

Planning Policy Context for Planning Authorities on Rural Settlement



Focus of this presentation



2005 Sustainable
Rural Housing
Guidelines



Development Plans



National Planning
Framework



Development
Management



Circulars & Guidance



Role of Members

FACTS



1971 to 2016: persons living in rural areas increased by 300,000.

2016-2020: 25,850 one-offs permitted - 1/3 of all homes permitted (excl apartments)

2016-2020: 22,588 one-offs constructed - 87% of those permitted

One-off housing comprises **over half of all dwellings built since 2011 in 17 counties**

One-offs consistently 25% of national housing output over decades/broadly in line with rural population living in the countryside

26% of all occupied dwellings are one-off homes (Sources for above CSO).

2005 Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines

Ensure proper planning of countryside & a fair balance between accommodating housing needs of rural community and managing areas of acute development pressure.

While enabling a flexible and primarily siting and design based approach to the accommodation of housing in remoter rural areas where the population has been in significant/structural decline.

Issued by MHLGH April 2005. Remain current as supplemented by National Planning Framework (NPF) 2018 & provide policy and planning guidance to



and enabling monitoring of developmental trends over time to avoid over-development and a range of adverse effects emerging in relation to water quality, impacts on rural towns and villages etc.

DHLGH Circular PL 2/2017 Advice

Arose from EU Commission concerns re “locals only” re eligibility for consideration re granting planning permission

Circular advised local authority sector engagement on the matter and further guidance (imminent)

Indicated that accommodating those with genuine rural economic and social needs for housing should not be problematic in suitable locations

Anticipated further work and advice in due course



2018 National Planning Framework (i)

Section 5.3: Planning for the Future Growth and Development of Rural Areas



National Policy Objective 15

Support the sustainable development of rural areas by encouraging growth and arresting decline in areas that have experienced low population growth... and by managing the growth of areas that are under strong urban influence to avoid over-development

National Policy Objective 16

Target the reversal of rural decline in the core of small towns and villages...address vacant premises and deliver sustainable re-use and regeneration outcomes

National Policy Objective 20

Project the need for single housing in the countryside through the local authority's overall Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) tool and county development plan core strategy process

2018 National Planning Framework (ii)

Section 5.3: Planning for the Future Growth and Development of Rural Areas



National Policy Objective 18a

Support the proportionate growth of and appropriately designed development in rural towns that will contribute to their regeneration and renewal...

National Policy Objective 18b

Develop a programme for “new homes in small towns and villages” with local authorities, public infrastructure agencies such as Irish Water and local communities to provide serviced sites with appropriate infrastructure to attract people to build their own homes and live in small towns and villages

2018 National Planning Framework (iii)

Section 5.3: Countryside



National Policy Objective 19:

Distinguish between areas under urban influence (commuter catchments) and elsewhere

In rural areas under urban influence facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need...and siting and design criteria...having regard to the viability of smaller towns and villages

In rural areas elsewhere, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on siting and design criteria...having regard to the viability of smaller towns and villages

Rural Planning Policy Overview...

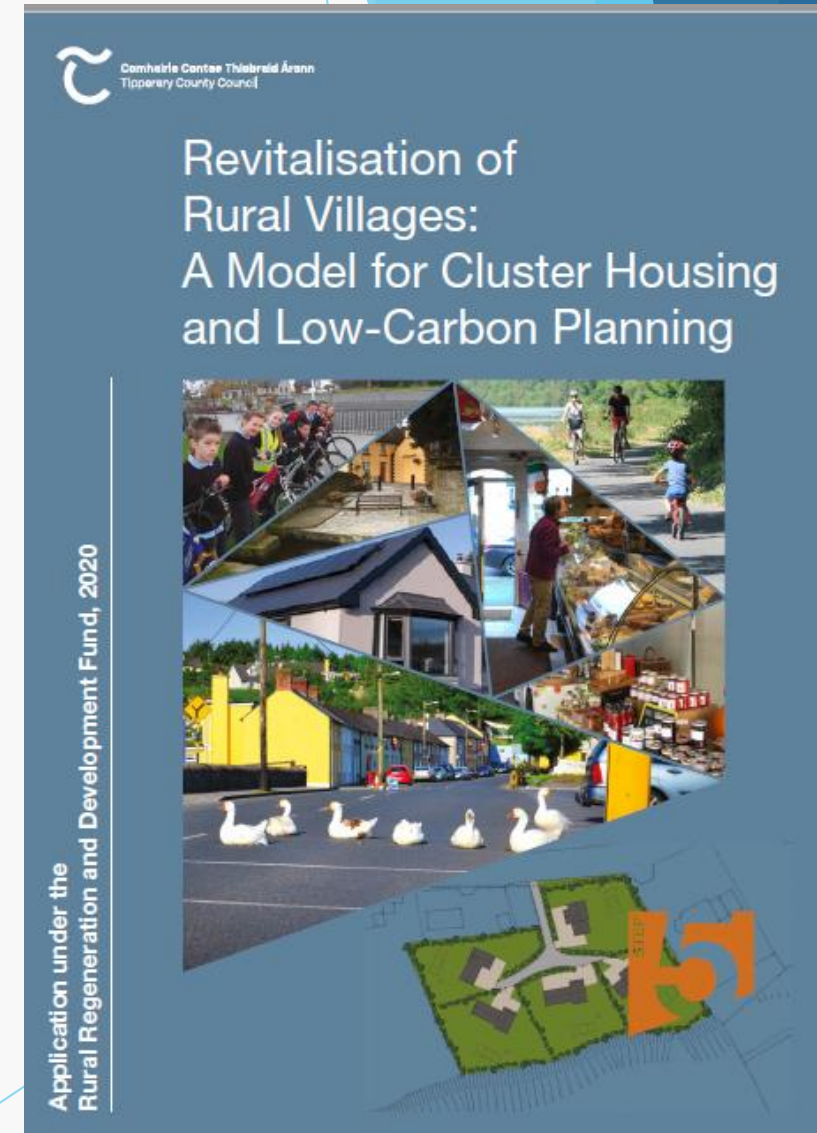
Rural Area	Farmers/Rural Economic Links	Social/Intrinsic Community Links	Urban Generated Housing
Under urban influence (definition?)	✓	✓	X
Other areas/sustained & significantly declining population	✓	✓	✓

