

30th October 2026

Forward Planning,
Wexford County Council,
County Hall,
Carricklawn,
Wexford,
Y35 WY93.

**Re: Proposed Material Alterations to Proposed Variation No. 2 of the Wexford
County Development Plan 2022-2028**

A chara,

Thank you for your authority's work in preparing the Material Alterations (material alterations) to the proposed Variation No. 2 (proposed Variation) of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 (Development Plan).

As Wexford 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, submissions may include 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.

1. Response to the Office's submission on the proposed Variation

With regard to Recommendation 1 of the Office's submission at draft stage, the Office notes and welcomes the inclusion of text related to speed limits along the N80 and the provision of alternative acceptable access points related to the development of land parcels I, J and K (MA 1).

2. Overview of submission on proposed material alterations

As an identified national road project in the National Development Plan¹ and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Regional Assembly area (Regional Policy Objective (RPO) 167), the N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour Scheme is of regional, national and international significance. The Office therefore particularly welcomes MA 9 which recognises the progress undertaken to date regarding the N25, currently at Phase 5 (Enabling and Procurement). Support for the development of the Rosslare Offshore Renewable Energy Hub (MA 10) is also a noteworthy and welcome addition to the Development Plan. The Office also notes and welcomes material alterations related to the promotion of pedestrian and cycle networks and improvements to public transport connections (MA 3, MA 5 and MA 6) and the recognition of the need to provide for additional community facilities to meet the demands of an increasing population in Rosslare Harbour and Kilrane (MA 33).

Notwithstanding the above positive amendments however, the Office has concerns in relation to the safety and capacity of the N80 national road, which is further discussed below.

The Office's assessment of the proposed Variation concludes that one recommendation is required to ensure alignment with the relevant policy and statutory planning framework.

Subject	Recommendation	Observation
National roads	MA Recommendation 1	-

¹ National Development Plan Review 2025: Sectoral Investment Plan for Transport

3. National roads

National Policy Objective 107 of the National Planning Framework First Revision (2025) (NPF) seeks to ensure the alignment of the NPF and the National Development Plan through the delivery of the National Strategic Outcomes (NSO) which includes NSO 2 of the NPF to enhance regional accessibility.

RPO 140(b) of the RSES focuses on maintaining and enhancing the strategic capacity and safety of the national road network, which is also reflected in the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012) (National Roads Guidelines). Section 2.5 of the National Roads Guidelines establishes that it should be the policy of planning authorities to avoid the creation of any additional access points from new development to which speed limits greater than 60 km/h apply, other than in exceptional circumstances as set out in section 2.6 of the National Roads Guidelines.

The material alterations include several proposed zoning objectives which would rely on either direct access onto the N80 or access via a new indicative link road with a junction onto the N80 beyond the 60 km/h speed limit. These include:

- MA 1 and MA 11 - Community and Education lands;
- MA 19 and MA 22 - New Residential lands at parcel L; and
- MA 18 - proposed indicative link road through parcels K and L.

It is not evident, however, that the Planning Authority has identified these stretches of the N80 as locations where a less restrictive access approach may be applied, following consultation with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and in accordance with the process and criteria set out in respect of exceptional circumstances in the National Roads Guidelines. These proposed material alterations may therefore undermine the strategic function of the national road network by compromising the carrying capacity, operational efficiency and safety of the N80 at this location.

The Office recommends that this matter be addressed prior to incorporating the proposed zoning objectives into the Development Plan through the variation process, and in consultation with TII.

MA Recommendation 1 - National Road Network

Having regard to the need to maintain the carrying capacity and safety of the strategic road network, and having considered the following:

- NPO 107 of the NPF to support the delivery of National Strategic Outcomes;
- NSO 2 of the NPF Enhanced Regional Accessibility;
- RPO 140(b) of the RSES (maintaining and enhancing the strategic capacity and safety of the national roads); and
- sections 2.5 and 2.6 of the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012) (the policy approach for access to national roads),

the Office recommends that the Planning Authority:

- (i) modifies the Variation to ensure that direct access onto the N80 will not be facilitated in respect of:
 - a) MA 1 (parcels K and L of table B-1 and footnote 10 related to the development of Community and Education lands);
 - b) MA 18 (map No. 2, Bunclody Objectives Map); and
 - c) MA 22 (New Residential lands, parcel 'L'),
- (ii) includes specific local objectives providing that access to the following lands shall be taken exclusively from the R746:
 - a) MA 11 (Community and Education lands); and
 - b) MA 19 (New Residential lands).

The Planning Authority should liaise with Transport Infrastructure Ireland regarding the implementation of the above requirements.

4. Next steps

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(15) of the Act should summarise the Office's recommendation 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 the elected members decide not to comply with a recommendation of the Office or the Minister, including the reasons for the decision of the elected members; 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
