

12th May 2022

Development Plan Team,
Planning and Strategic Infrastructure Department,
Fingal County Council,
County Hall, Main Street,
Swords,
Co. Dublin,
K67 X8Y2

Re: Draft Fingal County Development Plan 2023 - 2029

OPR Ref: DP-013-22

A chara,

Thank you for your authority's work in preparing the draft Fingal County Development Plan 2023 – 2029 (the draft Plan).

The Office of the Planning Regulator (the Office) wishes to acknowledge the considerable work your authority has undertaken in the preparation of the draft Plan against the backdrop of an evolving national and regional planning policy and regulatory context. In particular, the Office commends the planning authority for delivering an excellent public consultation campaign for the draft development plan which offered a mix of virtual and in-person consultation in order to cater for a broad range of people.

As your authority is aware, a key function of the Office is the assessment of statutory plans to ensure consistency with legislative and policy requirements relating to planning.

The Office has evaluated and assessed the draft Plan under the provisions of sections 31AO(1) and 31AO(2) of the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as amended (the Act) and this submission has been prepared accordingly.



Recommendations issued by the Office relate to clear breaches of the relevant legislative provisions, of the national or regional policy framework and/or of the policy of Government, as set out in the Ministerial guidelines under section 28. As such, the planning authority is required to implement or address recommendation(s) made by the Office in order to ensure consistency with the relevant policy and legislative provisions.

Observations take the form of a request for further information, justification on a particular matter, or clarification regarding particular provisions of a plan on issues that are required to ensure alignment with policy and legislative provisions. The planning authority is requested by the Office to action an observation.

A submission also can include advice on matters that the Office considers would contribute positively to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The planning authority is requested by the Office to give full consideration to the advice contained in a submission.

Overview

The draft Plan is being prepared at a crucial time following the preparation of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), which seek to promote the rebalancing of regional development in a sustainable manner by enhancing and improving the critical mass of the Dublin metropolitan area.

The draft Plan embraces many of the challenges and opportunities identified in the NPF and the RSES, in particular by setting out a strategy for the growth of the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) to enable Dublin to achieve the critical mass in terms of housing, employment, services and amenities needed to develop as a city region.

Fingal, due to its strategic location as part of the Dublin Metropolitan Area and Dublin City and Suburbs Area, with high quality public transport and accessibility infrastructure, will be critical to achieving the national strategic outcomes (NSOs) of the NPF for compact growth, sustainable mobility, enhanced regional accessibility and transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.



Given the need to ensure that development occurs in a compact and sustainable manner while protecting the hinterland at a regional and city scale in accordance with NPO 62, the Office particularly welcomes the policy focus on strengthening the greenbelt areas and to avoid the coalescence of settlements.

Further, the Office wishes to acknowledge the significant work undertaken in the preparation of background reports, such as the Urban Capacity Assessment and the Economic and Employment Land Use Study, which provide a strong supporting framework for the draft Plan.

The Office has however, identified a number of areas that require significant further consideration in order to ensure consistency with the legislative provisions and national and regional policy.

In particular, the extent of lands zoned within the draft Plan needs to be justified to ensure a sufficient and stable supply of residential and employment land is aligned with the core strategy and in the right locations where sustainable transport options are being provided. A particular focus on infill/brownfield lands and/or other sequentially appropriate lands, in proximity to high quality transport that is existing or that will be delivered during the plan period, is also required.

The Office also advises that, in addition to reviewing the management of land zoned in the draft Plan, the core strategy does not contain any significant capacity for additional significant residential or employment land use zoning without a commensurate reduction elsewhere, and where the replacement land is locationaly preferable.

The Office also considers that there is a need for greater clarity and focus in the draft Plan in relation to the prioritisation of better located land for housing and other forms of development over the plan period.

The Office is also concerned that there is an over reliance on dealing with strategic planning decisions in a case by case manner through the development management process and the preparation of non-statutory framework plans, rather than adopting a



comprehensive plan-led approach. This is particularly important given the extent of land zoned, which has been carried over from the existing Plan.

Overall, the Office considers that significant work will be required in order to improve the clarity and transparency of the draft Plan to ensure that it is consistent with recent changes in national policy and that it provides a strong plan-led approach to development over the next six years, leading to better planning outcomes for existing and new communities.

The planning authority will also be aware that the Office's evaluation of the Plan is required under section 31AM(2)(a) of the Act to address, in particular, matters within the scope of section 10(2)(n) of the Act in relation to climate change. The issues raised in relation to the core strategy table (Recommendation 1), the zoning of lands for specific uses and to achieve a less car dependant pattern of development (Recommendations 6, 13 and 14) and flood risk management (Recommendation 16) will be important in terms of providing a sustainable settlement and transportation strategy in accordance with section 10(2)(n).

It is within this context the submission below sets out 17 recommendations and 6 observations under the following eleven themes:

Key theme	Recommendation	Observation
Core strategy and settlement strategy	Recommendation 1, 2, 3	-
	and <u>4</u>	
Sustainable Development	Recommendation <u>5</u> , <u>6</u> , <u>7</u>	Observation <u>1</u> and <u>2</u>
	and <u>8</u>	
Housing Strategy and relevant	Recommendation 9	-
policies		
Rural Housing and Regeneration	Recommendation 10	-
Economic Development and	Recommendation 11 and	Observation 3
Employment	<u>12</u>	
Sustainable Transport and	Recommendation 13, 14	-
Accessibility	and <u>15</u>	



Climate Action and Renewable	-	Observation 4
Energy		
Flood Risk Management	Recommendation 16	-
Environment, Heritage and Amenities	Recommendation 17	-
Implementation and Monitoring	-	Observation 5
General and Procedural Matters	-	Observation 6

1. Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy

1.1 Housing and population targets

The Office is satisfied that the total county population projections to 2029 in section 2.2.7 of the draft Plan are generally consistent with the population prescribed for the City in the RSES and NPF.

The Office is also satisfied that the methodology used to calculate the Housing Supply Target (HST) as set out in Table 2.9, is generally consistent with the section 28 Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2020).

Notwithstanding, the above, the Office considers that there is a need to ensure that the information regarding population and housing supply targets is more clearly set out in the core strategy. Following on from the commitment in NPO 71, clear advice in relation to core strategies was provided in the *Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities - Draft for Consultation* (the *draft Development Plan Guidelines* (2021)) published in August of 2021 which, if followed would have provided for a greater level of clarity and transparency.

