



Oifig an
Rialaitheora Pleanála
Office of the
Planning Regulator

17th December 2025

Senior Planner,
Kilkenny County Council,
John Street,
Kilkenny.

**Re: Proposed Variation No. 7 to the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan
2021-2027**

A chara,

Thank you for your authority's work in preparing the Proposed Variation No. 7 (proposed Variation) to the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 (County Development Plan).

As Kilkenny County Council (Planning Authority) is aware, a key function of the Office of the Planning Regulator (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 proposed Variation under the provisions of sections 31AM(1) and 31AM(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (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, planning authorities are requested to implement or address recommendation(s) made by the Office in order to ensure consistency with the relevant policy and legislative provisions.

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. Planning authorities are requested by the Office to give full consideration to the advice contained in a submission.

On adoption of the plan, the Office will consider whether the plan has been made in a manner consistent with the recommendations of the Office and whether the plan sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and development of the area concerned.

Overview

The Office acknowledges the purpose of the proposed Variation to rezone lands at Upper Patrick Street / Jacob Street, Kilkenny City to accommodate infill housing and to address two Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) requests for rezoning at Leggettsrath West and Kilcreene.

With the exception of the matter raised below, the Office is generally satisfied that the proposed changes are consistent with the objectives of the National Planning Framework First Revision (2025) (NPF) and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Regional Assembly.

The Office does, however, have concerns in relation to the proposed rezoning of the well-located and serviced site at Leggettsrath West.

The submission below has been prepared to provide a strategic level input to your authority in finalising the proposed Variation. It is within the above context that the submission sets out one (1) recommendation.

Key theme	Recommendation	Observation
RZLT request for rezoning at Leggettsrath West	Recommendation 1	-

1. RZLT request for rezoning at Leggettsrath West

The Office recognises that the proposed rezoned of lands at Leggettsrath West is in response to a request to rezone the lands from Existing Residential to Agricultural due to an existing economic activity on the lands, in accordance with policy and objective 1(a) of the Residential Zoned Land Tax - Change in Zoning of Lands Subject to Existing Economic Activity, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024).

The Office understands that a process to implement the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements (2025) is currently being undertaken by the Planning Authority.

The recently published housing plan, Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025-2030, also emphasises the need for a strong pipeline of zoned and serviced land to support the delivery of 300,000 new homes to 2030, stating:

...Government will ensure that new homes are built in the right locations, with the necessary services and community facilities in place, in keeping with our climate action goals, and the wider spatial growth of the State.

In this context, the Office notes that the site at Leggettsrath West is serviced and well located in terms of its proximity to the city centre. The proposed rezoning of the site risks pushing much-needed housing to more peripheral locations, which are farther from existing and future services and amenities, and are more car-dependent with consequent implications for carbon emission and targets under the Climate Action Plan 2025.

The rationale for this zoning amendment is currently unclear. The Office recommends that the proposed rezoning should be reconsidered, and if a justification aligned with national and regional policy cannot be provided, the land should remain zoned for housing to support sustainable development and meet housing needs.

Recommendation 1 – RZLT request for rezoning at Leggettsrath West

Having regard to the compact and sustainable growth of Kilkenny City and in particular to:

- NPO 42 of the NPF to target the delivery of housing to accommodate approximately 50,000 additional homes per annum to 2040;
- NPO 43 of the NPF to prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development; and
- NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements (2025),

the Office recommends that the Planning Authority:

- i. provides a clear rationale for the rezoning of the site at Leggettsrath West, Kilkenny City from Existing Residential to Agricultural; and

- ii. if a clear rationale cannot be provided the proposed Variation should be amended to omit the rezoning of the land at Leggettsrath West, Kilkenny City from Existing Residential to Agricultural.

Summary

The Office requests that your authority addresses the recommendation outlined above. As you are aware, the report of the chief executive of your authority prepared for the elected members under section 13 of the Act must summarise these recommendations and the manner in which they will be addressed.

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 proposed Variation. 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 made by this Office, then the chief executive shall inform the Office and give reasons for this decision.

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.

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