were already included in April 2019: <https://kildare.ie/CountyCouncil/media/Naas%20Inner%20Relief%20Road%20A5%20Size%20B.pdf>). This is entirely unacceptable.

The proposed “alterations” speak of footpaths, cycle lanes, a bus stop, “greenway” and some trees. It is common knowledge that all such roads around Naas, and elsewhere, include designated footpaths, cycle paths, and some trees. This does not assuage our very serious concerns or previous objections in any way. If the reference to including a bus stop is in response to our strong and legitimate calls for much enhanced public transport in Naas as part of the solution to the town’s traffic problems, it is clearly disingenuous. Equally, your attempts to now say the ring road will have the “appearance of a street, avenue or boulevard”, are frankly insulting. These attempts to dress up and greenwash an entirely unfit and rejected proposal will not be accepted by the residents of Woodlands or neighbouring estates.

As we have stated, we remain extremely concerned about the negative environmental, safety and quality of life impact that this road would have on the Tipper Road area. It would irreparably damage a particularly quiet, peaceful and mature residential and natural area, one of the few such areas left in Naas and an amenity (both the Racecourse and ‘triangle’ walking areas), both recreational and environmental for all residents of the town. It would be particularly damaging for Woodlands residents, whose bedrooms would back onto the road, creating, *inter alia* light, air, dust and noise pollution, dangerous junctions for children walking to school, decreased security and property devaluation. We are still not aware of any adequate and independent environmental impact assessment - if it has, we would like to receive a copy. The proposed road would create serious congestion in other parts of Naas, simply moving the problem to another area, including in the context of new housing developments in those areas.

Such repeated attempts to force through the ring road in a clearly inappropriate place (see our previous submission) also raise fundamental questions about democracy, transparency and governance in this country. This in itself requires close examination. This proposal was rejected by 6 out of 7 local councillors immediately after an election in which this road played an important part of the campaign. This was an extremely strong democratic mandate on the part of all the people of Naas. We rejected this road in this place and gave many strong reasons for this (again, see our previous submission). Renaming it a boulevard, including a footpath, bus stops, and some trees do not in any way address the fundamental objections to this road.

Further, we were assured just a few months ago by our local TD and the Minister for Housing that “convoluted procedures” involving the Land Development Agency to force through the democratically-rejected road would not be used in an attempt to force this road through. Nevertheless, we now see another attempt to force this road through, whether via the Land Development Agency or another route. We have requested clarity on this from our local TD and will do so via the Minister too. Other local TDs from parties from Sinn Féin to Fianna Fáil have also written very strongly in opposition to this road and in support of the local community and we can share this with you.

Kildare County Council works for the people of Kildare, in this case the people of Naas, not the other way round. We have spoken through our democratically elected representatives, it is about time you listened. Let me be clear, you will not wear us down with repeated attempts to force this road through. A few tweaks, buzzwords and a bit of greenwashing will not change this. We will oppose this. We will also consider contacting the media and legal challenge if continued attempts are made to force through this democratically rejected proposal.