



**Oifig an  
Rialaitheora Pleanála**  
Office of the  
Planning Regulator

# **Councillor Training**

## **Evaluation & Assessment of Plans**

**John Desmond, Senior Planner**  
**February 2020**



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# Role of OPR

❑ Est. April  
2019

❑ Three  
statutory  
functions

## What is the Office of the Planning Regulator?

The OPR's purpose is to oversee the continuous enhancement of Ireland's planning process and its outcomes by driving the co-ordination of planning policy implementation across national, regional and local levels, building a stronger knowledge base and ensuring regular reviews of the performance of planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála.

## What are the main functions of the Office?

### Independent assessment of all local authority and regional assembly forward planning

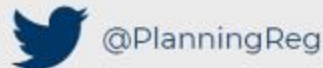
- ✓ Evaluates all local authority forward planning, including development plans, local area plans, etc.
- ✓ Provides recommendations during the drafting of statutory plans to ensure consistency with relevant national and regional policies.

### Reviews of the systems and procedures used by any planning authority

- ✓ Organisational review of the systems and procedures used by any planning authority, including An Bord Pleanála in the performance of their planning functions.
- ✓ Considers submissions from the public in relation to the systems and procedures used by planning authorities in the delivery of planning services.

### Driving national research, training, education and public information

- ✓ Delivers training and education programmes for stakeholders based on a strategic planning research programme.
- ✓ Promotes public awareness of the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and encourages effective public participation in the planning process.





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# Statutory Basis

31P. (1) The functions of the Office are—

(a) to evaluate and assess—

(i) development plans, including draft development plans,

(ii) variations of development plans, including proposed variations,

(iii) local area plans, including the amendment or revocation of such plans,  
and

(iv) regional spatial and economic strategies,

during their preparation and making under *Chapters I to III of Part II* in order for the Office to provide observations and recommendations to planning authorities and regional assemblies, as appropriate, on those plans and strategies,

(b) in respect of any plan or strategy to which *paragraph (a)* relates, to inform the Minister if, in the opinion of the Office, any such plan or strategy is not consistent with its observations and recommendations, especially where, in its opinion, failure to be so consistent would affect the overall strategy for proper planning and sustainable development of the area concerned,



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# Strategy

## □ Goals:

- Clear, fair & independent
- Driving innovation
- Customer focus
- Efficient

## □ Values:

- Independent
- Transparent
- Engaged





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# Team

- ❑ 5 full time & 3 staff part-time on evaluations team (out of a complement of 21 OPR staff)
- ❑ Roles
  - Carrying out evaluations & assessment
  - Mapping and recording (GIS)
  - Communicating
- ❑ Deputy Regulator position (Director)



