



Peter Thomson
Planning Solutions



The Draft Kildare County Development Plan,
C/O The Administrative Officer,
Forward Planning,
Áras Chill Dara,
Devoy Park,
Naas,
Co. Kildare.

23 May 2022

Dear Sir/ Madam,

The Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029

This submission is being made in respect of Chapter 9 (Our Rural Economy) of the Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029 (“the Draft Plan”) on behalf of the owner of Gowran Grange House, Swordlestown, County Kildare.

A submission has been made to the Draft Plan by the Punchestown Area Community Group in respect of Chapter 9 which seeks to extend the wording of equine industry objective RD013.

The Punchestown Area Community Group (“The Group”) was established on 10th March 2022, shortly after a planning application was made for a solar array development within the attendant grounds of Gowran Grange House (planning application ref: 22/111). There are no details of the membership of the Group or whether its interest is confined to local residents or includes commercial interests. We are agents for the owner in respect of this application.

The Group has made submissions to other chapters of the Draft Plan (Chapter 11 – Built and Cultural Heritage (RPSs) and Chapter 12 – Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure (Greenways); with specific references to Gowran Grange House and the proposed solar development.

Draft Plan policy towards the equine industry seeks to:

- Support equine related activities of an appropriate size at suitable locations in the county (Policy RD P3); and
- Support and encourage the continued development of a distinguished bloodstock industry in Kildare (Policy RD P4).

In support of these policies, it is an objective of the Draft Plan to:

- Encourage the expansion of the bloodstock industry by appropriately protecting the environment and amenity value of rural areas from

encroachment by urban sprawl and incompatible development (RD O13).

The submission from The Group requests an extension of the wording of objective RD O13 to read as follows:

- Encourage the expansion of the bloodstock industry by appropriately protecting the environment and amenity value of rural areas from encroachment by urban sprawl and incompatible development *and to protect the environment of the bloodstock industry which requires a calm, quiet and hazard-free environment for the proper welfare of horses and for the proper functioning of the industry.*

The Group has an opposing interest in the current planning application on my client's property in respect of the proposed solar development, stating the development is incompatible with, and inappropriately close to, the equine industry. It also expresses the view that solar development conflicts with Council policies and objectives towards support for the agricultural/ agri-food sector. It is, therefore, a concern that the Groups submission to Chapter 9 is aimed at adding weight to its opposition to the proposed solar development on my client's property.

In support of the requested addition to objective RD O13, The Group states that it is the purpose of its submission to seek balanced and necessary protection for the equine industry to ensure that it survives into the future.

It is respectfully submitted the correct balance is reached where the agricultural/ agri-food, equine and renewable energy sectors can all work together in rural areas and contribute to the rural economy. The proposed solar farm will continue to support agricultural activity and will not result in the loss of any land supporting the bloodstock industry. Many equine industries, on the other hand, do not support agricultural activity, including agri-food production. This is not referenced or justified in the Group's submission.

It is considered the correct balance is currently achieved in the Draft Plan through policies RD P3 and RD P4 and objective RD O13, without the requirement for amendments or additions.

Solar development, such as proposed, is not incompatible with equine use. While there will be some impacts from noise and movement during the installation of solar array panels, this will be temporary and insignificant to the equine industry and no greater than the impacts of agricultural activity.

The rural development policies and objectives of the Draft Plan aim to manage the various challenges that rural areas face such as urban generated pressures and rural diversification, including facilitating energy production and distribution, as appropriate.

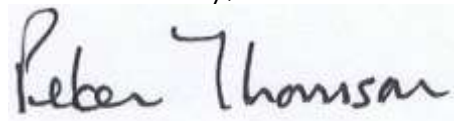
Rural policy objectives in the Draft Plan towards supporting renewable energy production seek to:

- Facilitate agriculture, horticulture, forestry, tourism, energy production and rural resource-based enterprise within the rural settlements and in appropriate rural locations subject to relevant development management standards (RD O2); and
- Support the development of renewable energy production in rural areas where appropriate (RD O7).

It is respectfully submitted that the Draft Plan rural policies and objectives towards the equine industry and renewable energy production, as currently proposed, provides an appropriate policy framework to manage the balance that needs to be achieved through the development management process, in providing for the needs of both sectors while at the same time ensuring the protection of the equine industry. The protection of the environment of the bloodstock industry, as referred to in The Group's submission, will be achieved through development management standards referred to in objective RD O2.

We would be grateful for written confirmation of receipt of this observation.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Peter Thomson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Peter" is written with a large, prominent 'P' and the last name "Thomson" follows in a similar cursive script.

Peter Thomson, MSc, MIPI