



CC Cllr Denis Bourke
Cllr John Fahey
Cllr Denis Landy
Cllr Susan Meagher
Cllr Michael O'Brien
Cllr Eddie O'Meara

On behalf of the Fethard and Killusty Community Council, representing the people of Fethard & Killusty, we appeal to you, our representatives, to reject the 'Proposed Housing Development at Strylea / Rocklow Road, Fethard. We believe there are better alternative solutions and the Proposed Development should not be proceeded with until you, our representatives, can answer the following points to our satisfaction:

Critical Issues for Public Representatives
Re: Proposed Housing Development at Strylea / Rocklow Road, Fethard

- 1. Why is the current proposal for housing development being proposed prior to the presentation to the Local Representatives of the proposed Rocklow/Strylea Masterplan?**

The proposed smaller-scale development should not be considered or proceeded with until the overall approach to the development of the area has been considered. It is noted that residential development in this area has, over the years, tended to take place in a somewhat random and un-coordinated manner. It is now noted that a large-scale area to the North of the proposed site of this development is to have a Master Plan prepared for it and that its development will be encouraged when that Master Plan is complete. It is submitted that it is inappropriate to proceed with the present proposal until, at a minimum, the outlines of the proposals in the Master Plan for the adjacent area are clear.



The Fethard Local Area Plan as adopted in 2005 states on p15 HSG 12 that:

It is the policy of the Council to permit residential and ancillary development on lands identified as the Rocklow/Strylea Master Plan Area located at the Rocklow road, Strylea Boreen and the Killernaule road subject to any such development being in accordance with an agreed masterplan for the proposed site and all contiguous and neighbouring residential lands to be prepared by the developer(s)/applicant(s) to the agreement of the council.

It appears to contravene the Council's own local area plan for such a development to occur in the absence of the Masterplan. It is unsatisfactory for a development of a substantial scale in the context of Fethard to take place in an isolated manner, without having regard to the overall nature of the approach to development in the area.

2. Why is the proposal for further social housing in Fethard being presented to the Council in the absence of an overall plan for Social Housing for the area under the jurisdiction of South Tipperary County Council?

While we appreciate the necessity for South Tipp County Council to provide housing for those who are unable to do so for themselves and while we have no objection to the provision of social housing in the town, we are concerned that this provision should be of a nature and at locations that provides an appropriate social mix, that does not give rise to the undue concentration of particular sectors of the community in particular parts of the town and that properly reflects the balance of current housing provision in the area. In this context the provision of a social housing scheme of in the one location and in an area where there is a large concentration of such housing already does not seem to be appropriate.

The committee and members of the Community Council feel very strongly about the imbalance between public and private housing development to date in Fethard. Public housing schemes in Fethard (Woodvale Walk, Fr. Tirry Park, Canon Hayes Court, Slievenamon Close, Barrack Street and Kilnockin View) provide one hundred and eighty-one houses¹. In contrast private housing schemes consist of approx. forty-six houses completed (Strylea, Cedar Grove, Cois Falla, Abbey Close) and approx. thirty-three under construction (Killernaule and Cashel roads)². By including the (proposed) additional houses this increases the public housing stock to over 200 units – a ratio of almost 3:1. It is proposed by the Community Council that Fethard is being allocated a higher number of social housing units than many other towns in the County. It is the

¹ Public Housing Scheme figures calculated from Register of Electors 2004

² Private Housing Scheme figures approximated from Register of Electors 2004 and local knowledge (Developments recently completed and those currently under construction are not included in the 2004 Register)



duty of the Council to provide comparative information on housing allocations in the whole of the County to allow key decisions to be made with full regard to the facts.

3. Why has the Council refused to take on board various proposals from Private Developers regarding a mixed housing development on the proposed Strylea site, as proposed in the Fethard Local Area Plan?

In the Local Area Plan for Fethard it is stated on Page 9 that “The Council owns 3.9 hectares of land between Strylea and Rocklow Road. Issues regarding the extent of social accommodation in the immediate vicinity of these lands has been raised through the public consultation process of preparing the LAP. In light of such concerns, the Council would consider a mix of public and private development on these lands and the development of individual serviced sites.”

It appears to the Community Council that the overall approach being taken to the development of this land does not reflect this undertaking in the Local Area Plan nor does it reflect the nature of the concerns of the community as acknowledged in the plan. The provision of a small number of private sites does not of itself meet the requirements of this policy. The Community Council believes that South Tipperary County Council were unwilling to enter into negotiations with the owners of the adjoining lands which may have preferred a solution in keeping with this undertaking in the FLAP.

In addition, the County Development Plan 2003 stipulates that *“balanced communities (will be generated) through a range of housing types.”* It also states that *“the social and cultural needs of rural communities will be safeguarded”*. The Community Council considers that the approach being taken to this area of land is not in conformity with these provisions in the County Development Plan.

In addition to the contravention of the Development Plan Policies, the concentration of all public housing in the one area with extremely limited play / amenity areas has caused many social problems in the past. The Community Council considers that this is a significant factor in Fethard being one of the seven areas within South Tipperary identified by the South Eastern Health Board as being most deprived and that future developments should not exacerbate the problem.

4. Given the current pressure for social housing in Fethard, why is the Council not in a position to allocate housing to people from the housing list under Part V of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-02?



Ard Alainn is a private development scheme, of approx. 27 houses on the Killenaule Road, which has been launched in Fethard during the past twelve months. Friars Field is a private development of 18 houses just launched at Killenaule Road. An application is currently with South Tipperary County Council for a private scheme at Kerry Street comprising of approx. 50 houses and a development site has been recently sold at Abbey Road, Fethard.

National policy guidelines were interpreted in the Fethard Local Area Plan which states on p14 *that the council will reserve 20% of lands zoned for residential or mixed development for social and affordable housing in the town.* The Community Council is unclear if *any* of these allocations have been made in Fethard. Given the urgency of meeting social housing needs in the town, we would request that such policy is pursued with immediate effect. The Local Representatives should be furnished with such information for past and proposed schemes as a matter of urgency.

5. What consideration is being given to the design of any proposed new housing in the proposed area given its sensitive location to a historic monument?

It is noted in the Local Area Plan that the Council is committed to ensuring high quality design in Fethard. However, the Community Council considers that the proposed development is significantly deficient in this regard.

Firstly, the approach to the overall design is quite unimaginative and very much reflects traditional approaches to housing scheme development. There is no attempt to create imaginative spaces or sub areas with a sense of identity. The approach to the provision of a design mix is also limited and may result in the worst of both worlds - limited variation in design but groups of differently designed blocks that will not necessarily sit harmoniously together.

Furthermore, it is critical that the design of houses, particularly those close to Rocklow Road, are compliant with the Conservation Area Design Guidelines (Appendix 2 FLAP) as they are within view of Sparagoleith, the only remaining gate in the Town Wall - a monument of not alone local but National and European importance. The brick material proposed for use on the exterior of the houses is not appropriate to the historical character of Fethard, as a matter of fact 5.7.0 of the FLAP states that *'brickwork... should be avoided'*,