

Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly,
3rd Floor North,
Ballymun Civic Centre,
Main Street,
Ballymun,
Dublin,
D09 C8P5

22nd of January 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

**SUBMISSION RE: DRAFT REGIONAL SPATIAL AND ECONOMIC STRATEGY FOR THE
EASTERN AND MIDLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY – SETTLEMENT STRATEGY – SMALL
TOWNS AND VILLAGES**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

J. Murphy Developments/Ravala Limited has retained Stephen Ward Town Planning and Development Consultants Limited to make this submission on its behalf.

This submission relates to the proposed Growth Strategy as it relates to small towns and villages and policy objective RPO 4.51 which states;

“In Development Plan policy Local Authorities shall identify small towns and villages that have the potential for serviced sites as an alternative to one-off rural housing”.

It is submitted that greater flexibility is required to allow for individual circumstances that may apply to villages that are well served by services and infrastructure and have the ability to perform an enhanced role.

2.0 Grounds of Submissions

It is the intention of the Growth Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region to *“Support our vibrant rural areas with a network of towns and villages”* (p.24)

The Settlement Strategy illustrated at page 39 of the draft document outlines the approach for small towns, villages and rural areas as follows-

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“Support the sustainable growth of rural areas by promoting the regeneration and revitalisation of rural towns and villages coupled with investment where required to support local employment and services and targeted rural housing policies to be determined by local authorities”.

It is acknowledge that the designation of smaller towns and villages with a population below 5,000 (4,000 population in the Outer Region) is to be set at local level (p.40). However, our client seeks a strengthening of the policy objective relating to smaller towns and villages (RPO 4.51). In accordance with the key principles in the draft RSES which are informed by an evidence driven Settlement Typology and Asset-Based approach (para. 4.1), this submission seeks to ensure that all places can meet their full potential.

For example, Termonfeckin, Co.Louth has a population of 1,579 according to the Census 2016. This town has a range of services and facilities such as a recently extended primary school, church, local shops and restaurants. Lands identified below are zoned ‘Strategic Reserve’ by the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021. Lands to the immediate south of these lands have planning permission for 51no. dwellings. The development of these lands, close to the traditional village core and within the village boundary could offer the opportunity for a mixed use development to complement the village core which is restricted from expansion due to the natural features such as the river and existing pattern of development that lends to its character and appeal. Policy objective RPO 4.51 would imply that this land has only potential as single serviced sites as an alternative to one off housing. It is submitted that this would not be an efficient use of lands such as these and would not be in keeping with the existing pattern of development.

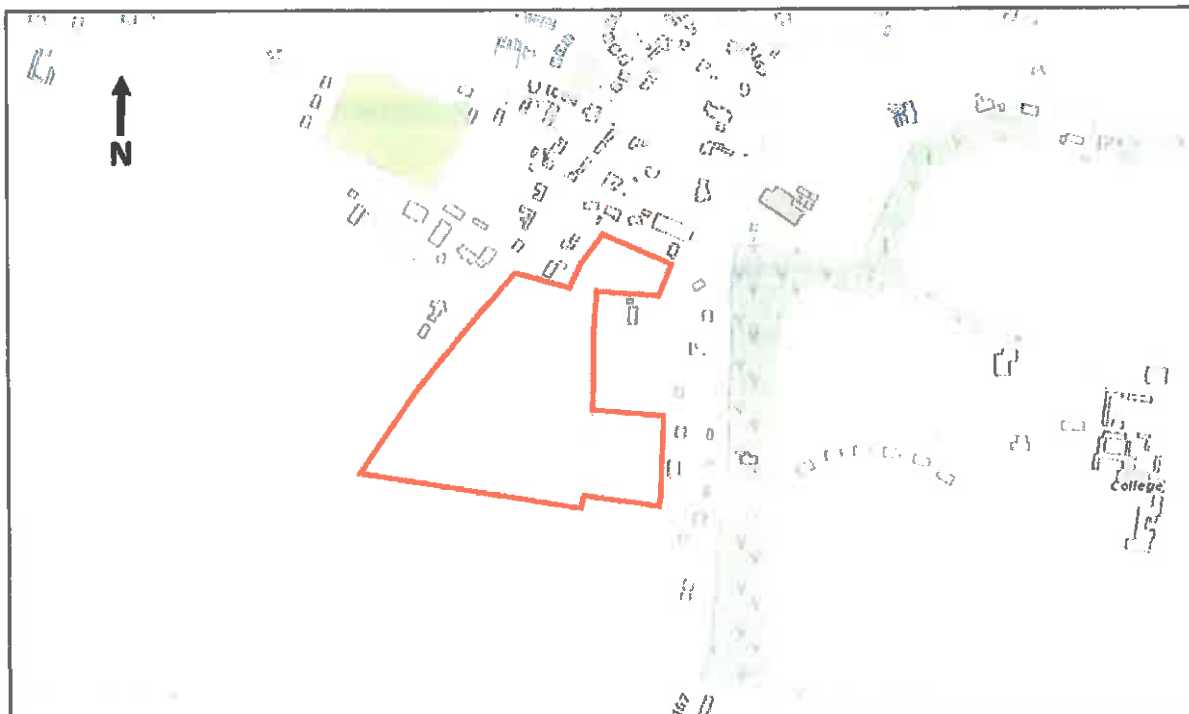


Figure 1: Lands south of Termonfeckin contiguous to the built area and within the Village boundary

The National Planning Framework acknowledges that smaller settlements by reason of accessibility, employment and local services can fulfil important roles for a wider area (p.59). Following on from this assessment within the NPF and based on the asset based approach within the RSES, we propose the following objective-

"In Development Plan policy, Local Authorities shall identify small towns and villages for growth appropriate to their position with regard to accessibility, employment and local services as well as those that have the potential for serviced sites as an alternative to one-off rural housing".

Yours faithfully,



Stephen Ward

