

9th August 2022

Senior Planner,
Forward/Strategic Planning,
Limerick City and County Council,
Merchant's Quay,
Limerick
V94 EH90

Re: Adopted Limerick City & County Development Plan 2022 - 2028

A chara,

The Office of the Planning Regulator (the Office) acknowledges the adoption of the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028 (the Plan) by the members of Limerick City and County Council on 17th June 2022.

The Office also acknowledges receipt of your notice letter dated 23rd 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, and notes the decision of the planning authority not to comply, in whole or in part, with a number of the recommendations included in its submissions to the draft Plan and at material alterations stage.

Where the recommendations of the Office were not complied with, the Office gave careful consideration to the reasons given by the 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:

- MA Recommendation 2 in relation to MA no. 149 which zoned lands at Ballysimon House for a data centre; and
- MA Recommendation 4 in relation to several material amendments which proposed to zone lands in areas identified as being at risk of flooding for vulnerable uses.

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 31AM of the Act.

The Office's recommendation to the Minister of a proposed draft direction and notice letter pursuant to section 31AM, has been 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 Plan which provides a clear strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Limerick City and County over the next six years.

This Plan is particularly important for Limerick, not only as the first development plan since the publication of the government's National Planning Framework and the important role of Limerick City as a driver of regional growth, but also as the first development plan for the City and County since the merger of both authorities.

In this respect the Office considers that the Plan provides a strong blueprint for the development of Limerick which supports the growth of the city and county as an attractive place to live, work, study and invest.

In particular, the Office welcomes the Plan's focus on future housing development within existing built up areas of towns, and in areas capable of being serviced by social and physical infrastructure, consistent with national policy. This approach has been informed by the extensive work your authority undertook to identify the infrastructure capacity of lands. In real terms, this will ensure new and existing residential developments are in the right locations with the required recreation and amenity infrastructure to create sustainable, healthy, inclusive and resilient communities.

The Office also welcomes the positive approach to sustainable transport set out in the Plan which, together with the compact growth of towns, is necessary to address climate change over the plan period. Ultimately, this focus, which prioritises walking, cycling and public transport, will reduce car-dependency and result in an enhanced quality of life for all citizens.

The Office acknowledges the scale of work involved in developing a coherent, rational policy approach to building heights through the comprehensive building height study, which provides practical advice, and specific and tailored guidance for various locations across the city.

The Office also acknowledges the detailed work carried out in preparing an objective strategic flood risk assessment in accordance with the section 28 Guidelines to inform the proposed zoning objectives of the Plan.

All of the above demonstrate a strong evidence-based approach adopted by your authority in the making of the Development Plan.


The Office also appreciates the extent to which land use zoning objectives were included in the Plan for much of the metropolitan area and for the majority of settlements. Notwithstanding that zoning objectives were not included for several of the larger settlements, the Office welcomes the clear direction that the core strategy provides in terms of the extent of zoning required in future Local Area Plans (LAPs) to accommodate projected growth for relevant settlements. This approach provides certainty for all parties, and will enable the planning authority to focus on qualitative planning issues and implementation in the LAP preparation process.

Finally, the Office would like to, again, commend the very extensive work undertaken by the planning authority in responding to the many issues raised by the Office in its recommendations and observations, which was undertaken in a very positive and constructive manner.

With the exception of the specific issues detailed in the section 31AM(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 Limerick Development Plan, and looks forward to continued positive engagement with the planning authority into the future.

Is mise le meas,

Handwritten signature in black ink that reads "AM O'Connor".

Anne Marie O'Connor

Deputy Regulator and Director of Plans Evaluations
