

Roisin McAllister

From: Emma McIlwaine [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 September 2020 15:07
To: DevelopmentPlan@midulstercouncil.org
Cc: Tom Stokes
Subject: 2053 - Representation to Mid Ulster Draft Plan Strategy - Moygashel
Attachments: 2053 - R001 Representation to the Mid Ulster Draft Plan Strategy - Moygashel Sept 2020.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Dear Sirs,

Please find attached the below representation to the Mid Ulster Draft Plan Strategy made on behalf of our client **Square Holdings Ltd.:**

- 2053 – Representation to Mid Ulster Draft Plan Strategy – Moygashel

I would be grateful if you could confirm receipt of this representation at your earliest convenience.

Kind Regards,

EMMA MCILWAINE
SENIOR PLANNER
MA Hons MSc MRTPI



20 MAY ST, BELFAST BT1 4NL
www.tsaplanning.co.uk

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Mid Ulster Local Development Plan Draft Plan Strategy Representation

Moygashel,
Dungannon

Square Holdings Ltd.

September 2020



20 May Street
Belfast, BT1 4NL

W: www.tsaplanning.co.uk

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This representation has been prepared on behalf of our client, **Square Holdings Ltd.** in respect of the Mid Ulster Local Development Plan 2030 – Draft Plan Strategy.
- 1.2 In its current form, we currently believe the Draft Plan Strategy to be unsound in respect of the Local Development Plan Timetable and Retailing, Offices and Town Centres. Our reasons are set out within this representation as well as our proposed amendments.
- 1.3 We respectfully request this representation is dealt with by **oral hearing**.

2. Local Development Plan Timetable

- 2.1 The Draft Plan Strategy is unsound under soundness test P1 which requires LDP documents to be prepared in accordance with the Council's Timetable.
- 2.2 We note that the most recently published Mid Ulster LDP Timetable is dated November 2018. According to this Timetable, the Local Policies Plan is due to be adopted at Winter 2022/23. However, due to an identified procedural error under the original Draft Plan Strategy Consultation (February 2019 to April 2019) the Council has issued a fresh consultation on the DPS. As such, the publication of the Draft Plan Strategy and consultation period is currently c.15 months behind schedule.
- 2.3 Furthermore, when compared to the LDP Timetable published in 2016, the publication of the Draft Plan Strategy is over 3 years behind the anticipated date (Spring 2017). Whilst we appreciate that the original Timetable is no longer relevant, it provides significant evidence in illustrating the potential delays which can be experienced in the preparation of Local Development Plans. It is therefore reasonable to anticipate that the full adoption of the Plan will be further postponed past the Winter 2022/23 timeframe. This could result in less than 5 years between the adoption of the Plan and the end of the Plan period. Given these delays, and therefore the limited time for review and amendment of the Plan prior to 2030, it would be appropriate to amend the Plan Period to reflect the years 2020 to 2035 to allow for adequate flexibility and time to review in the event of a newly amended timetable.
- 2.4 Due to the above mentioned delays, the Draft Plan Strategy is unsound under soundness test CE2. The evidence upon which the DPS is based is now inappropriate and out of date, and more recent data is now available. Amendment of the Plan Period will allow for the Local Development Plan to take into account the most relevant and up to date evidence which is now available during this consultation, rather than relying on inaccurate data prepared in 2014/15.

This is an approach which has been taken by a number of Council's who are at a similar stage in the preparation of their Local Development Plan including Belfast City Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, and Derry City and Strabane Council.

3. Retailing, Offices and Town Centres

3.1 Retail Strategy

Soundness Test P2: Has the Council prepared its Preferred Options Paper and taken into account any representations made?

3.1.1 Mid Ulster District Council published their Preferred Options Paper Public Consultation Report in January 2019 which sets out the consideration of representations received. Page 126 of the Draft Plan Strategy sets out the proposed retail hierarchy for the hubs located within the District. The table identifies that there will be no Local Centres located within the hubs. Whilst this is in conformity with the Implementation of Recommendation for Local Centres as set out on Page 89 of the POP Public Consultation Report, it does not fully take account of the recommendation set out on the same page which states "The Local Policies Plan will consider whether there is a need to identify a local or village centre in any settlement in Mid Ulster and if such a centre/designation is appropriate then tailored policy will be provided for that centre/designation". It is also inconsistent with the SPPS that states at Para. 6.277 Local Development Plans should define a network and hierarchy of centres – town, district and local centres, acknowledging the role and function of rural centres.