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# Remit

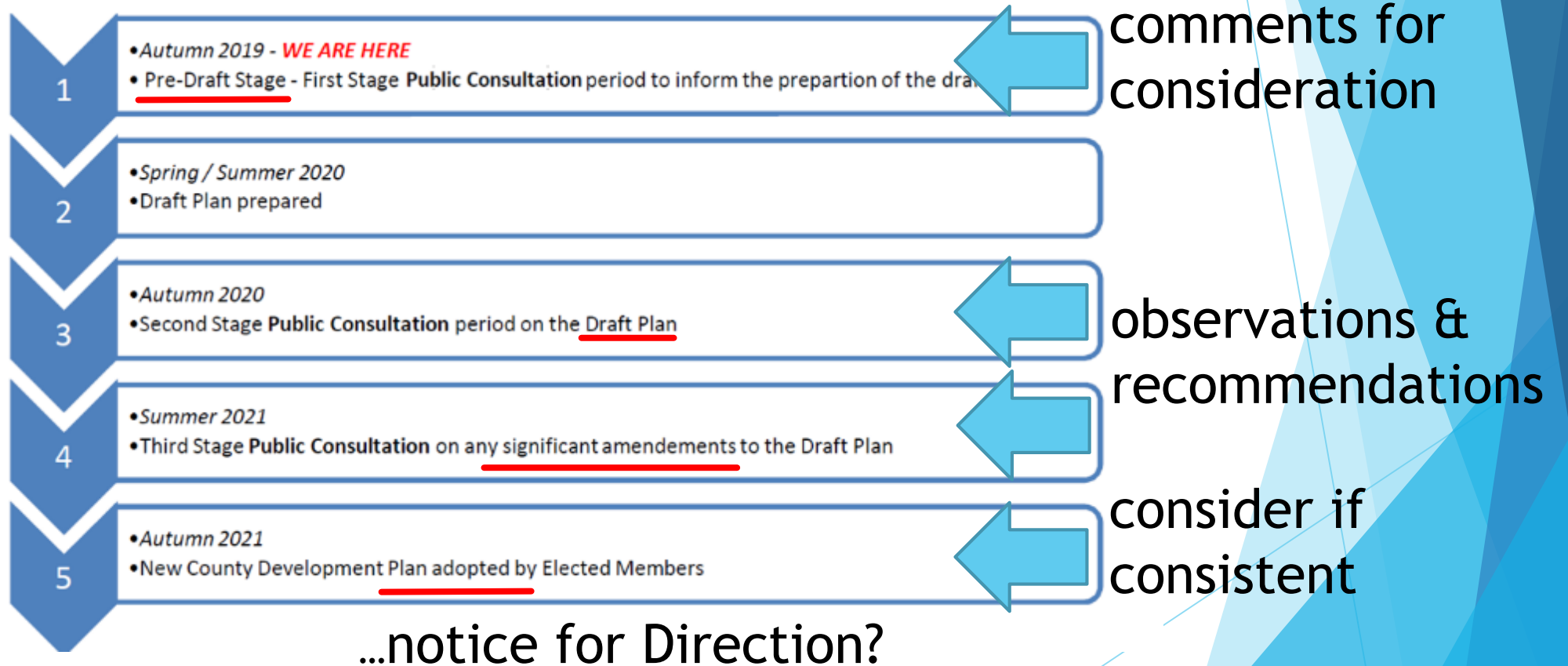
- ☐ Independent
- ☐ At least at a strategic level
- ☐ Support & guidance
- ☐ Not a policy maker

...when, what & how do we assess?



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# When do we assess?



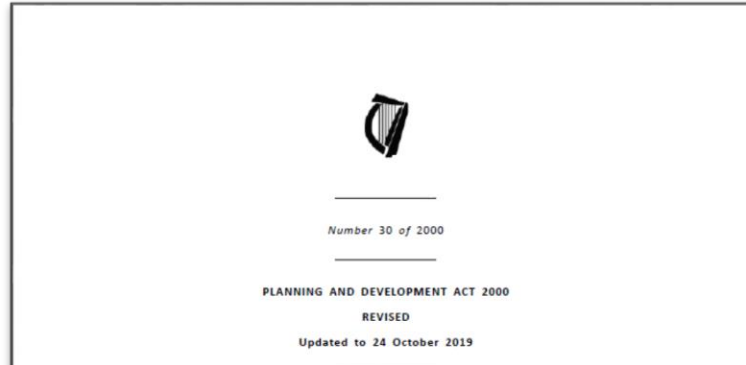




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# What do we assess?

- ☐ Mandatory objectives
- ☐ Core Strategy
- ☐ Climate Action



## PART II

### PLANS AND GUIDELINES

#### CHAPTER I

##### *Development Plans*

9. Obligation to make development plan.
10. Content of development plans.
11. Preparation of draft development plan.
- 11A. Extension of certain development plans and restriction of *section 11*.
- 11B. Development plans for new administrative areas to be provided for.





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# What do we assess?



