



Oifig an  
Rialaitheora Pleanála  
Office of the  
Planning Regulator

28<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Forward Planning,  
Wexford County Council,  
County Hall,  
Carricklawn,  
Wexford,  
Y35 WY93.

**Re: Proposed Material Alterations to Proposed Variation No. 1 of the Wexford County  
Development Plan 2022-2028**

A chara,

Thank you for your authority's work on preparing the Material Alterations (material alterations) to Proposed Variation No. 1 (proposed Variation) to the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 (Development Plan).

As Wexford County Council (Planning Authority) is aware, a key function of the Office of the Planning Regulator (Office) is to evaluate and assess statutory plans to ensure consistency with legislative requirements and national and regional planning policy. The Office has evaluation and assessment pursuant to Part 3 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 (Act) and its functions under section 546, and this submission sets out the outcome.

In this context, the submission includes recommendations and observations.

Recommendations arise where the Office identifies clear inconsistencies with legislative provisions or policy frameworks and are intended to be addressed to ensure compliance. Observations highlight areas where further clarification, justification, or refinement would strengthen the plan. The submission may also include advice to support the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Following adoption of the Variation, the Office will carry out a further assessment under section 63 of the Act.

## **1. Response to the Office's submission on the proposed Variation**

The Office welcomes and commends the significant work undertaken by the Planning Authority to date and the material alterations in particular, in addressing the recommendations and observations of the Office as expressed in its submission at draft stage.

In particular, the review of the settlement boundary in Enniscorthy to the northwest and south (MA 1 and MA 31) is a positive step and will support a more compact and sustainable pattern of development while avoiding the unnecessary, unsustainable and costly servicing of lands located further from the town.

The Office also welcomes the revision of net density for New Ross, aligning it with the Key Towns of Wexford and Gorey and the Large Town of Enniscorthy, in accordance with the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024) (MA 3).

The addition of several new objectives relating to flood risk management is also strongly supported. This includes provisions relating to development that would interfere with flood relief schemes (MA 10 and MA 21), the preparation of a flood risk register (MA 11), identification of flood events in Enniscorthy (MA 12), and constraints relating to vulnerable development within Flood Zones A and B (MA 14).

The Office also notes the Planning Authority's response to Recommendation 4 (Transportation) of the Office's submission at draft stage in the Chief Executive's Report, which identifies a number of transport objectives within the Town Centre First Plan (Town Centre First Plan). While the inclusion of these objectives is welcomed, the Town Centre First Plan is a non-statutory document. The Office therefore encourages the Planning Authority to consider incorporating these transport objectives into the Development Plan, which would strengthen the case for future funding opportunities and support the integration of transport and land use planning.

Notwithstanding this progress, the Office considers that a number of targeted modifications could be made at this stage to strengthen alignment with national and regional policy, support integrated infrastructure planning, and promote compact and sustainable growth. These include formalising engagement with relevant infrastructure agencies in the planning of strategic employment lands and improving clarity and transparency in relation to flood

risk management measures. MA Observation 1 and MA Observation2 below address these matters.

## 2. Overview of submission on proposed material alterations

As set out above, the Office welcomes the stronger emphasis in the proposed Variation on consolidating Enniscorthy through the refinement of the settlement boundary to the northwest and south. However, the inclusion of lands at Clonhaston (MA 43), located on the periphery, would not align with this approach or with the objective of promoting compact and sequential growth. The Office therefore recommends that the proposed Variation be made without this material alteration.

The following recommendations and observations set out below are intended to support the Planning Authority in your authority in finalising the proposed Variation and ensuring its effective implementation.

Key theme	Recommendation	Observation
<a href="#">Employment lands in Enniscorthy</a>	-	<a href="#">MA Observation 1</a>
<a href="#">Residential zoning</a>	<a href="#">MA Recommendation 1</a>	-
<a href="#">Flood risk management</a>	-	<a href="#">MA Observation 2</a>

## 3. Employment lands in Enniscorthy

The Office welcomes the inclusion of Objective ED03A in response to Recommendation 2 of the Office’s submission at draft stage relating to General Industry lands to the north of Enniscorthy (MA 5). This objective sets out a number of key evidence-based assessments that will form part of the review of the Development Plan (and include the lands north of Enniscorthy) including an Employment Strategy, detailed Masterplan (taking account of the emerging Local Transport Plan) and an infrastructure assessment.

However, Recommendation 2 of the Office’s submission at draft stage also advised that the Planning Authority should engage with the National Transport Authority (NTA) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and prepare an evidence-based employment strategy supported by an infrastructure assessment. The current wording of Objective ED03A does not reference the NTA, TII or other key infrastructure stakeholders.

Having regard to the strategic location of these lands at the junction of the N30, N80 and R772, the reliance on water services and transport infrastructure and the importance of ensuring integrated and sustainable development, the Office considers that engagement and agreement with key stakeholders including the NTA and TII, but also with Uisce Éireann and the Office of Public Works (OPW) should be included in the wording of Objective ED03A.

For these reasons the Office considers that Objective ED03A should reflect a commitment by the Planning Authority to undertake meaningful consultation with key stakeholders.

