



Oifig an  
Rialaitheora Pleanála  
Office of the  
Planning Regulator

13th May 2026

Administrative Officer,  
Planning Section,  
Wicklow County Council,  
Station Road,  
Wicklow Town.

**Re: Adopted Variation No.5 to the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028**

A chara,

The Office of the Planning Regulator (Office) acknowledges the adoption of Variation No.5 (Variation) to the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028 (County Development Plan) by the members of Wicklow County Council (Planning Authority) on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

The Office also acknowledges receipt of your letter of 8<sup>th</sup> April 2026, further to section 31(AM)(6) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (Act). The Office has reviewed the Variation in accordance with the legislative requirements set out in section 31(AM) of the Act and welcomes the decision of the Planning Authority to clarify information presented in table 3.5 Wicklow core strategy in relation to the baseline housing growth requirement for the county (Recommendation 1(ii) of the Office's submission to the proposed Variation (draft stage)) and the net densities applied to determine the land required (Recommendation 1(iii) draft stage).

In its submission, the Office expressed concern that the Variation was overly cautious in the Dublin Metropolitan Area, placing undue reliance on the full and timely delivery of already zoned lands at Fassaroe, notwithstanding the significant lead-in times required to plan, coordinate, and deliver the necessary supporting infrastructure. On this basis, the Office advised that additional residential lands, accessible to existing or planned high-quality public transport, should have been zoned to provide appropriate short- to medium-term contingency.

The Planning Authority has determined not to follow this recommendation, stating that the Variation is a significant revision to the core strategy, releases significant additional

Phase 2 lands that were previously restricted and will set a context for subsequent zoning variations.

In addition, the Office notes the Planning Authority's commitment to prepare an Infrastructure Planning and Delivery Strategy (Infrastructure Strategy) in collaboration with Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County Council, relevant infrastructure agencies (including Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the National Transport Authority), and landowners (Recommendation 1(iv) draft stage).

The Office also notes the reference in the Chief Executive's Report (CE's Report) regarding the possibility of the Housing Activation Office (HAO) leading on the preparation of the above Infrastructure Strategy, to intervene to support immediate development and remove policy or infrastructure impediments.

The role of the HAO in funding the delivery of infrastructure to activate lands critical to housing delivery is acknowledged, however the role of the Planning Authority in facilitating the activation of large land parcels with complex infrastructure dependencies is critical to ensuring effective governance and oversight, as well as the coordination of key stakeholders and infrastructure and utility providers. For these reasons, it is the Planning Authority that should lead the preparation and delivery of the Infrastructure Strategy, and the rationale for assigning this role to the HAO has not been adequately explained.

Furthermore, given the Chief Executive's assertion that the Fassaroe lands are a priority for activation to support housing delivery in the immediate term, the range of infrastructures needed, the likely significant timescales associated with addressing sustainable transport and accessibility constraints, signals that delivery of housing on these lands may take time and therefore the effective implementation of the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements (2025) (Housing Growth Guidelines), cannot be assured.

As such, while it is acknowledged that the Variation demonstrates that the overall extent of residential zoned land across the county is sufficient in quantitative terms to meet the housing growth requirements set out in the Housing Growth Guidelines, the Office remains of the view that there is a significant risk that residential zoned lands within the Dublin Metropolitan Area (Bray and Greystones–Delgany) will not deliver housing in the

short to medium term, having regard to the scale and complexity of the interventions required to address identified constraints.

In light of the above, it is essential that the Planning Authority urgently progresses the non-statutory Call for Sites process to identify additional residential zoned lands within the Dublin Metropolitan Area that are accessible to existing or planned high-quality public transport.

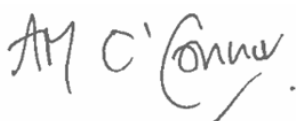
Mindful of the above and the statement in the CE's Report that the Variation removes core strategy barriers to release Phase 2 lands immediately, it is imperative that the Planning Authority proceeds, without undue delay, to advance a further Variation to zone further lands in appropriate locations that are immediately and/or near-term deliverable and at a quantum equivalent at a minimum to the extent of the Fassaroe lands.

The Office therefore requests that the Planning Authority provides an indicative timetable for the progression of this process and keep the Office informed of its progress.

You will also be aware that section 63 of the Planning and Development Act 2024 now enables the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage or the Office on its own initiative and for stated reasons, to assess a development plan for the purpose of determining its consistency with statutory requirements and national and regional planning policy at any time. In this context, the absence of sufficient progress or evidence of effective implementation may give rise to the need for the Office to instigate such an assessment.

The Office looks forward to continued engagement with the Planning Authority in the implementation of national and regional policy at the local level and to constructive collaboration in addressing the matters outlined.

Is mise le meas,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "AM O'Connor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a checkmark at the end.

**Anne Marie O'Connor**

Deputy Regulator and Director of Plans Evaluation

Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015