

31st May 2022

Senior Planner,
Planning Department,
Cork County Council,
County Hall,
Cork,
T12 R2NC.

Re: Adopted Cork County Development Plan 2022 - 2028

A chara,

The Office of the Planning Regulator (the Office) acknowledges the adoption of the Cork County Development Plan 2022 - 2028 (the Plan) by the members of Cork County Council on 25 April 2022.

The Office also acknowledges receipt of your letter of 3 May 2022, further to section 31(AM)(6) of the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as amended (the Act).

The Office has reviewed the adopted Plan, and welcomes the decision of the planning authority to comply with the majority of recommendations included in its submission on the draft Plan, and to comply, in whole or in part, with many of the MA recommendations made in its submission at material alterations stage.

Where the recommendations of the Office were not complied with, the Office gave careful consideration to the reasons of elected members and, with the exception of certain specific matters, accepted that these reasons addressed the matters raised by the Office.

However, in relation to recommendations of the Office concerning: the preparation of a joint retail strategy with Cork City Council; the introduction of policy and an objective for a retail outlet centre; the amendment of residential density standards for two sites in the vicinity of the train station in Carrigtwohill; an additional residential zoning objective outside the settlement boundary for Bantry; and two additional employment zonings in the vicinity of M8 junction 15; the Office has made a recommendation to the Minister in respect of a proposed draft direction in accordance with the legislative requirements set out in section 31(AM) of the Act.

You will note that this correspondence, issued 20 May 2022, preceded the recent ruling of the High Court in relation to the Minister's letter issued under section 9(7) of the Act.

The Office's recommendation to the Minister of a proposed draft direction and notice letter pursuant to section 31(AM), will be made available on the [Office's website](#), together with this [letter](#).

As you will be aware, the matter is now to be determined by the Minister under section 31 of the Act.

With the exception of the specific matters raised in the 31AM(8) notice, the Office welcomes the making of a comprehensive Plan to provide for much needed housing, infrastructure, employment and amenities over the plan period in a manner that is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

In particular, the Office fully acknowledges the scale of the work involved in bringing all land use zoning objectives into the county development plan and the challenges in responding to new national and regional policy in the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

The Plan provides a positive framework for the spatial development of the county through the prioritisation of the main towns and key villages in the Metropolitan Area, having regard to the settlement framework of the RSES and the Cork MASP and, generally, the National Strategic Objective for compact growth.

Further, the Office acknowledges the positive steps taken to integrate the growth strategy with existing and/or proposed high quality public transport infrastructure, and the policy support in the Plan to promote active and sustainable transport modes aligning with the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy.

The Plan also provides for the protection and improvement of environmental, heritage and amenities and includes an appropriate renewable energy strategy for the county. Such measures have the potential to address pressing environmental concerns, including climate change and biodiversity loss affecting the county.

Although the Office considers the provisions for Traveller accommodation in the Plan to be less than optimum, it notes the nature and extent of housing need (and expressed demand) identified by the planning authority in an evidence-based approach in the

Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024, prepared under the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998. The Office considers that further consideration as to how the authority can best address the specialised housing needs of the Traveller community, through its range of functions, would be of benefit.

Finally, the Office would again commend the planning authority for its use of interactive GIS in the plan-making process, which is considered to represent best practice and can be anticipated to increase the public's interaction with the Plan and their understanding of how it relates to their local area.

Excepting the specific issues detailed in the section 38AM(8) notice, the Office is generally satisfied with the manner in which its recommendations and observations have been addressed during the Plan preparation process.

In conclusion, the Office generally welcomes the adoption of the Cork County Development Plan 2022 - 2028, and looks forward to continued positive engagement with the planning authority into the future.

Is mise le meas,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "AM O'Connor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a diagonal slash at the end.

Anne Marie O'Connor

Deputy Regulator and Director of Plans Evaluations