In particular, although the HST figure is provided for the county area as a whole, it has not been integrated into the Core Strategy Table (Table 2.14). Consequently, the number of housing units in each town, or area within the county is not clear or apparent, resulting in a lack of transparency and uncertainly in a development management context.



This is not consistent with the *draft Development Plan Guidelines* (2021), which specifies that the methodology in the *HST Guidelines* (2020) must be used in meeting the statutory obligations in the core strategy. As a consequence, significant revisions will be required to the core strategy, as set out in Recommendation 1 below.

In addition, the core strategy table amalgamates significant urban areas in their own right under 'Blachardstown' and 'Other settlements' with the 'Dublin City and Suburbs Consolidation Area', and also 'Towns and Villages' within the metropolitan area and the core area.

The Office notes that the *draft Development Plan Guidelines* (2021) recognise that a differentiated approach to the core strategy table is necessary for the major cities and larger urban counties to those of the smaller predominantly rural counties¹ and that the structure of 'major town centre', 'district centres' and 'urban villages' is advocated.

However, the absence of details for significant urban areas such as Blanchardstown, Santry, Ongar, Ballymun, and newer areas such as Tyrellstown, results in a lack of clarity regarding the draft Plan's strategic preferences for development (and associated infrastructure), and the portion of the HST figure that could realistically be delivered in each area over the plan period.

Furthermore, the treatment of the additional population and corresponding housing supply target arising from the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) allocation under NPO 68 for Swords is also unclear. Section 2.2.7 states that an additional 20,000 population was allocated to Swords in accordance with NPO68 and the Dublin MASP. However, Table 2.14 provides for a population growth of just 10,265 over the plan period, and it is not clear how these growth rates are reconciled.

The Office also advises that the NPO 68 additional population allocation is for the Key Town of Swords, and cannot be applied universally across the county. The

¹ Appendix A, section 1.3.2



allocation must also be applied <u>in addition</u> to the county HST allocation to Swords and clearly demonstrated within the core strategy table.

The core strategy 'estimated 2029 population' (361,894) (Table 2.14) is also inconsistent with the population projections for the plan period as set out in Table 2.5 (359,000) and the reason for different figures is not apparent. It is further noted, that there may be an error in the summation of the CSO 2016 figures in Table 2.14. The planning authority is advised to review and clarify these discrepancies.

It is also noted that some of the 2016 population figures outlined in the Table 2.14 do not correspond with those of the 2016 Census (SAPMAP) and where there is any deviation this should be clearly explained.

Recommendation 1 – Core Strategy Table

In accordance with the requirements of sections 10(2A) (f), (g) & (h) and 10(2C) of the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as amended, and having regard to the *Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning* (2020), *Guidance Note on Core Strategies* (2010) and the *Development Plans, Guidelines for Planning Authorities - Draft for Consultation* (2021), NPO 68, RPO 5.5 and the Dublin MASP (RSES), the planning authority is required to review the core strategy in Chapter 2 of the draft Plan and revise as necessary to:

- (i) include at a settlement or urban area level the housing supply targets in Table 2.9 of the draft Plan (calculated in accordance with the section 28 guidelines Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning (2020)) and Appendix 1 of the accompanying Ministerial Letter to Local Authorities of 18/12/20);
- (ii) differentiate between the individual urban areas within the 'Metropolitan Area' and the towns and villages within the 'Core Area' including housing and population growth for each of the areas, and to apply the structure of 'major town centre', 'district centres' and 'urban villages' as detailed in



- Appendix A, section 1.3.2 of the *Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities Draft for Consultation* (2021);
- (iii) differentiate between the individual 'towns and villages' within the 'Metropolitan Area' and the 'Core Area' including housing and population growth for each settlement (including Portrane, Loughshinny and Balrothery);
- (iv) clearly identify the provision (housing supply target and population growth)for the Key Town of Swords under NPO 68 and the Dublin MetropolitanArea Strategic Plan (MASP);
- (v) confirm the density assumptions used to calculate the land area requirements for each urban area/settlement over the plan period, ensuring that the assumptions are consistent with the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009); and
- (vi) ensure that the level of growth proposed for each settlement is aligned to the level of services, including water services infrastructure and high quality public transport corridors.

Note: Appendix A of the Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities, Draft for Consultation (2021) provides a useful reference and illustrative example of a core strategy table.

1.2 Settlement Hierarchy and distribution of growth

The Office welcomes the designation of Dublin City and Suburbs as tier 1, Swords as a Key Town and Donabate as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town, consistent with the NPF and RSES.

As set out above, further clarity is however required in relation to the growth being planned for individual urban areas or settlements within each tier.



Having regard to the scale, location and character of a number of the settlements included within the Dublin City and Suburbs category in particular, the Office considers that the location of that growth within the tier needs further consideration in order to ensure that preferable areas in terms of compact growth and public transport accessibility are prioritised. This is especially important in terms of the location of areas such as Hollystown and Tyrellstown, which are not identified for the provision of high quality public transport in the GDA Transport Strategy.

The *draft Development Plan Guidelines* (2021) state that for cities, the settlement strategy may be focused around particular public transport corridors or transport nodes where targets for residential development may be set and the general opportunities for encouraging brownfield and infill densification may be much greater.

While the Office fully accepts that the delivery of substantial housing targets within the Fingal area will include plan-led greenfield development, it is critical that the settlement strategy focusses on the potential for compact growth and infill/brownfield densification and prioritises growth in areas well served by the social and physical infrastructure needed to support sustainable communities.

The issue is also addressed below in relation to residential land use zoning (Recommendation 4).

Recommendation 2 – Settlement Hierarchy and Distribution of Growth

Having regard to section 10(2A) of the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as amended, the National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) and National Policy Objectives (NPOs) in the National Planning Framework (NPF), and the policies and direction for the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan contained in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly, the planning authority is required to review the distribution of housing and population growth in conjunction with Recommendation 1, and to demonstrate that the growth for each of the settlements/urban areas identified in the core strategy (and the settlement hierarchy) are in accordance with the following:



- (i) the NPOs in the NPF to deliver stronger cities and towns (NPO 2a, NPO 9);
- (ii) the NPOs in the NPF in respect of compact growth (NPO 3c); developing cities of sufficient scale to compete internationally (NPO 5); regeneration and rejuvenation (NPO 6);
- (iii) the key future growth enablers for Dublin City and Metropolitan Area in the NPF which refer to, amongst others, progressing sustainable development of new greenfield housing on public transport corridors, relocating less intensive uses outside the M50; and delivering Metro Link; and
- (iv) the target growth allocated to each settlement/urban area is proportionate to their role within the settlement hierarchy and the availability of social and physical infrastructure as well as amenity facilities.

