

Westmeath County Council

Variation Number 5 of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2008 – 2014

Pursuant to Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, it is proposed to vary the rural housing policy and insert the following after Policy **PHS – 19** in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2008 - 2014;

Policy PHS – 19 A

Where a number of houses are proposed in an area, (eg a number from the same family) it is preferable that these would be clustered, well set back from the public road and served by a single entrance rather than set out in a line along a roadside. Clustering which follows the traditional format will be appropriate, subject to high quality siting, design, landscaping and the protection of groundwater quality. However, the creation of housing estates in the countryside is not considered appropriate.

Policy PHS – 19 B

People who wish to return to farming and who buy or inherit a substantial farm-holding which is kept intact as an established farm unit, will be considered by the Council to be farmers and will be open to consideration for a rural house, as farmers. Where there is already a house on the holding, refurbishment or replacement of this house is the preferred option.

Policy PHS – 19 C

Villages for which a plan has yet to be prepared

A difficulty has arisen for people who are indigenous to designated villages for which a Village Plan has not been prepared. It is acknowledged that there are persons who are indigenous to these villages who have a real housing need, but who encounter difficulties meeting such need in the village because of the absence of a Village Plan and the non-release of building land or due to the lack of wastewater drainage infrastructure and these people will be facilitated as follows:

- a) Prioritise the preparation of village plans for such settlements, which should include designation of lands for low density residential development e.g. self-serviced sites
- b) On a pilot basis, the Council may acquire lands / secure the release of land for residential sites.
- c) Give positive consideration to permission in the vicinity of the village

Where such applications under c) are being considered, it would be important that these would not prejudice any future plan / future development of the village.