#### MA Observation 1 - Employment Lands in Enniscorthy

Having regard to the location, extent, accessibility and serviceability of the proposed lands for General Industry to the north of Enniscorthy and having considered;

- NPO 93 of the NPF (integration of land-use and spatial planning to support active and sustainable transport modes);
- NPO 103 of the NPF (serviceability of lands within the life of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028);
- RPO 151a, c and d of the RSES (integration of land use and transport);
- RPO 154 of the RSES (integration of transport and land use planning);
- RPO 62b of the RSES (employment and accessibility); and
- RPO 163a of the RSES (effective integration of land-use and transport planning),

the Planning Authority is advised to make the Variation with MA 5 subject to a minor modification to Objective ED03A to include a commitment for meaningful engagement with key stakeholders, including the National Transport Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Office of Public Works and Uisce Éireann, in the preparation of the Infrastructure Assessment, Employment Strategy and Masterplan.

#### 4. Residential zoning

The Office notes and welcomes that the majority of long-term development lands have been removed from the Enniscorthy Land Use Zoning map, consistent with its earlier recommendation, while accepting the rationale for retaining a limited area of such lands to the west to support infrastructure provision.

MA43 however proposes changing the zoning of a 9.74 ha site to the east of Enniscorthy at Clonhaston from Long Term Development to New Residential. These lands lie outside the CSO boundary and are identified as Site No. 6a in the updated Settlement Capacity Audit where junction improvements, footpaths and street lighting are noted as services that would be required to develop these lands. The Office also notes that there is no existing or planned public transport serving the site. Development in this location would also result in the leapfrogging of undeveloped lands to the west. The Office notes that MA33 relates to the extension of the Enniscorthy Land Use Zoning map to extend the New Residential Zoning to reflect MA 43.

Having regard to the above factors, the Office considers that rezoning the proposed lands at Clonhaston is not required to achieve the housing growth requirements for Enniscorthy and would be inconsistent with the principles of compact and sequential growth and would also increase reliance on car-based travel.

#### **MA Recommendation 1 - Residential Development at Clonhaston**

Having regard to the compact, sustainable and sequential growth of Enniscorthy, the development and co-ordination of housing delivery and infrastructure, and having considered;

- NPO 9 of the NPF to ensure compact and sequential patterns of growth within existing settlements;
- NPO 43 of the NPF to prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development; and
- the policy and objective under section 6.2.3 of the Development Plans, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022) to implement a sequential approach to zoning,

the Office recommends that the Planning Authority make the Variation without:

- (i) MA 33; and
- (ii) MA 43.

## 5. Flood risk management

The Office notes and welcomes the inclusion of a new objective relating to the preparation of a flood risk register (MA 11). However, Objective NRTXX only includes flood relief schemes constructed by the Planning Authority and not those constructed by, inter alia, the OPW.

In relation to MA 12, the Office notes that section 2.2.1 of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been updated to show recurrent flood events in Enniscorthy Centre. However, taking account of recent flood events in Enniscorthy in particular, the Office considers that flood event locations should also be represented on the Enniscorthy Land Use Zoning map in the interests of clarity and transparency.

In relation to MA 9 and the zoning of lands as Open Space and Amenity reflecting the extent of unmapped water courses, the Office notes that no evidence has been presented to inform such land use zoning changes. In this regard therefore, the onus is on the Planning Authority to ensure that the full extent of the unmapped water courses is reflected through appropriate land use zonings.

### MA Observation 2 - Flood Risk Management

Having regard to the need to manage flood risk, and having considered;

- NPO 78 of the NPF (flood risk management);
- RPO 114 of the RSES (flood risk management);
- RPO 116 of the RSES (inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding);
- RPO 119 of the RSES (flood relief schemes); and

- The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009),

the Planning Authority is advised to:

- (i) make the Variation with MA 11 subject to a minor modification to amend the wording of Objective NRTXX so that the flood risk register includes all constructed flood relief schemes and not only those constructed by the Planning Authority; and
- (ii) make the Variation with MA 12 subject to a minor modification to identify on the Enniscorthy Land Use Zoning map No. 6, the recurrent flood event locations in Enniscorthy Centre, to reflect section 2.2.1 of the updated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

## Summary

The Office requests that the Planning Authority addresses the recommendations and observations set out above.

As part of this process, the Chief Executive's report to the elected members, prepared under section 58(15) of the Act should summarise the Office's recommendations and outline how it is proposed to address them.

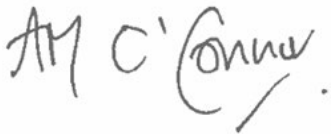
Following adoption of the Variation, the Planning Authority is required to:

- notify the Office within **one week** of the decision to adopt the Variation;
- inform the Office, as soon as practicable, where it decides not to comply with a recommendation, including the reasons for this decision;
- provide the Office with a copy of the adopted Variation, together with any submissions received from the Minister, the relevant Regional Assembly, and the National Transport Authority during the plan preparation process; and
- publish notice of the Variation within **one week** of adoption, confirming that the Development Plan as varied will be available for inspection (online and at a specified location) no later than **five weeks** after adoption.

The Office looks forward to continued constructive engagement with the Planning Authority. If further clarification or discussion would be helpful, the Office would be pleased to assist and can be contacted at [plans@opr.ie](mailto:plans@opr.ie).

Is mise le meas,

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "AM O'Connor". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Anne Marie O'Connor**

Deputy Regulator and Director of Plans Evaluation

Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015

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