



19th December 2025

Senior Planner,
Planning Department,
City Hall,
College Road,
Galway,
H91X4K8.

Re: Proposed Variation No. 1 to the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029

A chara,

Thank you for your authority's work in preparing the Proposed Variation No. 1 (proposed Variation) to the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 (City Development Plan).

As Galway City 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 any recommendation(s) made by the Office in order to ensure consistency with the relevant policy and legislative provisions.

Observations take the form of a request for further information, justification on a particular matter, or clarification regarding particular provisions of a plan on issues that are required to ensure alignment with policy and legislative provisions. Planning authorities are advised by the Office to action an observation.

A submission can also 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 proposed Variation seeks to amend the zoning for lands to the southwest of Roscam from Residential (R2) to Agriculture (A) under the provisions of section 13 of the Act and 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) (RZLT existing economic activity guidelines)..

Having reviewed the proposed Variation against the relevant criteria set out below, the Office is of the view that the proposed zoning amendment does not raise any concerns in relation to consistency with the legislative and policy requirements.

1. Compliance with statutory guidelines

The Office notes the following reasons as set out in the proposed Variation to support the rezoning of the subject lands:

- the land has an existing bona fide economic activity (agriculture) other than to serve the purposes of residential development;
- the land is zoned for the purposes of residential development (R2) in the City Development Plan; and
- the land is not required to meet the housing targets as set out in the core strategy of City Development Plan.

With regard to the first bullet point, the Office notes policy and objective 1(a) of RZLT existing economic activity guidelines which states that where an owner of lands which is subject to an existing bona fide economic activity other than to serve the purposes of residential development seeks an alternative zoning of their land, such a request should be

facilitated by the planning authority under the provisions of section 13 of the Act. The Office accepts the reason of ongoing economic activity in this regard.

In addition, the Office notes that the subject lands are not serviced by wastewater infrastructure and are not considered to be sustainably accessible due to the absence of pedestrian and cycle infrastructure and public transport.

With regard to the second and third bullet points above, the Office accepts the reason as set out in the proposed Variation, that the land is not required to meet the housing targets as set out in the core strategy of City Development Plan. The Settlement Capacity Audit included with the City Development Plan notes that there is a potential yield of 60 units across the entire land banks of R2 zoned lands. As such, the rezoning of the lands would not be significant.

The Office also understands that the Planning Authority is currently preparing its Chief Executive's Report in response to the section 28 NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines which require planning authorities to vary their development plans to reflect the housing growth requirements set out in the appendix 1 to the guidelines, and to provide for additional provision in terms of residential zoned land. The Office looks forward to working with the Planning Authority throughout this process.

The Office welcomes that the proposed Variation has been screened as part of the processes for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA). In this regard, the Office notes the determination that a full SEA is not required to be undertaken, and that the proposed Variation does not require an AA or the preparation of a Natura Impact Report.

Summary

As stated above, the Office accepts the rationale for the proposed Variation and is of the view that it does not raise any concerns in relation to consistency with the legislative and policy requirements.

Your authority is however required to notify the Office within **five working days** of the decision of the planning authority in relation to the proposed Variation.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "AM O'Connor". The "A" is large and stylized, and "O'Connor" is written in a cursive script.

Anne Marie O'Connor

Deputy Regulator and Director of Plans Evaluations

Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015