

From: Pat Lafferty [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday 16 November 2020 00:26
To: forwardplan
Subject: Development Plan Review

Hi,

Would like to share my opinions on a few matters...particularly in relation to wind energy planning applications. As you are undoubtedly aware, this is an extremely contentious issue in many areas of County Clare. It is an issue that is splitting rural communities down the middle. There is an increasing perception that large Wind Energy companies are steamrolling rural communities and that our local authority is facilitating that. In designating areas as extremely suitable for wind energy, CCC have effectively given the green light to developers to do as they please. Currently, in my locality there are two applications with CCC for the construction of wind turbines that are 175m high. Who is going to shout STOP!. Will we go to 275m high and 375m high or are we accepting that the "sky is the limit".(no pun intended) Locals opposing these developments are being effectively told that they are wasting their time in that once an area is designated, that is the end of it. Rural areas and residents feel there is little or no protection being afforded by planning authorities and that enforcement of conditions is practically non existent. Does the whole designation system need to be clarified? Currently we appear to have lots of overlapping in that areas deemed as acceptable for residential housing are also designated as suitable for wind energy on top of also being areas that have protected habitats. On separation distances from homes and wind turbines, will CCC please take the lead and not have developers abuse recommended separation distances applicable to relatively inoffensive wind turbines that were usually less than 50m tall when these 2006 guidelines were introduced. A 175m turbine should be at least 3 times further away from a house compared to a 50m turbine. Also can CCC ignore (or outlaw if possible) the extremely divisive practice of companies buying favour by promising "community funds" if permission for their development is granted. This is a most divisive and distasteful practice.

Could we also be a little more flexible and encouraging when it comes to children applying to build houses on their family farms. It seems that the process is just too cumbersome and prohibitively expensive right now.

Could we encourage rural regeneration and re population in sparsely populated areas by allowing outsiders purchase sites and build houses? It is ironic that an outsider can obtain planning permission for a windfarm with multiple turbines 175m in height but would likely be refused permission to construct a bungalow. I feel we have an ideal opportunity to regenerate rural areas as a result of the "new normality" of working from home.

Thanking You

Pat Lafferty