NB:

- (1) All subject to siting/design and avoidance of over-development
- (2) Estimates of rural housing provision included in CDP Core Strategy

Alternatives to Urban Generated/Difficult Sites...

Option	Area Under Urban Influence	Other Rural Area
Serviced LA sites	✓	✓
Sensitive/adaptive re-use of traditional buildings	✓	✓
Replacement dwelling	✓	✓
Conversion of disused building	✓	✓
Extension of family home	✓	✓



Summary of National Policy Context for Rural Settlement



Essential to plan pro-actively for rural communities in economic, social & environmental terms...

Rural development is part of wider urban and rural challenges & opportunities that the development plan must integrate...

Importance of the CDP in enabling positive LA interventions to support rural towns & villages supported by wider investment (Irish Water, Broadband)

Importance of flexible approach to rural planning in rural areas where population, services etc are in long-term decline...

Importance of a managed approach in rural areas that are under sustained pressure for development based on planning considerations...

CDP must achieve balance and sustainability long-term

In Practice: Rural Contexts Envisaged by Policy?



- Typical rural development contexts...
- Good balance between rural character and rural housing...

In Practice: Areas Where Managed Approach Critical ...



Aerial Image dated 07/12/13



Aerial Image dated 01/06/20

- Typical environs of commuter town above – 10 homes in 1 sq km
- In last development plan period (6 years) a further 7 homes permitted/6 built
- Not a sustainable pattern of development versus existing national policies

In Practice: Getting the Balance Right...