3.1.2 In relation to our specific POP response, page 88 of the POP public consultation report identifies "We also note the support for Moygashel to be designated as a local centre. Since these are matters for the Local Policies Plan further consideration will be given to this issue for the second stage". Whilst we agree that a Local Centre boundary should be designated at the Local Policy Plan stage, in order to take full account of the POP representations, this should be investigated at the Draft Plan Strategy stage in order to include Local Centres within the retail hierarchy. Failure to do this would make the Plan unsound as it would appear that the Council has not taken full consideration of our representation or indeed their own recommendations set out in the report, within the preparation of the Draft Plan Strategy.

Soundness Test CE1: The DPD sets out a coherent strategy from which its policies and allocations logically flow and where cross boundary issues are relevant it is not in conflict with the DPDs of neighbouring councils

3.1.3 Further to the above, failure to conduct sufficient research at this stage, or include any Local Centres within the Draft Plan's Retail Strategy prohibits the ability of the Council to designate these Centre's within the Local Policies Plan as these will not logically flow from one another.

- 3.1.4 In addition, Paragraph 13.47 states that [smaller office development] should be located in existing local centres or in an area of existing economic or mixed-use activity. This is contradictory to the Retail Strategy which states no Local Centres will be designated.

Soundness Test CE2: The strategy, policies and allocations are realistic and appropriate having considered the relevant alternatives and are founded on a robust evidence base

- 3.1.5 As identified above, the Draft Plan Strategy states that no Local Centres will be designated within the Hubs of Mid Ulster District Council. Paragraph 13.13 states that [edge of centre supermarkets and individual shops] do not warrant designation in the Plan as they are not locations for major expansion. Firstly, there is no evidence base provided in order to identify why expansion is not warranted in these locations. Secondly, as stated in the Council's justification for the Oaks Centre District Centre designation, centres can be allocated to provide for the daily shopping needs of residents within that quadrant of the town. They can be designated in order to retain and consolidate existing provision. As such, due to the lack of evidence for not designating any Local Centres, further research is required to determine which locations would benefit from this provision, retention and protection of shops to meet the daily shopping needs of local residents.

Soundness Test CE3: There are clear mechanisms for implementation and monitoring

- 3.1.6 As with the previously identified tests of soundness, failure to allow provision of Local Centre's within the Retail Strategy removes the ability to implement these designations within the Local Policies Plan.

Changes Required

- 3.1.7 In order to make the Retail Strategy sound, further research is needed in to the requirement for Local Centres across the District at this stage. We would suggest that Local Centres are included within the Draft Plan Strategy in order to allow for these designations to be brought forward within the Local Policies Plan, should they be required. As currently written, the DPS does not allow for Local Centres to designated within the Local Policies Plan.
- 3.1.8 The inclusion of Local Centres will perform more positively within the Sustainability Appraisal than Policy RE5: Neighbourhood Shops. As identified within the Councils justification for the Oaks Centre District Centre designation, the designation of Local Centres not only serves to provide an allowance of future retail development, but also gives protection to existing local retail provision and services. Should there cease to be any protection, existing local provision could be redeveloped for a number of different uses, which would reduce accessibility for elderly and disabled people who may not be able to access the Town Centre. The amendment therefore improves the sustainability of the following SA/SEA Objectives:

- Objective 1: Poverty and Social Exclusion

- Objective 7: Accessibility to Key Services; and
- Objective 20: Employment

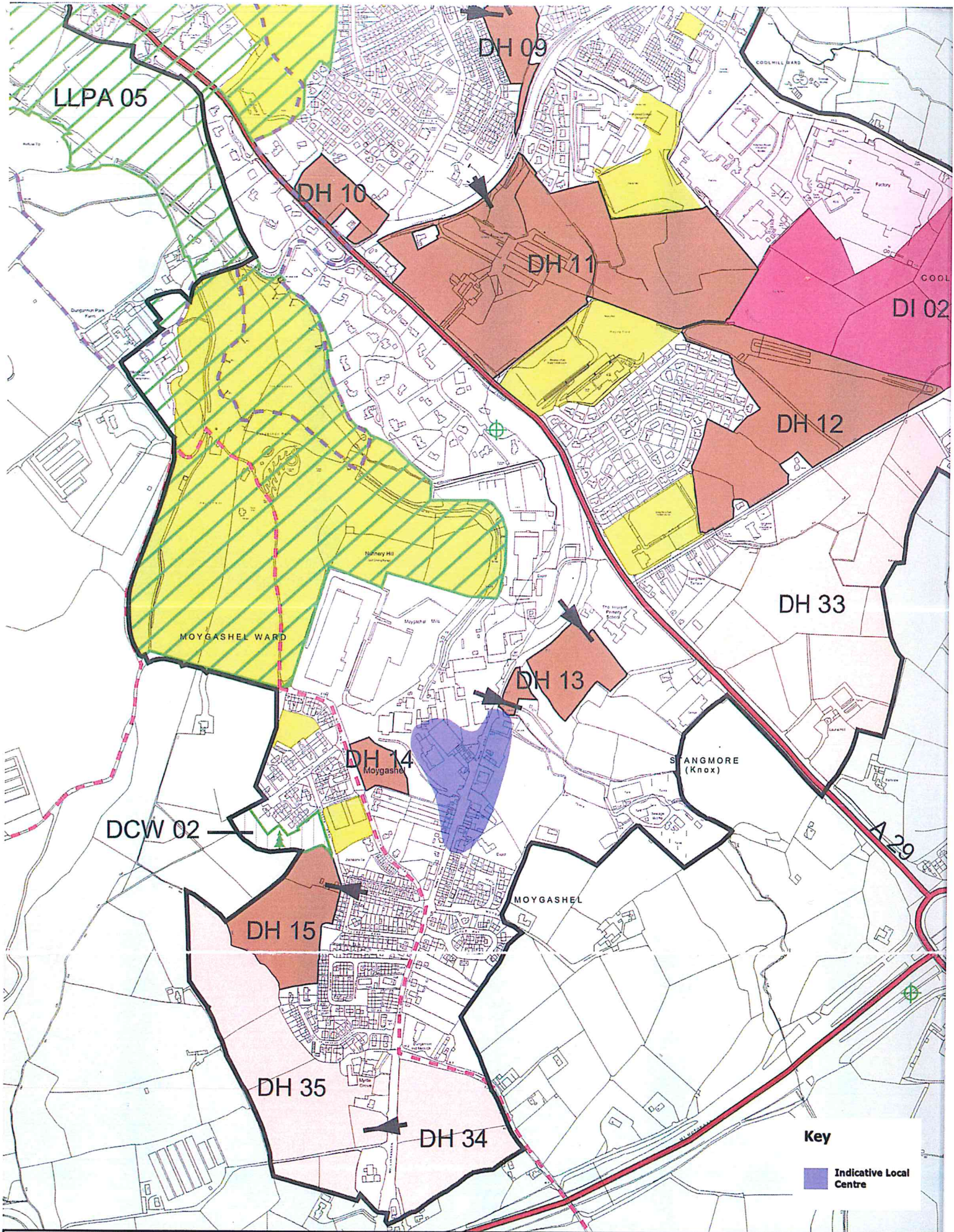
3.1.9 Furthermore, as both options for Neighbourhood Shops within the Sustainability Assessment were equally weighted, the proposed amendments will not have a negative impact upon the sustainability objectives.

4. Subject Site - Moygashel

- 4.1 The need for a Local Centre designation is particularly prevalent in Moygashel. As identified within our POP response, Moygashel is physically detached from the Centre of Dungannon and forms its own separate neighbourhood. The population of the Moygashel ward has increased by 14.5% to 2,257 during the period 2005 to 2015. The rate of population growth for Northern Ireland during the same period was 7.2% and therefore it is evident that the population of the Moygashel area is growing at an advanced rate comparative to the rest of the Province. Additionally, based upon Dungannon Housing Monitor Information 2015, within Phase 1 lands and existing planning permissions within the Moygashel locality, there is the potential for an additional c.178 no. dwellings and when considered along with 13.1 hectares of Phase 2 housing lands, the demand for local retail services will inevitably grow due to the increase in local population.
- 4.2 Although superseded by the SPPS, PPS 5: Retailing and Town Centres provides the definition of Local Centres to be "Small groupings of shops, typically comprising a general grocery store, a sub-post office, occasionally a pharmacy and other small shops of a local nature". Outside of Linen Green, which provides a specialist retail offering for the wider province, Moygashel currently benefits from a group of local shops and retail services at Neville Terrace including Costcutter (with sub-Post Office), accountants and Gordy's Fish and Chip Bar. A number of retail units are currently vacant and as such, given the growth of Moygashel and an aging population, it is vital that this existing offer is protected, with a small allowance for expansion should this be required to serve the growing population over the revised plan period.
- 4.3 We would therefore respectfully request that further consideration is given to designating a Local Centre within Moygashel, in order to protect the retail offering for local residents. As per our Preferred Options Paper representation, we have included a suggested location for a Local Centre at **Annex 1**, based upon existing uses.

ANNEX 1

Indicative Local Centre - Moygashel



Project: Moygashel Local Centre Representation

Title: Indicative Local Centre Location

Client: Square Holdings Ltd

Drawing: TSA 2053-01

Date: September 2020