...& the NTA TS for the GDA

...& the development plan

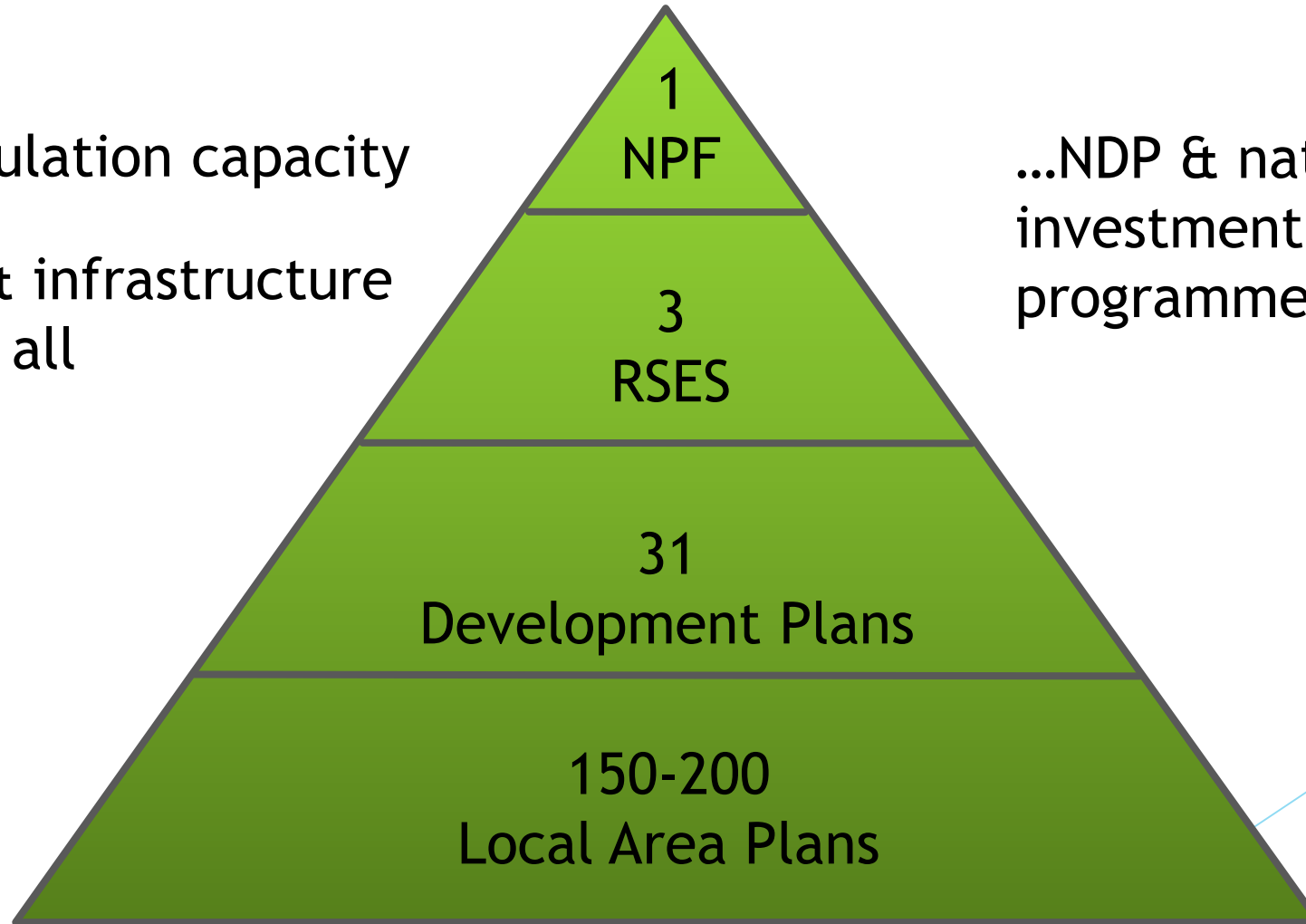


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# What do we assess?

...aligning population capacity  
...with social & infrastructure  
investment at all  
plan levels

...NDP & national  
investment  
programmes







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# What do we assess?



