

29<sup>th</sup> June 2022

Planning Department,  
Waterford City and County Council,  
Menapia Building,  
The Mall,  
Waterford City.

**Re: Adopted Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022-2028**

A chara,

The Office of the Planning Regulator (the Office) acknowledges the adoption of the Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 (the Plan), by the members of Waterford City and County Council on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022. The Office also acknowledges receipt of your letter dated 10<sup>th</sup> June 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 in accordance with the legislative requirements set out in section 31(AM) of the Act.

The Office wishes to congratulate the planning authority on the adoption of a well-considered and evidence-based City and County Development Plan, which provides a coherent and appropriate strategy for the delivery of key national planning objectives including the promotion of compact growth and town and village centre regeneration.

The preparation of the City Neighbourhood Strategy, Appendix 21 ‘Waterford City and County Regeneration and Opportunity Sites’, and inclusion of brownfield targets for the county’s settlements within the core strategy table are all welcomed and demonstrates the planning authority’s objective to support compact growth and the provisions of NSO 1 of the National Planning Framework. Furthermore the delivery of a robust renewable energy strategy, which provides for measurable renewable energy targets, demonstrates the planning authority’s clear commitment to supporting national renewable energy targets under the *Climate Action Plan 2021*.

The Plan is also presented in a systematic and coherent manner, including GIS mapping for land use zonings, which allows all parties to access and understand the Plan, and the Office would like to commend the planning authority for this approach.

In general, the Office welcomes the progress made in addressing the extent of residential zonings, and the introduction of residential phasing which provides a focus for growth in a manner that supports sequential development and compact growth of the county's towns and villages, whilst integrating with the delivery of infrastructure and accessibility to services.

Furthermore the Office welcomes the adoption of the Plan with minor modifications concerning population targets and the core strategy table respectively to adhere to the typology set out in the *Development Plans (Appendix A) Guidelines for Planning Authorities – Draft for Consultation (2021)*. These ambitious growth targets will allow Waterford to grow as a 'Regional City of Scale', by accommodating an additional population of 50%-60% by 2040, and is welcomed.

The Office also commends the planning authority for the adoption of the Plan without the proposed land use zonings identified by MA Recommendation 4 which demonstrates the planning authority's clear commitment to avoiding areas at risk of flooding.

However, and notwithstanding the good progress made by your authority in addressing peripheral and non-sequential land use residential zonings during the draft plan and material alteration stages of the plan, the Office is concerned about further expansion of residential development in the Duckspool area of Dungarvan.

The Office supports the refocussing of development around the town centre of Dungarvan which promotes consolidation, regeneration, and enhances opportunities for sustainable travel thus reducing journey times. In this regard the Office is supportive of the development plan strategy to prioritise regeneration on sites that are amenable to walking and cycling to the town centre, such as Shandon and Kilrush, and whereby the most central development sites in the town are prioritised for new development first.

While the Office accepts the New Residential zonings in Duckspool in this instance, the approach is less sustainable in the future as it would continue the spread of development westwards in an area further from the town centre and less accessible to the town centre for active travel modes.

Regarding the decision of the Council not to comply with MA Recommendation 2 concerning zoning Material Amendment 213 (Monang), the Office acknowledges the Council's rationale on the material amendment and notes the introduction of a specific development objective for these lands (Specific Objective DGDO 22) ensuring they are developed out subject to the preparation of a master plan in consultation with the planning authority, and providing for planned and sustainable development.

In general, the Office welcomes the Council's approach in responding to MA Recommendation 3 and the omission of zoning objectives on peripheral lands which would have potentially leapfrogged the development of more centrally located land.

Notwithstanding, the Office advises the planning authority to closely monitor development activity in the aforementioned settlements over the plan period, consistent with the development policy objectives CS 03, CS 07 and CS 12 that strongly support compact growth and the regeneration and renewal of towns and villages throughout the county.

Overall, however, the Office is satisfied with the outcome of the adopted Plan and the manner in which the vast majority of its recommendations and observations were addressed, and considers that the Plan as adopted sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area that is consistent with national and regional policy.

In conclusion, the Office welcomes the adoption of the Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022 – 2028, and looks forward to continued engagement with Waterford City and County Council in the implementation of national and regional policy at the local level.

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**Anne Marie O'Connor**  
Deputy Planning Regulator and Director of Plans Evaluation

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