

Submission in Support of the Retention of HA-LV (High Amenity – Liffey Valley) Zoning at St Edmundsbury

To: Senior Executive Officer, Forward Planning Section, Planning and Transport, South Dublin County Council, County Hall, Tallaght, Dublin 24, D24 A3XC

Chapter: MA St Edmundsbury

Topic: MA6.1

Purpose: Support for the proposed Material Alterations to Variation No. 2 which retain the HA-LV (High Amenity – Liffey Valley) zoning objective for the St Edmundsbury lands.

Date: 4 August 2026

Support for Retention of High Amenity Zoning

We wish to express our strong support for the proposed Material Alterations to Variation No. 2 of the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028 which seek to retain the HA-LV (High Amenity – Liffey Valley) zoning objective across the St Edmundsbury lands.

We believe the retention of the existing zoning is consistent with the long-standing planning objectives for the Liffey Valley, protects an important environmental and landscape asset, and ensures that future development within South Dublin occurs in locations that have been specifically designated and planned for growth.

While we recognise the importance of delivering housing, we do not believe that the St Edmundsbury lands are an appropriate location for residential development. The existing High Amenity designation should remain in place and no portion of the estate should be rezoned for housing or other forms of development that would undermine the integrity of the Liffey Valley corridor.

Importance of the Liffey Valley

The River Liffey corridor is one of the most important landscape and environmental assets within South Dublin County. The valley provides a unique combination of natural heritage, biodiversity, recreation and visual amenity that cannot easily be replaced once lost.

The St Edmundsbury estate forms a significant part of this wider landscape. Its open character, mature trees, hedgerows and green spaces contribute to the continuity of the Liffey Valley and help maintain the visual and environmental qualities that make the area distinctive.

The value of these lands extends beyond their boundaries. They contribute to the broader setting of the river corridor and provide an important buffer between existing urban development and the protected landscape of the valley.

A Rare Remaining Green Space

Over the past four decades, Lucan has experienced substantial residential growth. Large areas of former agricultural and open land have been developed to accommodate a growing population and changing housing needs.

As a result, relatively few large, uninterrupted green spaces remain within the area. St Edmundsbury is one of the last significant open landscapes on the northern side of Lucan and plays an important role in maintaining a balance between the built environment and the natural landscape.

Once developed, such land cannot realistically be restored to its existing condition. Retaining the HA-LV zoning ensures that this important green space is preserved for future generations.

Planning for Growth in Appropriate Locations

South Dublin County already contains a number of strategically planned growth areas, including Adamstown and Clonburris, which were specifically identified to accommodate substantial residential development supported by appropriate infrastructure.

These locations were selected following comprehensive planning processes and are intended to absorb much of the county's future housing growth.

In contrast, rezoning part of the St Edmundsbury estate for housing would represent a departure from the principle of directing development towards locations that have been planned, serviced and designated for that purpose. The retention of High Amenity zoning supports a coherent and sustainable planning approach and avoids unnecessary pressure on a sensitive landscape.

Biodiversity and Environmental Protection

The lands at St Edmundsbury support a network of mature trees, hedgerows and open grasslands which contribute to local biodiversity and provide habitat connectivity within the wider Liffey Valley.

Protecting these features is increasingly important in the context of climate resilience, biodiversity enhancement and the protection of green infrastructure.

Retaining the High Amenity zoning aligns with the objectives of the County Development Plan to safeguard ecological networks, protect natural heritage and ensure that significant environmental assets are preserved.

Protection of Heritage and Landscape Character

The St Edmundsbury estate also possesses important historical and cultural significance. The historic demesne setting associated with St Patrick's Mental Health Services contributes to the character of the area and forms part of its heritage value.

The open landscape surrounding these historic structures is an integral component of that setting. Maintaining the High Amenity zoning helps to preserve the character of the estate and avoids development that could diminish its visual or heritage significance.

Long-Term Planning Certainty

The continued protection of St Edmundsbury through the HA-LV zoning objective provides clarity and certainty regarding the future of the lands. It reinforces the Council's long-standing commitment to protecting the Liffey Valley and ensures that sensitive environmental and amenity lands are not gradually eroded through piecemeal rezoning.

Retaining this zoning demonstrates that environmental and landscape protections within the Development Plan have meaning and will continue to be upheld where justified.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, we strongly support the proposed Material Alterations which retain the HA-LV (High Amenity – Liffey Valley) zoning objective across the St Edmundsbury lands.

We respectfully request that South Dublin County Council maintain the existing High Amenity designation in its entirety and reject any proposal that would permit residential or other inappropriate development on these lands.

The St Edmundsbury estate represents a significant environmental, landscape, biodiversity and heritage asset within the Liffey Valley. Its protection is important not only for current residents but for future generations who should continue to benefit from this unique and irreplaceable part of South Dublin's natural environment.

Yours faithfully,

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