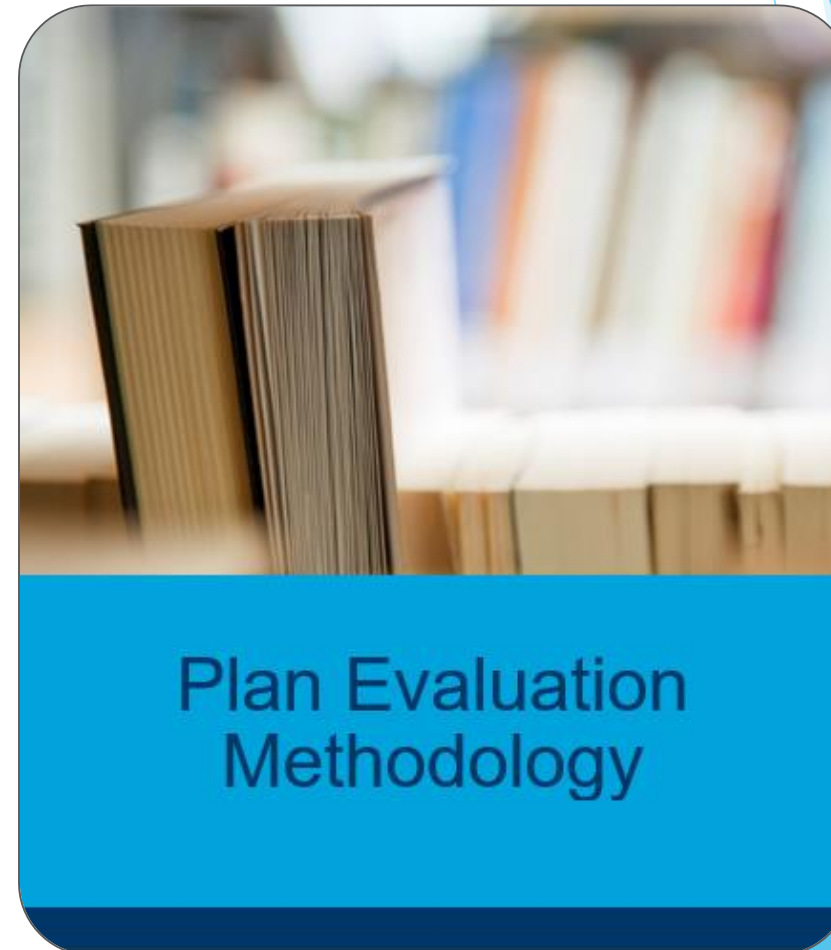
...statement under 28(1)(b)



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# How do we assess?

- ❑ Working manual or guide (comprehensive)
- ❑ Processes and deadlines (clarity)
- ❑ Checklists (consistency)
- ❑ Interactions with planning authority & prescribed authorities (transparency)





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# Scope of assessment?

	Within scope
Check development plan contains all mandatory objectives	✓
Settlement strategy / hierarchy	✓
Check for possible omissions, e.g. no strategic flood risk assessment	✓
Review if site should be included as a Protected Structure	X
Specific design standards	X
Presentation and format of the document	X



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# Output of our assessments?

- ❑ Observations  
&
- ❑ Recommendations
  - ...necessary to ensure effective coordination of national, regional and local planning requirements....
- ❑ Clear explanation

