

3rd July 2026

Senior Executive Officer,
Planning Department,
Kildare County Council,
Áras Chill Dara,
Naas,
County Kildare.

**Re: Proposed Variation No. 5 to the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-
2029**

A chara,

Thank you for your authority's work in preparing the Proposed Variation No. 5 (proposed Variation) to the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (Development Plan).

As Kildare County Council (Planning Authority) is aware, a key function of the Office of the Planning Regulator (Office) is to evaluate and assess statutory plans to ensure consistency with legislative requirements and national and regional planning policy. The Office has undertaken this evaluation and assessment pursuant to Part 3 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 (Act) and its functions under section 546, and this submission sets out the outcome.

In this context, the submission includes recommendations and observations. Recommendations arise where the Office identifies clear inconsistencies with legislative provisions or policy frameworks and are intended to be addressed to ensure compliance. Observations highlight areas where further clarification, justification, or refinement would strengthen the plan. The submission may also include advice to support the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Following adoption of the Variation, the Office will carry out a further assessment under section 63 of the Act.

Overview

The proposed Variation integrates the Northwest Quadrant (Naas) Framework Masterplan into the statutory planning framework and includes a number of changes to Volume 1: Written Statement and Volume 2: Settlement Plans of the Development Plan.

The Office acknowledges and welcomes the preparation of the proposed Variation and its consistency with Variation No. 3 to the Development Plan, where it undertook to bring forward the Northwest Quadrant Masterplan into Volume 2 of the Development Plan in response to the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements (2025), and also its consistency with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly area in accordance with section 58 of the Act.

The proposed Variation sets out a clear, detailed and phased development planning framework for the development of the area over the lifetime of the plan. The Office welcomes the focus on housing delivery at scale, sustainable mobility-led growth and the creation of complete neighbourhoods incorporating schools, services, employment and parks, which are embedded in the framework via land use zoning objectives and associated policies NWQ O1.1-O1.8.

In relation to sustainable mobility, the Office also welcomes the sustainable mobility strategy which prioritises walking, cycling and public transport over private car use, namely measures such as a dedicated bus corridor, enhanced pedestrian and cycle permeability, mobility hubs, reduced car dependency and accessibility-led development patterns.

The Office welcomes the green and blue infrastructure framework, which uses the Grand Canal, open spaces, green corridors and watercourses as key structuring elements of the masterplan, supporting climate adaptation, biodiversity, active travel and high-quality placemaking.

Notwithstanding the above, the Office makes one recommendation regarding flood risk management that requires further consideration prior to the adoption of the proposed Variation.

The following recommendation set out below is intended to support the Planning Authority in further strengthening the proposed Variation and ensuring its effective implementation:

Subject	Recommendation	Observation
Flood risk management	Recommendation 1	-

1. Flood risk management

The Office welcomes the preparation of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) in accordance with National Policy Objective (NPO) 1 of the National Planning Framework First Revision (2025) (NPF) and the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) (Flood Guidelines).

As part of the SFRA, Plan Making Justification Tests (Justification Test) have been undertaken for undeveloped lands that are proposed to be zoned as New Residential within Flood Zone B, and Light Industry and Warehousing within Flood Zone A. As highly vulnerable and less vulnerable uses, as defined by the Flood Guidelines, and that these lands are at the periphery of Naas, it is considered that they would not pass the Justification Test.

As such the Office considers that the Planning Authority should reassess these lands to ensure lands within Flood Zone A are not zoned for highly vulnerable or less vulnerable uses, and lands within Flood Zone B are not zoned for highly vulnerable uses. Instead, these lands should be avoided or zoned for a water-compatible use to ensure material consistency with NPO 1 and NPO 78 of the NPF and to demonstrate that due account has been taken of the Flood Guidelines.

Recommendation 1 - Flood risk management

Having regard to flood risk management, and having considered:

- NPO 1 of the NPF (ensure all plans are subject to relevant environmental assessment requirements, including Strategic Flood Risk Assessment);
- NPO 78 of the NPF (avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding that do not pass the Plan Making Justification Test);
- RPO 7.12 of the RSES (avoid inappropriate land use zonings and development in areas at risk of flooding);
- Policy Objective IN033 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (manage flood risk in the county in accordance with the sequential approach and requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) (Flood Guidelines) when preparing plans); and
- the Flood Guidelines,

the Office recommends that the Planning Authority:

- (i) reassesses New Residential zoning within Flood Zone B and Light Industry and Warehousing within Flood Zone A; and
- (ii) if necessary, re-zone lands for an appropriate use in accordance with the Flood Guidelines.

The Planning Authority is advised to liaise with the Office of Public Works to address this recommendation.

Summary

The Office requests that the Planning Authority addresses the recommendation set out above.

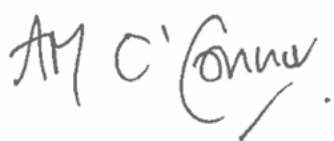
As part of this process, the Chief Executive's report to the elected members, prepared under section 58(11) of the Act should summarise the Office's recommendations and outline how it is proposed to address them.

Following adoption of the Variation, the Planning Authority is required to:

- provide the Office with a copy of the adopted Variation, together with any submissions received from the Minister, regional assemblies, and the National Transport Authority during the plan preparation process, within **one week** of adoption;
- inform the Office, as soon as practicable, where it decides not to comply with a recommendation, including the reasons for this decision; and
- publish notice of the Variation within **one week** of adoption, confirming that the Development Plan as varied will be available for inspection (online and at a specified location) no later than **five weeks** after adoption.

The Office looks forward to continued constructive engagement with the Planning Authority. If further clarification or discussion would be helpful, the Office would be pleased to assist and can be contacted at plans@opr.ie.

Is mise le meas,



Anne Marie O'Connor

Deputy Regulator and Director of Planning Policy Implementation

Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015
