



Oifig an
Rialaitheora Pleanála
Office of the
Planning Regulator

11 January 2021

Planning Office,
Monaghan County Council,
1 Dublin Street,
Monaghan,
H18 X982

Re: Adopted Variation No. 2 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025

A chara,

The Office of the Planning Regulator (the Office) acknowledges the adoption on 7 December 2020 of variation no.2 of Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025, as notified by way of email received on 14 December 2020.

The Office welcomes the adoption of Variation no.2 and looks forward to continued engagement with Monaghan County Council in the implementation of national policy at the local level.

The Office acknowledges that the substance of our observations were addressed in the chief executive's report and that a modification was incorporated into the adopted variation to specifically acknowledge Monaghan as a key town and the strategic potential of Carrickmacross.

The Office also welcomes your authority's firm commitment to the delivery of the National Planning Objective (NPO) 3c of 30% of all new homes to be within existing built-up footprints, and the allocation of 20% of all new housing to be developed on brownfield/infill sites in the settlements within table 2.4 in accordance with Regional Policy Objective (RPO) 3.3. Observations 2-4 of our submission sought to ensure that a sufficient basis was provided in your authority's development plan for prioritising this form of development above greenfield peripheral locations, and that progress in this regard could be monitored and measured by your authority.



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In this respect, the Office recognises that your authority will commence the section 15 report, on progress on achieving the objectives of the plan, in spring 2021. We note that the chief executive's report states that this process will be used to evaluate the success of the plan in terms of achieving suitable densities, compact growth (NPO 3c) and the 20% target for rural housing on brownfield sites (RPO 3.3). This process will be key to meeting the objectives of the National Planning Framework (NPF), the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA RSES) and section 28 guidelines, and a transparent evidence-based approach to this review will be of key importance.

Clearly, the above advice and your authority's forthcoming section 15 review should also be considered in the context of any new emerging guidelines from the Department on development plans and core strategies, which we understand are forthcoming early this year.

With regard to the preparation of a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Monaghan Town as required under RPO 6.27 (observation no.5), we acknowledge that the chief executive's report indicates that the planning authority is hesitant to commence this process in absence of 'best practice'. In this regard, the Office is of the opinion that the NWRA RSES provides sufficient clarity in respect to the methodology that should be used for Local Transport Plans, namely the Area Based Transport Assessment guidance of the NTA and TII:

www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Area_Based_Transport_Assessment_ABTA.pdf

Furthermore, the Office can identify a number of other local authorities that have already commenced Local Transport Plans (LTP) which may be of assistance to you:

- I. The Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) and Limerick Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LMATS) are helpful reference points for style and clarity of content.
- II. Kildare County Council are currently working on the Draft Local Transport Strategy for Naas/Sallins.
- III. Donegal County Council have also begun preparation of the Letterkenny LTP.



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In summary, the Office considers that there is no impediment, in terms of policy or best practice methodology that would negate the preparation of a Local Transport Plan for Monaghan key town, as required by RPO 6.26.

Conclusion

Adopted Variation no. 2, the purpose of which is to enable the incorporation of the NPF and the RSES into the development plan, is considered generally consistent with the observations of the Office.

The Office would, however, underline the importance of effective monitoring to ensure the successful implementation of the plan's policies and looks forward to the said report.

Your authority is also encouraged to commence the preparation of a Local Transport Plan for Monaghan Town to support alternative means of travel such as walking and cycling, and the potential for greater public transport where possible.

Please feel free to contact the Office through plans@opr.ie in the context of your authority's plan-making function and should you wish to discuss the issues above further.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Marie O'Connor

Deputy Regulator and Director of Plans Evaluations