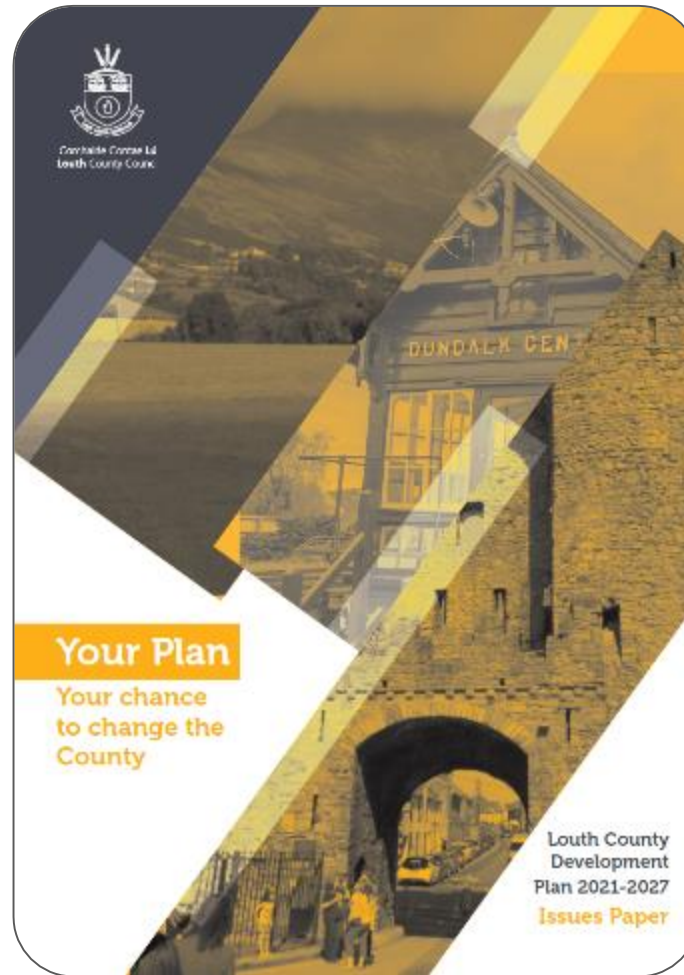
**Examples of approach so far?**



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# Louth CDP

- ❑ Core strategy & settlement hierarchy
- ❑ Economic development & employment
- ❑ Transport & connectivity
- ❑ Infrastructure
- ❑ Climate action & energy







