

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

22/05/2022

Dear Sir/ Madam,

The Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029

As the owner of Gowran Grange aerodrome I am making this submission in respect of Chapter 5 (Sustainable mobility & transport) of the Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029 (“the Draft Plan”)

5.14.2 Aerodrome Safeguarding, ‘Obstacle Limitation Surfaces’, and ‘Shielding’ ICAO “Annex 14”

The Gowran Grange aerodrome does not comply with the obstacle limitations surfaces as set out in the IAA ALM003 document. As a result the IAA have denied an aerodrome licence.

1. The 21 approach surface is penetrated by the boundary fence, the hedge line and the roadway to the KHC kennels which is considered to be a 4.8m high object.
2. The 03 approach surface is penetrated by a hedge line, trees and a utility poles and the R411 to Ballymore Eustace

To remedy these the runway would need to be shortened by 120m making it too short for gliding operations and indeed most aviation operations.

5.14.3 Public Safety Zones

The Public safety zone to the north of the field is almost completely within Punchestown racecourse lands. The lands of Punchestown are used as de-facto park for the people of Naas and the locality. There is very little limitation to the areas that the public can access in Punchestown and they can easily get to within 45 meters of the northern threshold of the runway.

5.14.14 Other Small Aerodromes and Helipads in Kildare

Gowran Grange Aerodrome (see Map Ref 5.5)

I do not agree with the statements

1. ‘... home to the Dublin Gliding Club’. This infers that the DGC are the owners and operators of the aerodrome the DGC are tenants and the tenancy has been in dispute for almost 26 years.

2. *'It is not licensed (for passenger traffic) by the IAA at date of writing...'* The field has not been licenced for many years in **any** capacity. Please see the attached letter from the IAA detailing the safety problems with the aerodrome.

Policy

TM P17

In my view and the IAA's, by their refusal to grant an aerodrome licence, the field is not a suitable place to grow and promote aviation activities in the area.

Objectives

TM 0142

It seems bizarre and inconsistent to protect the obstacle limitations of Gowran Grange aerodrome when they are already severely compromised to the North, South and West of the runway, a situation that cannot be remedied.

TM 0147 – TM 0148 – TM 0149

I respectfully submit that all **current** and future aviation facilities should be in compliance with these objectives.

Other matters

The runway at Gowran Grange is a private field occupied by a private club. I do not believe that the council should be ensuring the future of a completely non-essential private runway.

The runway at Gowran Grange does not meet safety standards in terms of the slope and profile both laterally and longitudinally. As mentioned above, the transitional surfaces are intersected to the North, West and South. My Grandfather first used the field as a landing strip I think in the 1940's or 50's when safety standards were far laxer than they are now. If Gowran Grange aerodrome was proposed now it would not be allowed on multiple safety grounds not least the proximity of Punchestown.

In the DGC visiting pilots brief, the emergency fields to the North of the strip are all within Punchestown lands. These fields are regularly used by members of the public for exercise, walking their dogs and the KHC Kennels for horses. I respectfully submit that growing and promoting aviation at Gowran Grange which depends on these fields for safe landings in case of a malfunction (e.g. a rope break or engine failure of the tug) presents an increasing risk to the public and livestock.

Relatively recently a launch had to be abandoned and the glider had to land in Punchestown lands, it broke through an internal fence in Punchestown. There have been several of these emergency landings over the years

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Attachments:

1. Letter from the IAA specifying the safety issues that need to be resolved for the granting of an aerodrome license
2. Excerpts from a report from former airline pilot, Captain Fintan Ryan who is also a chartered engineer and expert witness.

I respectfully request that the safeguarding and promotion of Gowran Grange aerodrome be removed from the county development plan as the location is not suitable for the growth or promotions of gliding or

John de Robeck – Gowran Grange – Naas – Co.Kildare

aviation in the county. However I would support and encourage another suitable field to be granted planning permission to allow the club to grow and flourish.

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

Yours faithfully,

John de Robeck