

23rd September 2025

Laois County Council,
Senior Planner,
Áras an Chontae,
James Fintan Lalor Ave,
Portlaoise,
Co. Laois.

Re: Adopted Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031

A chara,

The Office of the Planning Regulator (the Office) acknowledges the adoption of the Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031 (Joint Local Area Plan) on 16th and 30th June 2025, by the members of Offaly County Council and Laois County Council (the Planning Authorities), respectively. The Office also acknowledges receipt of your letter of 7th July 2025, further to section 31AO(5) 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 31AO of the Act.

In particular, the Office notes the Planning Authorities' approach to MA Recommendation 3, which recommended that the Planning Authorities make the Joint Local Area Plan without MA 44 and MA 45, which rezoned lands from Community, Educational and Institutional to Residential 1 – Existing Residential, and notes the Chief Executive's Report which supports this recommendation. However, the letter from Laois County Council dated 7th July 2025, further to section 31AO(5), advised that this recommendation was not accepted at the council meeting on 30th June and instead the Joint Local Area Plan was made with MA 44 and MA 45. The reasons for the decision included proximity to the town centre, proximity to the existing Residential lands and that the lands are serviced.

While the Office acknowledges the reasons for the members to rezone these subject lands for residential use, the Department of Education and Youth raised an important concern regarding the need for future school expansion. The Office would therefore

recommend further strategic discussions with the Department of Education and Youth regarding the land requirement for future educational needs in Portarlington.

Notwithstanding the above, the Office is satisfied with the overall outcome of the adopted Joint Local Area Plan and the manner in which the vast majority of its recommendations and observations were addressed at draft plan and material alterations stages.

In conclusion, the Office welcomes the adoption of the Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031 and looks forward to continued engagement with Laois County Council in the implementation of national and regional policy at the local level.

Is mise le meas,



Anne Marie O'Connor

Deputy Regulator and Director of Plans Evaluation

Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015