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# Dublin City DP

## draft Variations 8-28

Camac River

Proposed  
residential  
rezonings

Royal Hospital  
Kilmainham

Old Kilmainham  
village

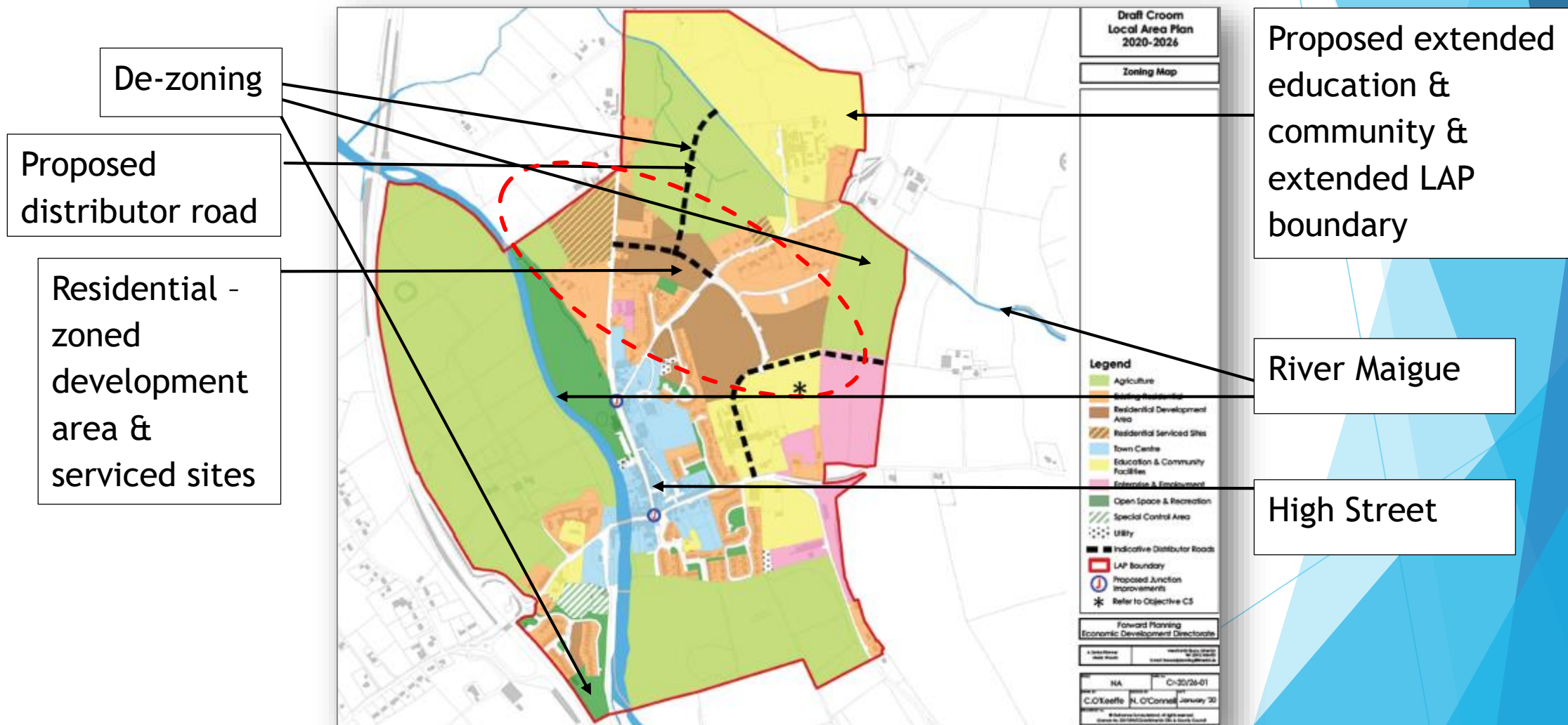




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# Draft Croom LAP



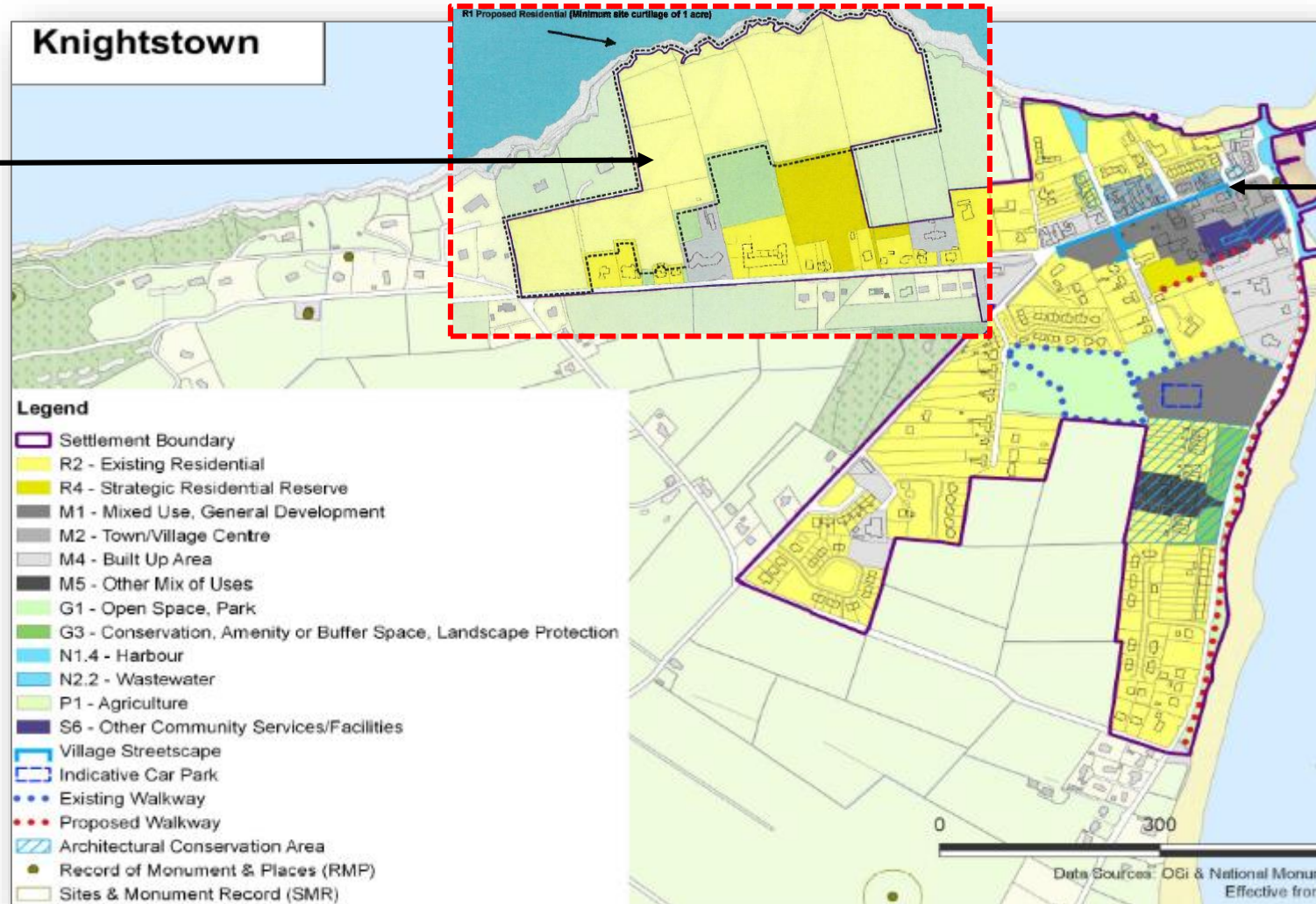




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# West Iveragh MA LAP Material Amendments

