



For the Attention of:

Mr. John G. McLaughlin, Chief Executive,
Donegal County Council,
County House,
The Diamond,
Lifford,
County Donegal
F93 Y622

28th September 2026

**Section 31AN(4A)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 –
Decision Not to Agree with a recommendation of the Office of the Planning Regulator to
Issue a Direction to Donegal County Council in relation to three identified parts of the
Office of the Planning Regulator’s recommended Proposed Final Direction regarding the
County Donegal Development Plan 2024-2030**

Dear John,

Consequent to the recommendation made to the Minister, by the Office of the Planning Regulator ('the Office') on 2nd September 2024 under section 31AN(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 ('the Act') in connection with the County Donegal Development Plan 2024-2030 and further to section 31AN(4A)(b) of the Act, I, as Minister of State for Local Government and Planning, give notice that:

- (1) I have decided not to agree to issue a direction to Donegal County Council in relation to **three identified parts** of the Office’s recommended proposed final direction regarding the County Donegal Development Plan 2024-2030, for the reasons set out in the enclosed *Statement of Reasons*, and;
- (2) the remaining nineteen parts of the recommended proposed final Direction remain subject to the ongoing statutory process and a Ministerial decision will issue in respect of those parts at a later date subject to the completion of any necessary steps that may be determined to be applicable under section 31AN(16)(b) of the Act.



Process to Date

A detailed outline of the process leading up to the issuing of a draft Direction and the issues arising was set out in the letter issued to you by Minister Alan Dillon, in his capacity as Minister of State for Local Government and Planning, on 26th June 2024. This document is accessible online at the following link: <https://www.opr.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2-Ministers-draft-Direction-Donegal-CDP-2024-2030.pdf>

The draft Direction was made available for public inspection by Donegal County Council and submissions were invited during the period from 5th July 2024 to 18th July 2024. Subsequently, you prepared a Chief Executive's Report dated August 2024 on submissions received during the consultation period and made recommendations on how to give effect to the draft Direction. The Office considered this report and on 2nd September 2024, issued a recommendation under section 31AN(4) of the Act recommending that the Minister issue the Direction with minor amendments.

On 21st September 2024 the Minister published a notice in *The Irish Independent* pursuant to section 31AN(16)(a) of the Act giving notice that:

- having regard to the nature and number of amendments recommended to be directed, the giving of the Direction to the planning authority would require the making of a material alteration to the County Donegal Development Plan 2024-2030;
- the Minister's decision under section 31AN(4A) of the Act shall be subject to section 31AN(16).

Section 31AN(16)(b) of the Act requires that the Minister shall, before giving a direction, determine—

- i. whether or not a strategic environmental assessment or an appropriate assessment is required to be carried out as respects a material alteration to a development plan that would be required in order to comply with the direction, and
- ii. where he or she determines that a strategic environmental assessment or an appropriate assessment is so required, the period that it would take to carry out such strategic environmental assessment or appropriate assessment.

Detailed work in respect of these requirements is nearing conclusion within my Department and further details will be communicated in due course, in line with statutory requirements.

Decision

On review of the recommendation issued by the Office, corresponding documents and analysis, I have decided not to issue a Direction to Donegal County Council in relation to the following **three identified parts** of the Office's recommended proposed final direction, for the reasons set out in the enclosed Statement of Reasons, prepared under section 31AN(4A)(b) of the Act:



- Recommendation (2)(b)(iii) – i.e. land identified as Buncrana MA 18(b).13
- Recommendation (2)(b)(iv) – i.e. land identified as Buncrana MA 18(b).15
- Recommendation (2)(b)(vi) – i.e. land identified as Ballybofey / Stranorlar MA 19(b).2

This letter and the enclosed statement of reasons marks the conclusion of the section 31 direction process in relation to those three identified parts.

Next Steps

Further correspondence will issue in due course in relation to those parts of the recommended direction that remain subject to the ongoing statutory process.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John Cummins', with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

John Cummins TD

Minister of State for Local Government and Planning

Copied to:

- Cathaoirleach, Donegal County Council, County House, The Diamond, Lifford, County Donegal, F93 Y622.
- Director, Northern and Western Regional Assembly, Dillon House, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon, F45 WY26.
- Office of the Planning Regulator, Park House, Grangegorman, 191-193A North Circular Road, Dublin 7, D07 EWW4.