Where the planning authority identify locations whereby growth is targeted that is not in accordance with the criteria listed (i) - (iv) above, that measures are taken to redirect this growth to a more suitable location.

In relation to the lower tiers of the settlement hierarchy identify 'Towns and Villages' in, the both the Metropolitan Area and the Core Area, and then the lowest tier identifies the 'Rural Clusters and Rural Area'. The policy approach for these villages is acceptable in principle and is in accordance with the settlement typology outlined in the *draft Development Plan Guidelines* (2021). In addition, the objective to facilitate serviced sites within them is welcomed.

The criteria used for the designation of these 10 Rural Villages and 37 Rural Clusters is not, however, clear and the draft plan does not include a social or infrastructure audit.

For example, a number of the rural villages include considerable landbanks (for example Rivermeade) whilst the rural clusters appear to be unserviced settlements and very small stretches of ribbon development or clusters such as Balcultry,



Magilstown, Colecut are and would be more appropriately located in the 'Rural Area' tier.

The infrastructure capacity for these settlements is extremely limited and the designation of such a large number of very small settlements undermines the objectives set out elsewhere in the draft Plan and the core strategy to redirect growth to the upper tier settlements to achieve compact growth (consistent with NPO 3) and sustainable development of the rural areas (NPO 15).

The planning authority is required to consolidate the number of settlements listed in the lower tiers in the settlement hierarchy with a particular focus on the inclusion of settlements based on infrastructure capacity.

Recommendation 3 - Rural Villages & Rural Clusters

Having regard to National Policy Objectives promoting compact and sequential growth, in particular NPO 3(c) and 72 (a-c), and the land use categories set out in the draft Plan, the planning authority is required to review the approach to land use zoning for the Rural Villages and Rural Clusters in the draft Plan. In this regard, the planning authority is required to:

- (i) review and consolidate the extent of land zoned for 'Rural Village' and 'Rural Cluster' to reflect the established commercial core of the village centres and any planned expansion areas to ensure compact and sequential growth and avoid ribbon development consistent with the guidance in the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2005);
- (ii) review and reduce the number of rural clusters having regard to NPO 15 and the range of social, community and retail services, as well as capacities in service infrastructure such as footpaths, cycle lanes and public transport available to ensure that the growth targets are proportionate and will assist in sustaining and regenerating these settlements; and



(iii) ensure that there is clarity as to the designation for each of the rural villages and rural clusters.

1.3 Core Strategy and zoning for residential use

The Office notes the outcome from the land capacity analysis that there is no requirement to zone additional land to satisfy the population projections in the NPF and RSES and the HST for the plan period. The core strategy table 2.14 identifies that the undeveloped zoned lands have the capacity to provide significant additional housing units significantly, over and above what is identified in the HST for the plan period.

In this regard, section 4.4.3 of the *draft Development Plan Guidelines* (2021) recognises that it may be necessary to zone more serviced land and sites for residential (or a mixture of residential and other uses) over and above what the projected housing demand projects for a settlement.

Where a planning authority considers this 'Additional Provision' mechanism to be necessary in respect of a particular settlement, the *draft Development Plan Guidelines* (2021) also require the extent of the Additional Provision to be clearly identified, quantified and explained in the core strategy.

Any additional land zoned under the 'Additional Provision' mechanism must also be consistent with certain planning criteria, including sequential development patterns, Town Centre First principles, proximity to services and facilities and the need to reduce carbon emissions.

This information, which is necessary to enable the Office to assess and evaluate the proposals for 'Additional Provision' as envisaged by the guidelines, does not appear to have been clearly set out in the draft Plan.

The Office has further identified a number of sites (circa 70 hectares in total), where RS zoning (*residential*) extends over lands that are not yet developed, and should therefore be identified as 'RA' (residential area). There is a potential for this approach to result in further inconsistencies with the core strategy as the potential housing



yield is not taken into account in the core strategy table in determining 'zoned land required (with additional provision)', or indeed in determining consistency with the compact growth NPO3c target. This is inconsistent with the draft DPGs, which promote a transparent and evidence-based approach to the core strategy and zoning for residential use.

Having regard to the, which promote a transparent and evidence-based approach to the core strategy and zoning for residential use, In the absence of the details specified above, it is difficult for the Office to determine the full extent to which the zoning of residential land is in accordance with the *draft Development Plan Guidelines* (2021). However, the planning authority is required to review its approach to ensuring sufficient provision of housing lands in accordance with the draft Guidelines, and to provide full clarity between the housing supply targets in the revised core strategy and the extent and location of all residential zoned land.

Recommendation 4 - Residential zoned land

Having regard to the provisions under section 10 of the Act, to NPO 3 and RPO 10 compact growth, and to the *Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities - Draft for Consultation* (2021), and the revision to the core strategy and settlement hierarchy under Recommendation 1 and Recommendation 2 the planning authority is required to:

- (i) define the precise extent of 'Additional Provision' lands proposed to be zoned for each urban area and/or settlement and provide justification for the extent and location of which is to be based as per section 4.4.3 of the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities - Draft for Consultation (2021);
- (ii) review and include the extent of land zoned RS Residential that has not been developed within the 'land availability' in the core strategy table (Table 2.14); and



(iii) where land in excess of that required to meet the implementation of the housing supply target allocation, in combination with any justified 'Additional Provision' has been proposed to be zoned in the draft Plan, the planning authority is required to implement prioritisation / phasing to prioritise land consistent with compact and sequential development in areas identified to be served by high quality public transport corridors (rail, LUAS, and Bus Connect spine routes), and with adequate services and facilities to meet the needs of future communities.

2. Sustainable Development

2.1 Development approach for settlements

The Office notes the proposal to prepare local areas plans (LAPs) for the areas identified in table 2.16 of the draft Plan: Lissenhall East, Coolquoy, Balscadden, Ballymadun, and Belcamp. However, with the possible exception of Lisenhall east and Belcamp, the rationale for the selection of these areas is not clear given that the settlements are all designated rural villages with a population well below 1,500. The basis for the assertion that the rationale for the section of these areas has been informed by the Act and section 28 Guidelines is not therefore clear.