Material  
alteration 47



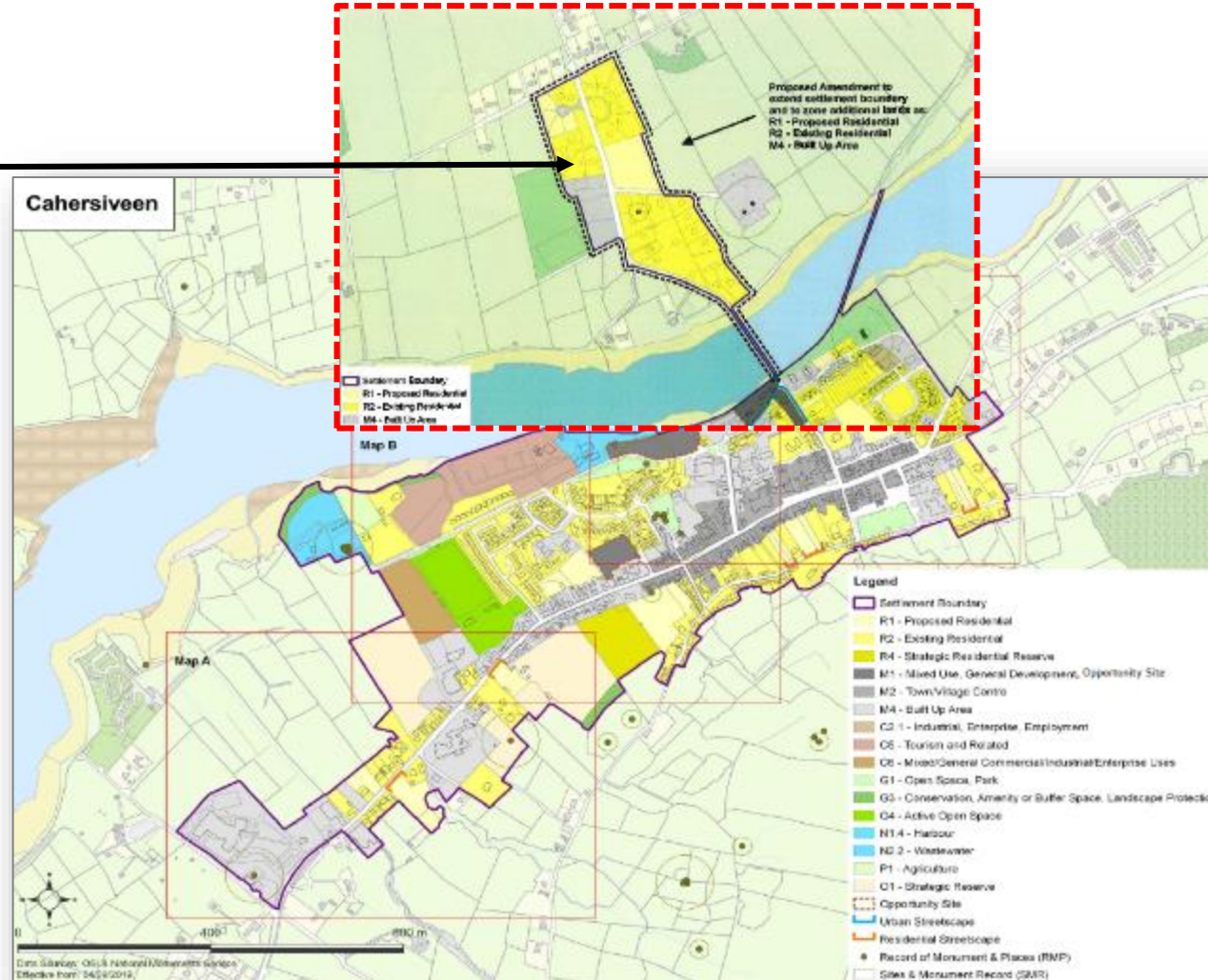
Ferry to  
Cahersiveen



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# West Iveragh MA LAP Material Amendments

