



28<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Anita Sweeney,  
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Forward Planning Section,  
Carlow County Council,  
Athy Road,  
Co. Carlow

**Re: Proposed Variation No. 3 of Joint Spatial Plan for the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area 2012-2018 (incorporating the Carlow Town Development Plan 2012-2018) as extended**

A Chara,

Thank you for your authority's work in preparing Proposed Draft Variation No. 3 of the Joint Spatial Plan for the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area 2012-2018 (herein, the Joint Spatial Plan).

The Office of the Planning Regulator (the Office) notes and fully endorses the overall reasoning behind the proposed variation, being to facilitate the renewal of a serviced but under-utilised strategic brownfield opportunity site within Carlow Town, and to give full effect to the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 regarding the Vacant Site Levy and urban renewal and regeneration.

The Office has evaluated and assessed the proposed variations to the development plan, above, under the provisions of sections 31AM(1) and (2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (the Act).

Having regard to the particular nature of the Joint Spatial Plan, your planning authority, in tandem with Laois County Council, should ensure that the three plans constituent of the Joint Spatial Plan remain mutually consistent concerning the matters subject of the proposed variation.

As your authority will be aware, one of the key functions of the Office includes assessment of statutory plans and strategies to ensure consistency with legislative and policy requirements relating to planning.

The Office is currently developing an overall evaluation and assessment methodology for statutory plans. The submission below has been prepared to provide a high-level input to your authority in finalising the proposed variation of the plan.

## **1. Matters within the scope of section 10 and section 10(2)(n)**

The Office is satisfied that the Proposed Variation No. 3 has the potential to have a positive impact in terms of climate action under section 10(2)(n) by virtue of enabling and actively supporting more compact and sustainable urban development. Similarly, the Office considers the proposed introduction to the plan of clear policy support for the climate action policies of government and for the provisions of the Carlow County Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 has potential to contribute positively to climate actions required under the Act. The approach of your planning authority in the proposed variation is therefore to be commended and is welcomed by the Office.

## **2. Consistency of proposed variations with the hierarchy of statutory plans**

The Office notes that Proposed Variation No. 3 seeks to change the zoning of an identified opportunity site (No. 10 Former Braun Site), at O'Brien Road Carlow, from "Industrial" to "Enterprise and Employment", and will also provide clarity on the Council's approach to active land management through the policies and objectives under the plan.

Proposed Variation No. 3 will provide for and will actively facilitate more compact and sustainable urban development within the Joint Spatial Plan area. This is consistent with National Strategic Outcome 1 (NSO 1) *Compact Growth* and with National Policy Objective 3c (NPO3c), under the National Planning Framework (NPF) concerning the delivery of at least 30% of all new homes in settlements, including Carlow, within the existing built-up footprint.

Proposed Variation No. 3 is consistent with the objectives of the draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (the draft RSES). In this regard, the Office would highlight, in particular, the following objectives in the draft RSES - objective RP32 *Support for Compact Growth*, which requires planning authorities to identify rejuvenation priorities within settlements and RPO31 *Urban Brownfield and Infill Development*, which require the core strategy to be accompanied by specific objectives to achieve urban infill / brownfield development.

The Office welcomes the approach taken by your authority, which demonstrates a strong commitment to the pursuit of compact growth, in accordance with national policy, and to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

## **3. Consistency of proposed variations with relevant section 28 guidelines**

The Office is satisfied that the proposed variation is not materially inconsistent with relevant section 28 guidelines.

## **4. Policy directives issued under section 29**

The Office has no comment in this regard.

## 5. Other legislative and policy matters as the Minister may communicate

The Office has no comment in this regard.

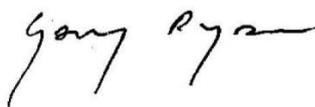
### **Summary**

Accordingly, the Office broadly supports the proposed variation and urges your authority to finalise same, and has no specific recommendations to make under the provisions of section 31AM(3)(a) of the Act above.

Your authority is required to notify this Office within 5 working days of the making of the variation and send a copy of the written statement and maps as made.

Please feel free to contact the staff of the Office in the context of any queries in relation to the above, which we would be happy to facilitate. Contact can be initiated through the undersigned or at [plans@opr.ie](mailto:plans@opr.ie).

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**Gary Ryan**

Director, Office of the Planning Regulator

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