



To: Chief Executives, City and County Councils
Chief Executive, Office of Planning Regulator
Chairperson, An Bord Pleanála
Directors, Regional Assemblies

Cc: Senior Planners, City and County Councils
Deputy Regulator, Office of Planning Regulator
Director of Planning, An Bord Pleanála
Assistant Directors, Regional Assemblies

Circular Letter: NRUP 04/2021

9th August 2021

Development Plans, Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities

A Chara,

I am requested by Mr. Peter Burke, T.D., Minister of State for Planning and Local Government to inform you of the issuing of Development Plans, Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities, under Section 28 of the Planning Development Act 2000 (as amended).

These Draft Guidelines will be subject to a period of stakeholder consultation, during which time submissions may be made to the Planning Division of the Department between 13th August 2021 and 8th October 2021, up to 5pm, via email to nrupconsultation@housing.gov.ie or in writing to:

Development Plans Guidelines Submissions,
National, Regional and Urban Planning Section,
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage,
Custom House,
Dublin 1, D01 W6X0.

Submissions are invited in respect of matters of process and methodology in the preparation of development plans, as set out in the Draft Guidelines, rather than on wider matters of planning policy. It is expected that the Draft Guidelines will be finalised before the end of 2021.

Although being issued in Draft format to enable feedback and refinement, it is intended that planning authorities would have regard to the Draft Guidelines, noting that many



development plan review processes are currently underway and are at different stages of completion.

The question naturally arises as how the Draft Guidelines may be taken into account in respect of ongoing review processes. While it is not possible to address each individual development plan review in a circular, any such consideration should be subject to the following:-

- the stage of the review process the plan in question is at;
- the extent to which matters of process and methodology set out in the Draft Guidelines may apply to the plan under review (i.e. give rise to material addition and/or change), and
- whether there is reasonable scope to address any such applicability as part of the ongoing plan review process, taking into account remaining periods of public consultation, reporting and decision making and any need for environmental assessment.

In some instances where a development plan is nearing completion, it may be preferable to complete the review process and to address any matters arising by way of subsequent variation. In other cases, likely to be at an earlier stage of the plan review process, it may be appropriate to consider whether an extension of the review period would provide sufficient scope to address any matters arising. In general terms, the earlier the stage in the review process a plan is at, the more likely it is that the Draft Guidelines may be taken into account without any need for variation or extension.

These are matters to be determined by each individual planning authority. In addition, the Office of the Planning Regulator in undertaking its independent plan evaluation and assessment function will be in a position to provide advice and guidance to planning authorities.

In conclusion, these Draft Guidelines are intended to provide clarity to assist planning authorities in the preparation and variation of city and county development plans and the Office of the Planning Regulator in undertaking statutory evaluation and assessment of same. Planning authorities and the Office are expected to have regard to the Draft Guidelines, while also determining their applicability to ongoing plan review processes and the means by which this might best be achieved.

Is mise le meas,

Paul Hogan

Principal Adviser (Chief Planner)