Material  
alteration 46



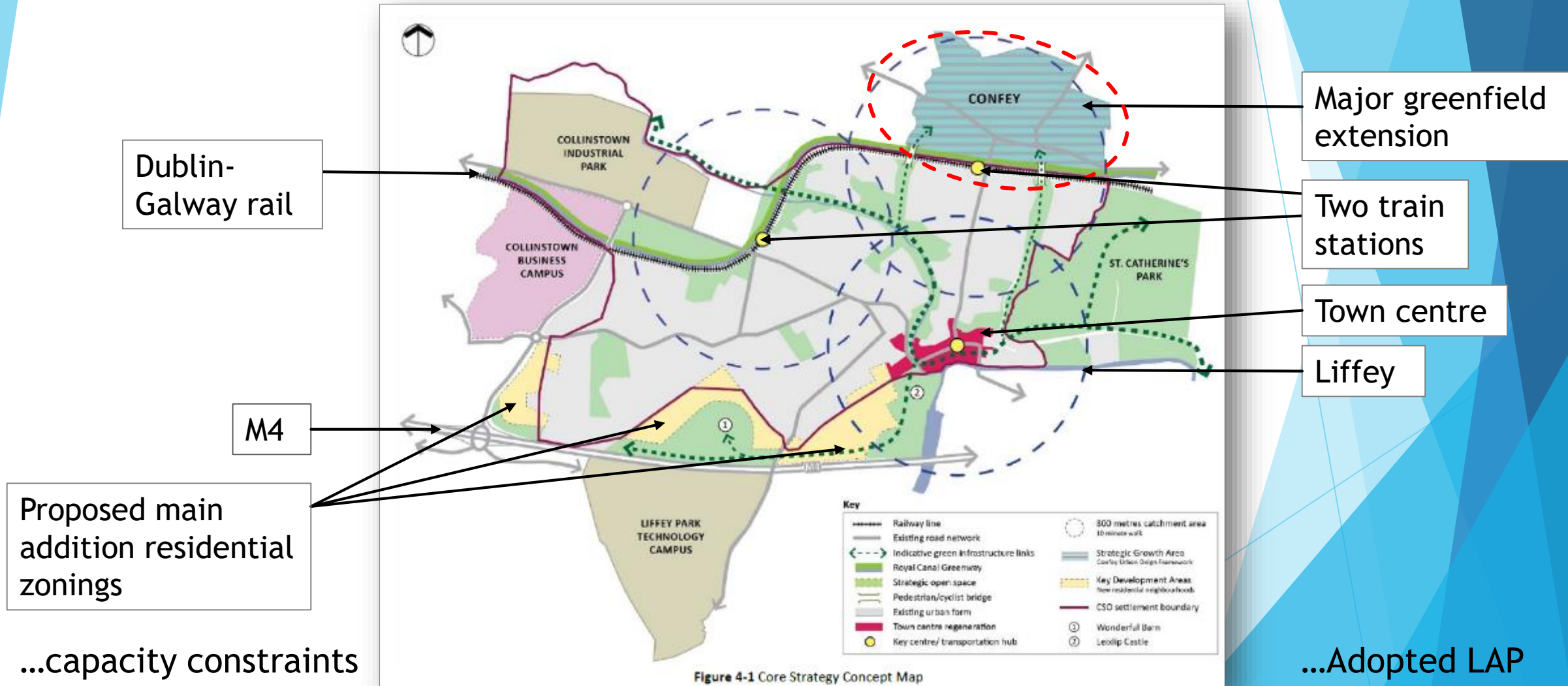




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# Leixlip LAP

## Material Amendments



...capacity constraints

...Adopted LAP



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# What next?

- ☐ Draft methodology out for consultation
- ☐ Four weeks for comments
- ☐ Will inform final methodology
- ☐ Periodic review to ensure it remains fit for purpose



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# Key messages

- ❑ Statutory mandate to evaluate & assess  
But....
- ❑ Guidance & help for plan-makers
- ❑ Avoid s.31 directions
- ❑ Not a policy-maker
- ❑ Feedback on our draft methodology





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# Thank you



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# Role in making of plans