existing ribbon development: >5 houses on any one side of 250m road



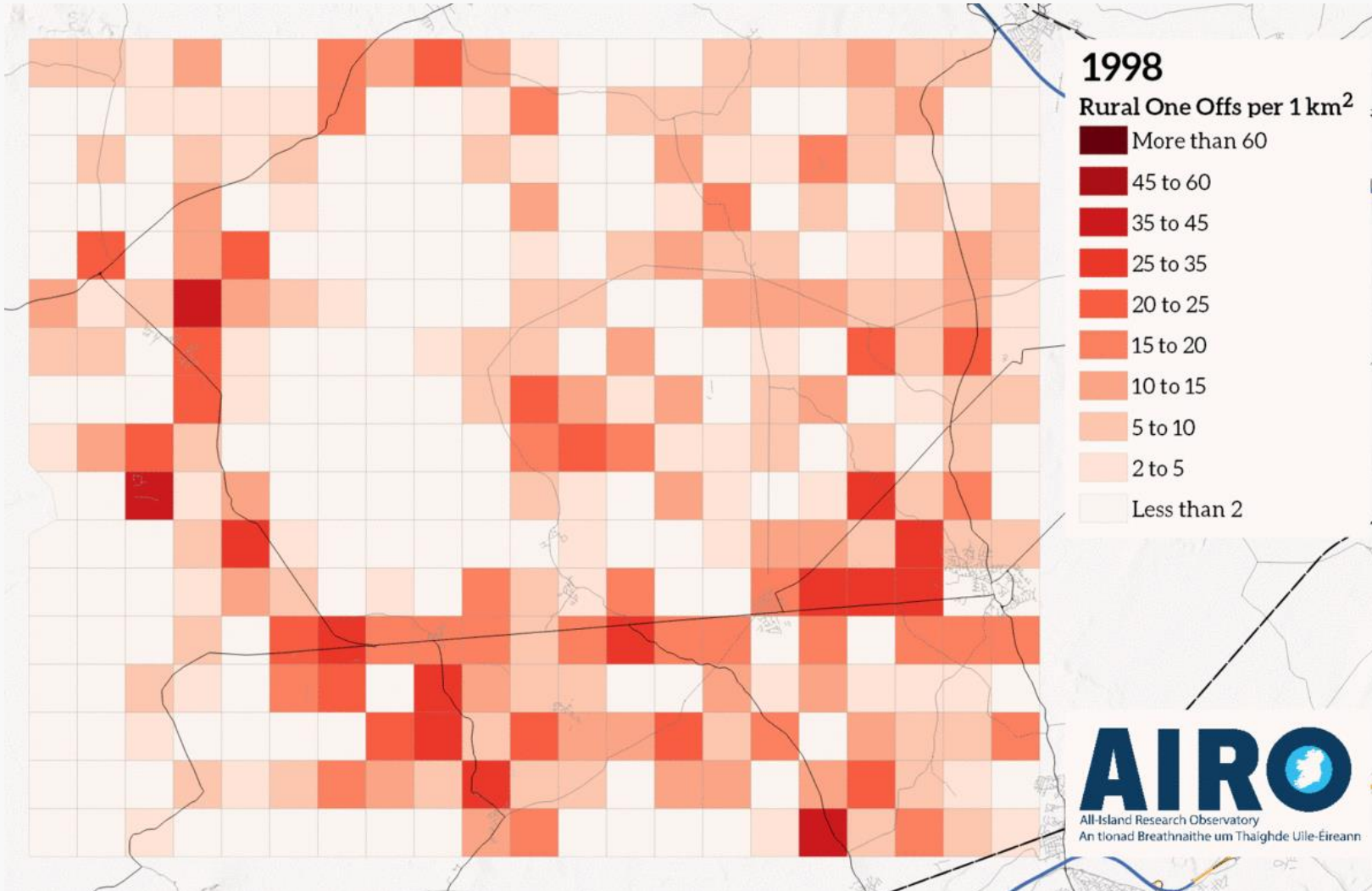
= recently permitted development



other potential sites/precedent set?

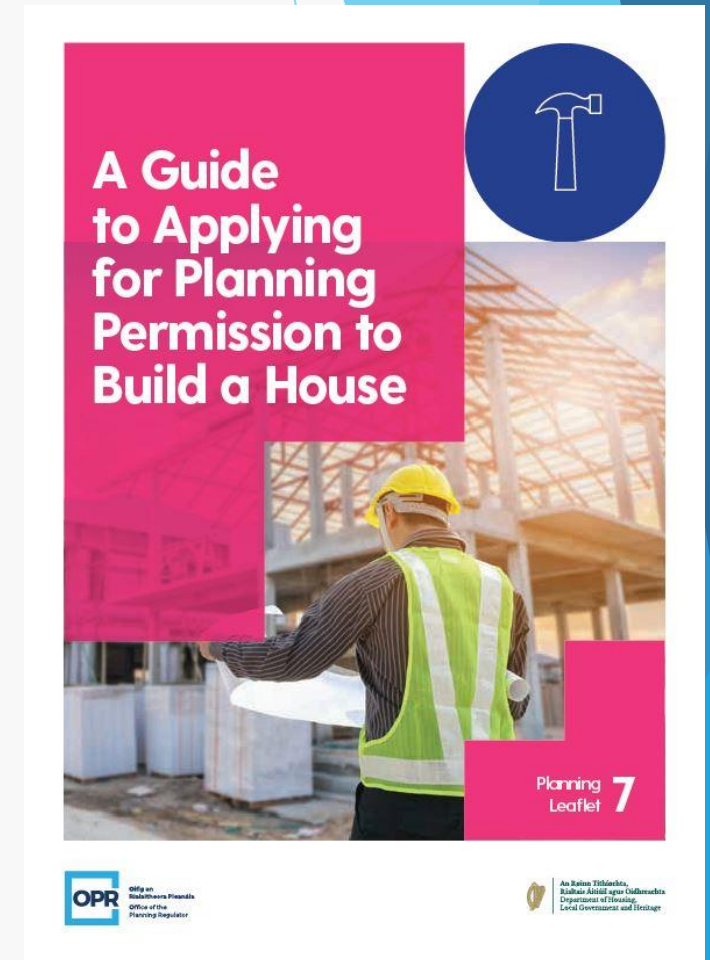
> 40 households not living in the nearby village?

Importance of Monitoring Trends Over Time...



Other Relevant Policies & Procedures...

- Receiving environment for any site is key...
- National policies apply re:
 - Ensuring safe access & road safety...
 - Avoidance of water pollution (EPA Code of Practice for On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems called up into building standards)...
 - Protecting biodiversity (EU Habitats Directive & Appropriate Assessment)...
 - Protecting cultural heritage (archaeology & landscape)...
 - Avoidance of areas at risk of flooding...
- Siting and Design...





Role of Members

- ✓ Ensure that your Council Executive gathers relevant data (mapping trends over time)
- ✓ Consider long-term trends over recent years/decades (individual cases = bad policy)
- ✓ Develop good Core Strategy: Understand implications for urban areas of rural policies – the two (urban & rural) must work in sync
- ✓ Continue monitoring trends over time: national policy requires effective plan monitoring
- ✓ Promote a range of attractive alternatives to unplanned/un-coordinated development
- ✓ Ensure the plan and its environmental assessments agree or risk challenge



**Oifig an
Rialaitheora Pleanála**
Office of the
Planning Regulator

Thank you