Conversely, the development Plan does not intend to prepare LAPs for larger settlements of over 5,000 population, many of which are designated for significant levels of growth. Section 19 of the Act sets out the requirement to make local area plans for designated towns of in excess of 5,000 population and, in certain circumstance for towns in excess of 1,500 population. Further, as the planning authority will be aware, section 2.7 of the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2009), advocates that the programme of delivery of LAPs should be prioritised for those areas with the potential for significant development in the short term.

The Office notes that statutory LAPs have not been prepared for certain towns within Fingal, including, Swords and Balbriggan, in accordance with the legislative requirements notwithstanding the land use zoning provisions set out in the draft Plan.



The Office also notes that the draft Plan indicates that a number of masterplans and framework plans will be prepared for a number of settlements and/or specified areas. While the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2009) reference the preparation of framework plans and / or masterplans to provide more detailed design guidance for large scale mixed development². This approach must, however, be considered in the context of the overarching role of the development plan to support and regulate new development, enhance valued assets and amenities and protect the environment.

The draft Plan does not also set out clearly timeframes or prioritisation of the preparation of these plans, which would provide clarity for both the local community and the development sector.

Furthermore, the planning authority must be cognisant of the importance of ensuring engagement and consultation of stakeholders as part of the plan-making process for statutory plans, including TII (a requirement under the *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2012)). The lack of a statutory consultation process in relation to non-statutory plans means that the input from stakeholders needed to identify key social and physical infrastructure constraints or requirements to serve new communities, such as schools, is not fully integrated into the process in a transparent manner.

Likewise, the lack of LAPs for key settlements limits the opportunity for the integration of land use and transportation planning through the preparation of Local Transport Plans in conjunction with LAPs.

The Office also notes the potential implications under the Habitats Directive concerning Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment, in particular, where such plans determine the spatial development of land. This also needs to be considered by the planning authority.

² Section 2.13, Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas 2009



Recommendation 5 - Local Area Plans

Having regard to section 19 of the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as amended, which sets out the requirement to make local area plans (LAPs) for designated towns of in excess of 5000 population, NPO 6 urban regeneration, and the guidance in relation to masterplans / framework plans in the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2009), the guiding principles in the RSES for strategic brownfield and infill sites, and the need to accelerate housing delivery over the plan period in tandem with public transport infrastructure, the planning authority is required to:

- (i) review Table 2.16 and Policy CSP6 to reflect the requirements of Section 19 of the Act and the requirement to prepare LAPs for, at a minimum, key settlements within the county including Swords, Ballbrigan, Donabate, Malahide, Portmarnock, Skerries, Rush, Lusk;
- (ii) amend the list of areas proposed for future masterplans and framework plans in Tables 2.8 and 2.19 clearly prioritising areas that have the potential to be delivered alongside strategic transport infrastructure projects outlined in the GDA Transport Strategy and setting out clear timelines for the preparation of same;
- (iii) include a commitment to active co-ordination with Dublin City Council in relation to the preparation of the Belcamp LAP (the 'north fringe') and the Jamestown Business Park framewok plan; and
- (iv) include a policy to prepare accompanying Local Transport Plans for all settlements for which a local area plan will be prepared, or to update existing transport strategies such as the South Fingal Transport Strategy (2019) where appropriate.



2.2 Residential Land Use Zoning - Compact and sustainable growth

It is an objective (NPO 3b) of the NPF that 50% of all new homes within the five designated cities and their suburbs are to be delivered within the 'existing built up footprint' of settlements (clarified in end-note 17 of the NPF) in order to achieve National Strategic Objective 1, compact growth. RSES RPO 3.2 is also relevant in this respect.

As recognised in the NPF, the challenge for Fingal which has substantial urban centres, will be to deliver infill/ brownfield development in locations well served by high quality public transport as part of the transition to a low carbon economy, including the fulfilment of the requirements under section 10(2)(n) of the Act.

In this regard, the Office welcomes the strong policy context of the draft Plan which, supports regeneration and renewal opportunities. The draft Plan does not, however, demonstrate how the 50% compact growth target required by the NPF and the RSES will be met and there are no regeneration opportunities identified.

For example, by identifying consolidation or infill opportunity sites or by quantifying the minimum infill lands in hectares as per the core strategy table in Appendix A to the *draft Development Plans Guidelines* (2021). Provisions to monitor the delivery of housing on smaller infill sites, such as corner/side garden, backland development or subdivision of dwellings, which have policy support under SPQHO37, 39 and 41 of the draft Plan will also be important in order to ensure the provision of compact growth over the plan period.

Recommendation 6 - Compact and sustainable growth

Having regard to National Planning Objective 3b and RPO 3.2 and 3.3 to deliver at least half of all new homes that are targeted in Dublin city and suburbs within its existing built-up footprint and the need to ensure that sustainable settlement and transport strategies in the plan include measures which clearly promote the reduction of energy use and GHG emissions through the location, layout and design of new development in accordance with section 10(2)(n) of the *Planning*



and Development Act 2000, as amended, and in view of the Government's stated policy on climate change under the Climate Action Plan 2021, the planning authority is required to:

- quantify those areas of settlements, either in the core strategy table³ or otherwise, which will contribute to the cumulative delivery of 50% and 30% (as applicable) of all new homes within the built-up footprint of existing settlements on infill and/or brownfield lands; and
- (ii) identify key consolidation or infill opportunity sites that have the potential to contribute to compact growth.

2.3 Residential Land Use Zoning – Infrastructure capacity

NPO 72a (and appendix 3 of the NPF) require planning authorities to apply a standardised tiered approach to zoning (TAZ) to differentiate between serviced land (tier 1) and land that is serviceable within the life of the plan (tier 2). The planning authority is required (NPO 72b) to make a reasonable estimate of costs of the full delivery of specified services, detailed in a report at draft and final plan stages. Lands that cannot be serviced within the plan period should not be zoned for development (NPO 72c).

The Office notes the Infrastructural Assessment included as Appendix 4 to the draft Plan which is a high level assessment detailing the current infrastructure programmes and plans at national and regional level. Although there are no obvious additions to the peripheral zonings, the planning authority has not taken the opportunity to reconsider the overall approach taken to spatial planning through its preparation of the draft plan. Rather, the proposed zoning under the draft Plan appears to represent a continuation of the approach to zoning evident under the previous plan, and infill/brownfield opportunities are not highlighted. Furthermore, the assessment does not differentiate clearly between tier 1 and tier 2 lands regarding

³ As outlined in Appendix A, Section 1.3.3 of the *Development Plans, Guidelines for Planning Authorities – Draft for Consultation (2021)*



transport infrastructure delivery, notwithstanding that a number of these projects will not be delivered over the plan period.

