



Oifig an  
Rialaitheora Pleanála  
Office of the  
Planning Regulator

26<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Planning Department,  
Laois County Council,  
Aras an Chontae,  
JFL Avenue,  
Portlaoise,  
Co Laois.

**Re: Proposed Variation No. 2 to the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027**

A chara,

Thank you for your authority's work preparing the Proposed Variation No. 2 (proposed Variation) to the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027 (County Development Plan).

As Laois 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 pursuant to Part 3 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 (Act) and its functions under section 546 and this submission has been prepared accordingly.

Recommendations issued by the Office further to section 58(9) of the Act relate to clear breaches of the relevant legislative provisions, of the national or regional policy framework and/or of the policy of Government. 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 issued by the Office pursuant to section 546 of the Act may take the form of a request for further information or justification on a particular matter, or clarification regarding particular provisions of a plan on issues that are considered necessary to ensure alignment

with policy and legislative provisions. Planning authorities are requested 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 assess it in accordance with the statutory framework in section 63 of the Act.

## **Overview**

The Office welcomes proposed Variation to incorporate the land use zoning map (Map 12.1) and the associated objectives map (Map 12.2) for the Carlow-Graiguecullen Joint Local Area Plan 2024-2030 area into the County Development Plan and supports the proposed rezonings for residential use in line with the implementation of the housing growth requirements as set out in the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements (2025) (Housing Growth Guidelines).

Specifically, the Office supports and welcomes proposed zoning LS-GN-001, which provides for the rezoning of lands from Strategic Reserve to Residential 2 - New Residential. This is considered appropriate to assist in meeting the identified housing delivery targets and to ensure an adequate supply of serviced and developable land to support compact, consolidated growth.

In addition, the Office welcomes and supports the proposed zoning LS-GN-002, which seeks to rezone lands currently designated as Community & Education, Strategic Reserve, and Open Space & Amenity to a combination of New Residential and Open Space & Amenity. While this results in a reduction of lands zoned for Community & Education purposes, the Office is satisfied that sufficient lands remain available within the plan area to support the achievement of the County Development Plan objectives for the delivery of key social infrastructure in tandem with residential development. It is also noted that educational facilities are Open for Consideration on New Residential zoned land, as such the Office is satisfied that additional or expanded community and educational provision can be facilitated on the rezoned land if required.

Overall, the Office is satisfied that the proposed Variation aligns with the principles of compact growth and the coordinated delivery of housing and supporting infrastructure. The proposed Variation represents a coherent and evidence-based response to the Housing Growth Guidelines in the Carlow-Graigecullen area and will assist the Planning Authority in delivering the revised housing growth requirements for the county.

The Office therefore has no recommendations or observations to make in respect of the proposed Variation.

## **Summary**

As you are aware, the report of the Chief Executive of your authority prepared for the elected members under section 58(11) of the Act must summarise any recommendations and how the Chief Executive proposes to address them.

Where a planning authority makes a variation, it is required to notify the Office **within one week** of the decision to adopt the variation. Where an authority decides not to comply with any recommendations of the Office, it shall inform the Office as soon as practicable and provide reasons for the decision not to so comply.

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 on a website and at a place specified in the notice no later than five weeks after the date of 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,

\_\_\_\_\_

AM O'Connor

**Anne Marie O'Connor**

Deputy Regulator and Director of Plans Evaluation

Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015