

3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026

Carlow County Council,  
Senior Executive Officer,  
Planning Department,  
Athy Road,  
Carlow.

**Re: Proposed Variation No. 4 to the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028**

A chara,

Thank you for your authority's work in preparing the Proposed Variation No. 4 (proposed Variation) to the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (County Development Plan).

As Carlow County Council (Planning Authority) is aware, a key function of the 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 further to its functions under section 546 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 (Act) and this submission has been prepared accordingly. Recommendations and observations are made further to section 58(9) and 546 of the Act.

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 National Planning Statements prepared by the Minister under section 25 of the Act or under section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (2000 Act). 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.

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

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 observation under the following key theme:

Key theme	Recommendation	Observation
<u>Flood Risk Management</u>	-	<u>Observation 1</u>

## Overview

The proposed Variation includes a number of changes to the County Development Plan including in relation to the implementation of the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements, Section 28 Guidelines (2025) (Housing Growth Guidelines) and the following elements:

- core strategy;
- policy amendments; and
- zoning amendments.

A report from the Chief Executive of Planning Authority, dated October 2025, outlined to the elected members how it was proposed to secure the objectives of the National Planning Framework First Revision (2025) (NPF) and the Housing Growth Guidelines.

The proposed Variation is the third of a suite of variations related to the Chief Executive's Report prepared in October 2025 which propose to increase housing yields on sites throughout Carlow and address housing delivery to the end of the current plan period. Variation No. 2 to the County Development Plan which related to the zoning of lands in

Muine Bheag has now been adopted and at the time of writing, the public consultation period related to Variation No. 3 to the County Development Plan, zoning of lands in Tullow, has just ended.

The Office has noted the updated core strategy table of the County Development Plan with respect to the quantum of new residential land to be zoned throughout the county. The Office has also noted the proposed rezoning of Strategic Reserve lands to New Residential lands in particular, which would result in an additional housing yield of c. 1,387 units on 55.5 ha

The Office is satisfied that proposed Variation is consistent with the core strategy, the settlement hierarchy, the objectives of the NPF, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Regional Assembly and the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024) and the Housing Growth Guidelines.

Furthermore, the Office has noted the low rate of housing completions in Carlow since the adoption of the County Development Plan in 2022 which has, in part, been attributed to wastewater constraints throughout the county. In this regard, the Office particularly notes and welcomes the improvements that have now been made in the District Towns of Muine Bheag and Tullow with respect to wastewater provision, where additional capacity of c. 2,500 population equivalent has been identified for Tullow and c. 3,500 population equivalent has been identified for Muine Bheag.

The Office also notes and welcomes the envisaged improvements in the wastewater system in the medium term to allow for additional capacity in the larger serviced villages of Ballinabrannagh, Clonegall and Tinryland c. 2028.

## **1. Flood Risk Management**

While section 2.1.1 of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Addendum Report states that there are no historic floods reported in the Pollerton Big area, a review of past flood events on the Office of Public Works Flood Info database indicates a recurring flood event at Pollerton Big, where a road is reportedly periodically impassable.

## Observation 1 – Flood Risk Management

Taking account of a submission received from the Office of Public Works (OPW), the Planning Authority is strongly advised to update all relevant maps to show a flood event at Pollerton Big to reflect data on past flood events as indicated on the OPW's FloodInfo.ie database.

### Summary

Taking account of the above therefore, the Office commends the Planning Authority for its efforts to meet and exceed the housing growth requirement figures as set out in the Housing Growth Guidelines. However, the Office requests that your authority addresses the observation outlined above.

Where the Planning Authority makes a variation, it is required to notify the Office within **one week** of the decision to adopt the Variation. Where your authority decides not to comply with the recommendations of the Office, then it shall inform the Office and provide reasons for this decision.

Your authority is also required to send the Office a copy of the Variation and any submissions made by the Minister, the relevant regional assembly and the National Transport Authority during the Variation preparation process.

Please be advised that planning authorities are also required to publish notice of the Variation within a week of the adoption, stating that a copy of the County Development Plan as varied will be available for inspection within five weeks of the adoption.

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](mailto: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

---