This would enable the planning authority to prioritise the sequential development of more favourably located lands, particularly in terms of access to high quality public transport in order to better achieve meaningful compact growth in accordance with the National Planning Framework and to achieve meaningful reductions on energy use and GHG emissions associated with future development through sustainable settlement and transport strategies.

Recommendation 7 - Tiered Approach to Zoning

Having regard to NPO 72a, NPO 72b and NPO 72c, and Regional Policy Objective 5.5, regarding the coordination of land use zoning, infrastructure and services, and in particular accessibility to high quality public transport corridors, and the *Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities - Draft for Consultation* (2021), the planning authority is required to elaborate and expand upon its infrastructural assessment, as necessary, to fully address the status of all residential lands zoned under the plan in accordance with the methodology for a tiered approach to land zoning under Appendix 3 of the NPF, relating to existing development services, i.e. road and footpath access including public lighting, proximity to public transport services, foul sewer drainage, surface water drainage, water supply and/or additional service capacity. It must also include, if required, a reasonable estimate of the full cost of delivery of the required infrastructure to the identified zoned lands at draft and final plan stages of the plan-making process.

2.4 Standards and Guidelines

The National Planning Framework signals a move away from rigidly applied, blanket planning standards in relation to building height, garden size and car parking in favour of performance based standards (NPO 13) where appropriate. There are, however, a number if prescriptive standards relating to private open space and separation distances between first floor windows which could militate against the



principle of promoting appropriate density and compact growth in the higher order tier settlements and would be more appropriately dealt with through performance based standards.

Furthermore, in accordance with Government policy to support increased building height and density in locations with good public transport accessibility, particularly town/ city cores, planning authorities shall explicitly identify, through their statutory plans, areas where increased building height will be actively pursued for both redevelopment, regeneration and infill development to secure the objectives of the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and shall not provide for blanket numerical limitations on building height.

The *Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines* (2018) also require development plans to identify locations for taller buildings (SPPR 1) and to ensure a greater mix of building heights and typologies in suburban locations and avoids mono-type typologies (SPPR 4).

The Office notes that a Building Height Strategy, which would provide a strong policy framework to provide for an effective mix of building height at appropriate locations in the larger urban centres, has not been prepared.

For the same reason, and to provide great clarity and certainty to the development management process, the planning authority should also consider the preparation of a density strategy in conjunction with the Building Height Strategy.

Recommendation 8 - Building Height Strategy

Having regard to NPO 13 which identifies building height as an important measure for urban areas to deliver and achieve compact growth the planning authority is required to demonstrate that the draft Plan is consistent with the specific planning policy requirements (SPPRs) specified in the *Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2018) (SPPR 1 and SPPR 4), and to prepare a Building Height Strategy for the larger urban centres of the county.



Observation 1 – Development Management Standards

The planning authority is requested to omit the minimum separation distances between opposing windows, minimum private open space provision and instead focus on assessing individual development proposals on performance based criteria dependent on location and individual site characteristics in accordance with the provisions of NPO 13.

2.5 School Sites

Section 20 (2)(I) of the Act requires that a development plan includes objectives for the 'provision, or facilitation of the provision, of services for the community including, in particular, schools, creches and other education and childcare facilities'.

The Office notes that the policies and objectives outlined in the draft Plan in relation to the provision of lands for educational purposes are generally in accordance with *The Provision of Schools and the Planning System: A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities* (2008).

However, given the capacity for significant population increases outlined in the core strategy, the Office advises the planning authority to ensure that the draft Plan provides protection for existing school sites that may be required for the expansion of school facilities in the future and ensures that the identification of future schools sites is prioritised in the preparation of any forthcoming LAPs, Masterplans and Framework plans (Recommendation 5).

Observation 2 – School Sites

Having regard to the urban nature of the plan area, and the level of population change envisaged for some of the larger urban areas in particular, the planning authority is requested to:

(i) include a policy to retain and protect existing school sites within the Plan area unless it has been determined in agreement with the Department of



Education that the use of the site for school provision is no longer required; and

(ii) include and objective to ensure that the identification of future schools sites is prioritised in the preparation of any forthcoming LAPs, Masterplans and Framework plans.

3. Housing Strategy and relevant policies

3.1 Build to Rent

The Office notes that policies SPQHP31 in section 3.5.9.3 and Objective DMSO25 in section 14.7.14 of the draft Plan all directly apply to the Build to Rent (BTR) schemes, and therein, require applicants to demonstrate that there is no overconcentration of this housing type within an area.

While the Office acknowledges that there are currently concerns around the dominant nature of the BTR housing typology, it must also be recognised that the development plan policies will apply over a six-year period, and as such, a longer-term view on the delivery of these policies must be considered.

The Office notes that Policy SPQHP31 requires that applications for BTR schemes must demonstrate that there is not an over concentration of BTR within an area, which is defined as being 1km of the site. The criteria by which an over concentration will be assessed includes number and scale of other permitted BTR within 1km of the site; household tenure and housing type of existing housing stock in the vicinity and the proximity of the proposal to high capacity public transport stops and interchanges. The Housing Strategy is silent on the extent of BTR typology within the plan area and it is unclear what the rationale is for the inclusion of such criteria. BTR typology is only one form of housing tenure and to apply the restrictions as set out to one form of housing tenure, without any evidential basis, is contrary to national housing policy, which aims to increase the supply of housing across all tenures and NPO 4 which seeks to ensure that urban places are home to diverse and integrated communities.



Recommendation 9 - Build to Rent

Having regard to NPO 4 of the National Planning Framework to ensure that urban places are home to diverse and integrated communities, and to the lack of evidential basis with respect to any over concentration of BTR schemes within the plan area in the Housing Strategy or the draft Plan, the planning authority is required to omit Policy SPQHP32 unless an evidence-based rationale for the inclusion of the policy consistent with national policy can be demonstrated.

4. Rural Housing and Regeneration

4.1 Rural housing policy

In respect of rural in the open countryside, the Office notes that the entire rural area of Fingal County is appropriately identified as being under strong urban influence and it is the policy of the council to restrict the spread of urban generated dwellings into rural and high amenity areas.

