



## Tionól Reigiúnach Oirthir agus Lár-Tíre Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly

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### **Proposed Variation No. 1 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025**

This submission on the proposed draft Variation of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 has been reviewed by the executive and approved by the Cathaoirleach of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly.

#### **Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)**

The Council will be aware of the finalisation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region which was made on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019. The RSES, prepared in accordance with the National Planning Framework, sets the context for each local authority within our Region to develop their county and city development plans in a manner that will ensure national, regional and local plans align. The RSES identifies regional assets, opportunities and pressures and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives. At this strategic level it provides a framework for investment to better manage spatial planning and economic development throughout the Region.

In line with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the Planning Authority shall ensure, when making or varying the County Development Plan, that it is consistent with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region, thus ensuring full alignment between local, regional and national planning policy. In this regard, the Assembly welcomes the publication of the proposed variation to the Monaghan County Development Plan.

#### **Legislative Context**

Under Section 27C of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as inserted by Section 18 of the Planning and Development Act, 2010) the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly, as the successor regional assembly of the dissolved Dublin and Mid East Regional Authorities, is obliged to prepare submissions/ observations to be submitted to the relevant planning authority and copied to the Office of the Planning Regulator.

A submission shall contain a report which shall state whether, in the opinion of the Regional Assembly, the draft variation of the Development Plan, and in particular its core strategy are consistent with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. If, in the opinion of the Regional

Assembly the proposed variation of the Development Plan, and its core strategy are not consistent with the RSES, the submission / observations and report shall include recommendations as to what amendments, in the opinion of the Regional Assembly, are required to ensure that they are consistent.

This report contains the opinion of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly in relation to the above matters along with recommendations as required under Section 27C of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

### **Proposed Variation**

Proposed Variation No. 1 of the Monaghan County Development Plan seeks to provide for the inclusion of an additional National Roads Policy NRP 7 stated as follows:

“To protect the selected route of the N2 upgrade road scheme between Ardee and Castleblayney and the selected route between Clontibret and the border with Northern Ireland, and to prohibit development that could prejudice their future delivery.”

### **Submission**

The proposed Variation No. 1 of the Monaghan County Development Plan (CDP) 2019-2025 provides for an additional National Roads Policy under Section 7.8.1 of Chapter 7 Transport and Infrastructure of the CDP. The reason for the proposed variation is to ensure that development will not prejudice the improvements proposed to the N2 National Primary Road.

The CDP recognises the strategic importance of the N2 National Road part of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) – a network which comprises roads, railway lines, inland waterways, inland and maritime ports, airports and rail-road terminals throughout the 28 EU Member States. The CDP states that the N2 is categorised as being part of the “comprehensive network”: a multi-modal network of relatively high density which provides all European regions (including peripheral regions) with an accessibility that supports their further economic, social and territorial development as well as the mobility of their citizens.

The RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region highlights the significance of the TEN-T network, supporting its improvement and protection through Regional Policy Objectives 8.11 and 8.16 and its role in ‘Strategic Connectivity’ as a growth enabler for the Region.

The CDP identifies that Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) have committed to providing additional funding for an online upgrade of the N2 extending from north of Ardee to south of the Castleblayney bypass and this project is at preliminary stages. This N2 upgrade is further identified in Table 7.2 as one of six strategic National road proposals for County Monaghan. It is recognised that National road

projects such as that proposed for the N2 form key routes and linkages with other development centres, sea-ports and airports and will be advanced in partnership with TII. It is identified as a joint project between Monaghan County Council and Louth County Council.

The RSES recognises the importance of maintaining, improving and protecting the strategic function of key transport corridors. The N2 Ardee to south of Castleblaney project is of strategic importance to the Eastern and Midland Region in terms of investment in improved strategic road connectivity. Regional Policy Objective 8.10 supports the appraisal and or delivery of this road project as set out in Table 8.4 of the RSES subject to the outcome of appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process.

It is considered that the proposed variation to include a new national roads policy objective to protect the selected route of the N2 upgrade road scheme between Ardee and Castleblaney is welcomed by the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly. The proposed variation will align with Regional Policy Objective 8.10 of RSES which supports the investment and delivery of the proposed project as part of improved strategic road connectivity within the Region and the wider Ten-T network.

The proposed variation underwent a Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) and it was concluded that the proposed Variation will not result in any significant adverse environmental effects nor likely significant effects to European sites.

#### Conclusion

Having regard to the above, it is considered that the proposed Variation to include new Policy NRP 7 to the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025, is consistent with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2019-2031.

Regards,



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Jim Conway  
Director  
Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly  
November 28<sup>th</sup> 2019.