While the rural housing policy is generally consistent with NPO 19, SPQHO79 and Table 3.5 include references to family ties, which are not consistent with the provision of housing in the countryside based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in a rural area in accordance with NPO 19.

In addition, the review and consolidation of the extent of land zoned for 'Rural Village' and 'Rural Cluster' under Recommendation 3 above, will also be critical to avoiding ribbon development on the edge of small villages stretching into the open countryside consistent with the guidance in the *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2005).



Recommendation 10 - Rural Housing Policy

Having regard to NPO 19 of the NPF and RPO 4.80 and 4.81 of the RSES, and Rural (RU), Greenbelt (GB) and High Amenity (AM) zoning objectives in the draft Plan, the planning authority is required to review the rural housing policies in the draft Plan to ensure that the specified criteria for rural housing is linked to demonstrable social or economic 'need' to live in a rural area and siting and design criteria for rural housing having regard to National Policy Objective 19 and the *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2005).

5. Economic Development and Employment

5.1 Employment Zoned Land

In terms of consistency with national planning policy, it is critical that employment zonings do not set up a conflict with the National Strategic Outcomes in the NPF for compact growth, sustainable mobility and transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society by facilitating development in areas poorly served by public transport.

Care must also be taken to ensure that employment zonings are made having regard to the policy for national roads set out in section 2.5 and 2.7 of the *Spatial Planning* and *National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2012) and the National Strategic Outcome for enhanced regional accessibility.

In this context, the economic strategy of the RSES sets out Guiding Principles for the location of strategic employment areas. In particular, RPO 5.6 of the Dublin MASP requires a sequential approach with a focus on the re-intensification of employment lands within the M50 and at selected strategic development areas, and the provision of appropriate employment densities alongside the provision of high quality public transport corridors.

In relation to the Fingal draft Plan, the Office welcomes the inclusion of the *Economic* and *Employment Land Use Study Report*, which has informed the economic strategy



of the draft Plan. It is noted that this report identifies circa 2,966 hectares of undeveloped land as zoned and available for employment uses within the County.

The Office notes that this extent of zoned land far exceeds that of similar neighbouring planning authorities, and considers that a more detailed evidence based rationale for the extent of employ zoned land is required consistent with section 6.2.5 of the *draft Development Plan Guidelines* (2021).

It is also critical that the location of land zoned for employment uses is consistent with the national and regional policy framework outlined above, and that land is not zoned in locations where it would be in conflict with the principle of compact growth and the implementation of sustainable transportation objectives.

The Office notes, that there are substantial land banks zoned for employment generating uses isolated from any settlement or strategic transport infrastructure projects, which if developed, would appear to be entirely car dependent. For example, the zoning of substantial landbanks in the North Blanchardstown area and along the N2 for "General Employment", which is indicated under Policy EEP2 as being for intensive employment purposes, is of particular concern given that these areas are inaccessible to both current and planned public transport services.

Recommendation 11 - Employment Zoned Land

Having regard to National Strategic Outcomes for compact growth, sustainable mobility and transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society, and enhanced regional accessibility, NPO 10, the principles of sequential approach to zoning set out in the *Development Plans Guidelines* (2007) and section 6.2.5 of the *draft Development Plans Guidelines* (2021), the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy*, section 2.5 and 2.7 of the *Spatial Planning and National Road Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2012), the planning authority is required to provide robust justification for the extent and location of employment zoned land and to demonstrate that the criteria of the aforementioned national and regional policy



have been satisfied, and specifically in respect of the following employment zonings:

- (i) lands zoned for high intensity employment uses located within the north Blanchardstown Area between the M2 and M3. The planning authority are advised to apply the sequential approach with lands contiguous to existing development and/or settlements being prioritised for high intensity employment zonings ahead of lands located further on the periphery where sustainable public transport infrastructure will not be provided during the lifetime of the draft Plan;
- (ii) lands zoned General Employment at the Junction 2 of the M2 at St Margaret's;
- (iii) lands zoned as Rural Business Cluster and Food Park located to the south of Coolquay rural village and south west of Corrstown Golf Club;
- (iv) lands zoned as General Employment north of Ashbourne to the east of the N2;
- (v) lands zoned as General Employment (circa 73ha) south of Balbriggan which extends across both sides of the M1; and
- (vi) undeveloped lands at Turvey (circa 20ha).

Where an evidence-based rationale consistent with national and regional policy cannot be provided for these, or any other employment zonings, the subject zoning objective should be removed from the draft Plan.

5.2 Retail

The Retail Hierarchy is set out in section 7.5.5 (table 7.2) with Dublin City Centre identified at Level 1. The *Retail Planning Guidelines* (2012) require retail strategies to define the boundaries of the core retail areas of major retail centres and these maps are included in Chapter 7, which is welcomed.



However, the Office notes that the inclusion of Rush, Lusk and Donabate as Level 3 Town and/or District Centres is not in accordance with the RSES Retail Hierarchy (Table 6.1) for the Region. There is no rationale provided for this and no county retail study has been prepared as an evidence basis for the designations of these additional towns as District Centres.

Recommendation 12 - Retail Hierarchy

Having regard to the *Retail Planning Guidelines* (2012), and the retail hierarchy set out in Table 6.1 of the RSES, the planning authority is required to revisit its intended approach to include Rush, Lusk and Donabate as Level 3 Town and/or District Centres that is contrary to the EMRA RSES Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area in terms of the scale and nature of retail and associated uses proposed to be accommodated, to ensure consistency with the provisions of the guidelines.

5.3 Extractive Industry

The NPF acknowledges the key role the planning process has to play in realising the potential of the extractive industries sector and the importance of identifying and protecting important reserves of aggregates and minerals from development that might prejudice their utilisation. Chapter 7, section 7.5.3.4 of the draft Plan sets out the policy objectives for the extractive industry. However, no map to identify the location of these resources within the county has been included and it is considered that this would be a welcome addition to the Plan and the policy objectives set out in this regard.

Observation 3 – Extractive Industry

Having regard to National Policy Objective 23 and the section 28 *Quarries and Ancillary Activities Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2004), the planning authority is requested to include a map to show the location of quarries and minerals across Fingal County.



6. Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

6.1 Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area

The Office welcomes the draft Plan's commitment to supporting the delivery of key public transport projects set out in the *Draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022 – 2042*. It is essential that in providing for expansion and growth of the county that future short-term and long-term public transport infrastructure of the Greater Dublin Area is considered and that the zoning of lands is consistent with the availability, or not, of public transport infrastructure having regard to the draft GDA Transport Strategy.

Furthermore the Office considers that the draft Plan presents an opportunity for the planning authority to further align, and support, the delivery of strategic public transport infrastructure projects and the associated enabling infrastructure.

In this regard policy CMP20 should be expanded to include a reference to the Blanchardstown Town Centre Bus Interchange which is a critical piece of the BusConnects Core Bus Corridor project. It is also imperative that the preparation of future land use plans for areas that will benefit from the significant public transport projects of BusConnect, Dart + and Metrolink ensure the integration of these projects in an appropriate manner.

Recommendation 13 - Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area

In accordance with section 9(6A) of the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as amended, and the *Draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022* – *2042*, and having regard to the requirement to include objectives for the promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies under section 10(2)(n) of the Act, the planning authority is required, in consultation with the National Transport Authority (and Transport Infrastructure Ireland), as appropriate, to:



- clarify that masterplans for Estuary Central, Estuary East, Seatown and Dardistown will be reviewed and updated to reflect the Metrolink project;
 and
- (ii) include a policy objective to secure the development of Park and Ride facilities and to provide a facility in the Lissenhall area.

6.2 Modal Share Targets

The Office considers that the draft Plan sets out clear measures to implement the relevant section 28 guidelines and policy documents, including appropriate development management standards, for example maximum rather than minimum parking standards.

However the draft Plan would benefit from promoting the *National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI)* by aligning the policies and objectives to the modal hierarchy of 1. Active Travel; 2. Public Transport; 3. Private Vehicles as promoted in the NIFTI.

Furthermore, the draft Plan does not provide baseline figures for the existing modal split for existing settlements and including baseline figures would enable the setting of achievable targets for modal change for individual settlements (e.g. Balbriggan as part of the Local Transport Plans) and/or by settlement type (self-sustaining growth towns, etc.).

Inclusion of baseline figures and targets for modal share would also form a basis for effective monitoring in the implementation of the local authority's movement strategy and climate change strategy, highlighting where implementation needs to be stepped up or addressed in subsequent reviews of the Development Plan.



Recommendation 14 - Modal Share Targets

In order to ensure the effective planning, implementation and monitoring of the development plan requirements under section 10(2)(n) of the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as amended, the planning authority is required, in consultation with the National Transport Authority (and Transport Infrastructure Ireland), as appropriate, to:

- (i) enhance Chapter 6 to include existing baseline figures for modal share for the overall county and modal share targets for the plan period. It is recommended that this could best be provided at individual settlement level for the larger settlements, and at aggregate level for rural towns and villages and the open countryside; and
- (ii) provide an effective monitoring regime for the implementation of the planning authority's sustainable transport strategy and the modal share targets in particular.

6.3 Strategic National Road Network

The Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012) require the planning authority to ensure that the strategic traffic function of national roads is maintained by limiting the extent of development that would give rise to the generation of short trip traffic on national roads.

The guidelines require the authority to assess the trip generation aspects of any land use zoning objectives and how such trip generation is to be catered for, promoting the use of sustainable modes, while protecting the strategic function of the national roads network. It also requires the plan to include policies, which seek to maintain and protect the safety, capacity and efficiency of national roads and associated junctions.

In addition to the matters raised in respect of the location of certain employment zoning objectives under Recommendation 11 above, all of the sites identified are



also located in proximity to junctions on the national road network and will need to be justified with regard to their potential impact on the road network.

A number of key policies and objectives of the plan should also be strengthened and enhanced to safeguard the national network consistent with the section 28 guidelines.

Recommendation 15 - Strategic National Road Network

Having regard to the provisions of the *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2012) safeguarding the strategic function of the existing national road network, and associated junctions, the planning authority is required to strengthen DMSO117 to include specific reference to, and to limit new or intensified access onto all national roads (not just motorways), in accordance with the *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2012)

7. Climate Action and Renewable Energy

The *draft Development Plan Guidelines* (2021) place considerable emphasis on climate action (adaptation and mitigation). Balancing growth with sustainable approaches to development, land-use and transportation are key policy decisions to be made through the development plan. To this end, in responding to the recommendations relating to compact growth (Recommendation 6) and flood risk management (Recommendation 16) will be crucial to ensure compliance with the requirements set out under section 10(2)(n) of the Act and the *draft Development Plan Guidelines* (2021).

The overall approach of the planning authority to climate action is set out in chapter 5 of the draft Plan, but extends throughout the draft Plan, including in its overall approach to sustainable settlement and transport strategy for the county. In general, the Office welcomes this approach. However, the manner of addressing climate change in statutory development plans is the subject of ongoing policy development. Accordingly, it would be prudent to include an objective in the draft Plan to the effect



that an assessment will be undertaken in relation to the implications of the introduction of such future policy mechanisms, with a view to varying the draft Plan as made to ensure consistency with relevant climate assessment and development plan guidelines.

While the Office notes the support in the draft Plan for increased use of renewable energy and development of renewable energy infrastructure, it is noted that there is no policy objective to support and/or deliver on the potential of district heating systems within the Plan area.

Observation 4 – Climate Change

Given the importance attributed to climate action by Government, as evidenced by, inter alia, the recent Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act (2021) and the Climate Action Plan 2021, and to ensure the Plan will be consistent with the approach to climate action recommended in the draft Development Plan Guidelines (2021) as adopted or any other relevant guidelines, the planning authority is advised that the draft Plan should also include:

- (i) an objective to consider a variation of the Plan within a reasonable period of time; and
- (ii) an objective to identify suitable location(s) for the delivery of district heating systems within the plan area.

8. Flood Risk Management

The Office welcomes the reference to the section 28 guidelines the *Planning System* and *Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2009), the preparation of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and the inclusion of a number of policies and objectives such as IUP13 and IUO16, which are key factors in terms of flood migration and climate action.



However the flood risk zones have not been overlaid on the land use zoning map in order to clearly outline what lands are impacted by flood risk and to assess if the sequential approach has been applied.

Furthermore, the Justification Test applied is not in accordance with the Justification Test outlined in Box 4.1 of the section 28 *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management, Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2009) and will need to be reviewed in accordance with the guidelines to fully determine that the sequential approach to flood risk management based on avoidance, reduction and mitigation of flood risk.

The Office also notes that the land use zoning objectives GB (Greenbelt), HA (High Amenity) and HT (High Technology) provide for vulnerable development to be permitted within these objectives which is not appropriate in flood zones A or B, unless a plan making Justification Test can be satisifed. Alternatively, consideration should be given to the inclusion of policies and/or objectives limiting any vulnerable uses in these land use zonings where there is an identified flood risk.

The Office also considers that a reference to the recently published DHLGH 'Nature Based Solutions to the Management of Rainwater and Surface Water Runoff in Urban Areas, Water Sensitive Urban Design Best Practice Interim Guidance Document' (November, 2021), prepared under the Local Authority Waters Programme, into Objective IUO10 would further strengthen the policy framework in this area.

Recommendation 16 - Flood Risk Management

Having regard to the detailed requirements of *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management, Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2009) and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government Circular PL 2/2014, the planning authority is required to:



- (i) overlay the land use zoning maps and the flood maps prepared in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in order to clearly outline the sites at risk of flooding;
- (ii) carry out a Plan-Making Justification Test in accordance with the Justification Test outined in Box 4.1 and omit or amend proposed zonings that do not meet the Justification Test in accordance with the provisions of Guidelines and Circular;
- (iii) where sites are zoned for vulnerable development having satisfied the requirements of the Justification Test under (ii) above, a policy objective should be included to ensure that the sequential approach is applied and that there is no encroachment onto or loss of the flood plain or that only water compatible development would be permitted for the lands identified as being at risk of flooding; and
- (iv) include reference to the recently published "Nature-based Solutions to the Management of Rainwater and Surface Water Runoff in Urban Areas -Water Sensitive Urban Design - Best Practice Interim Guidance Document (2021).

9. Environment, Heritage and Amenities

9.1 Rights of Way

Section 10(2)(o) of the Act requires public rights of way to be located on both a map and on a list appended to the development plan. Notwithstanding objective CMO13 which sets out to identify further rights of way over the plan period, it is considered that mapping of these should also be provided for as required under the Act and as regarded as best practice in the OPRs Case Study Paper CSP01.



Recommendation 17 –Rights of Way

Having regard to the requirements of Section 10(2)(o) of the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as amended, the planning authority is advised to prepare and include maps identifying public rights of way.

9.2 Environmental Assessments

The Office notes that the environmental report (SEA) concludes that no significant residual adverse impacts are identified in the SEA taking into account the detailed mitigation, which has been integrated into the draft Plan. The SEA is considered to be comprehensive and generally consistent with the requirements of the section 28 Guidelines.

The Natura Impact Report (NIR) concludes that having incorporated mitigation measures the draft Plan is not foreseen to give rise to any adverse effects on the integrity of the European sites, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, in view of the conservation objectives of the habitats or species for which the subject sites have been designated. The Office notes that the AA process is ongoing and will inform and be concluded at adoption of the Plan.

10. Implementation and Monitoring

The inclusion of a strategy for implementation and monitoring in Chapter 12 of the draft Plan is welcomed. This is particularly important given the emphasis on monitoring and implementation in the recently published *draft Development Plan Guidelines* (2021). These guidelines recommend a monitoring task for the strategic functions relating to Core Strategy Monitoring and Plan Objectives Monitoring.

The Office advises that a more targeted and detailed approach to implementation and monitoring could be provided to focus on the anticipated or proposed key outcomes of the plan, as determined by the planning authority, such as the core strategy (e.g. population growth and housing delivery), urban and rural regeneration, the sustainable transport strategy (e.g. modal share, preparation of Local Transport



Plan), climate action (e.g. renewable energy development, biodiversity and landscape (e.g. status of designate habitats) and others

Observation 5 – Implementation and Monitoring

Having regard to the commitment of the planning authority to securing and monitoring the implementation of the strategies, policies and objectives of the draft Plan, the Office requests the planning authority to consider how Chapter 12 'Implementation and Monitoring' could be amended to ensure that any monitoring is strategic in nature consistent with Part 10 of the *Development Plans Guidelines* for Planning Authorities - Draft for Consultation (2021).

11. General and Procedural Matters

11.1 Mapping

The draft Plan includes a suite of maps, which illustrate key requirements including the land use zoning objectives, strategic objectives, existing and proposed transport infrastructure and built and natural heritage sites for the County. The Office also welcomes the inclusion of online interactive mapping, which allows for the inclusion of multiple layers of mapping to be presented in a very user-friendly manner with clear visual representation of what the development plan comprises and provides a greater understanding of its spatial impact.

It is considered, however, that some small changes could be made to improve the clarity of the plan.

In particular, the strategic land reserves at Dunsink and Lissenhall should be clearly outlined as strategic and not available for development over the plan period on the land use zoning maps.



Observation 6 – Mapping

The planning authority is requested to review the land use zoning maps to provide greater clarity with respect to the policy objectives set out in the Plan and how their implications are presented spatially. Specifically the planning authority should ensure the following:

- (i) clearly differentiate between the following land use zonings on the maps:
 - a) GB (greenbelt), OS (open space) and HA (high amenity) areas
 - b) RB (rural business) and RV (rural village) and RC (rural cluster)
 - c) TC (town and district centre) and MC (major centre)
 - d) Any lands identified as 'Strategic Reserve';
- (ii) include the BusConnects Core Bus Corridor routes as per the *Draft*Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022 2042; and
- (iii) include the map based local objectives are included with Chapter 13 Land Use Zoning.

Summary

The Office requests that your authority addresses the recommendations and observations outlined above. As you are aware, the report of the chief executive of your authority prepared for the elected members under section 12 of the Act must summarise these recommendations and the manner in which they will be addressed.

In accordance with section 12(5)(aa), where the planning authority decides not to comply with any of the Office's recommendations made in the draft Plan and report, they shall inform the Office, by notice in writing containing the reasons for the decision.

At the end of the process, your authority is required to notify this Office within five working days of the decision of the planning authority in relation to the draft Plan.



Where your authority decides not to comply with the recommendations of the Office, or otherwise makes the plan in such a manner as to be inconsistent with the recommendations of the Office, the chief executive must inform the Office accordingly and state the reasons for the decision of the planning authority.

Please feel free to contact the staff of the Office in the context of your authority's responses to the above, which we would be happy to facilitate. Contact can be initiated through plans@opr.ie.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Marie O'Connor

Deputy Regulator and Director of Plans Evaluations