



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

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### **Proposed Variation No. 2 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025**

This submission on proposed Variation No.2 to the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 has been reviewed by the executive and approved by the Cathaoirleach on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

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

The Council will be aware of the finalisation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 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 region, thus ensuring full alignment between local, regional and national planning policy. In this regard, the Assembly welcomes the publication of the proposed Variation no. 2 to the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025.

#### **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. 2 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 seeks to provide for the inclusion of the following variation text to be inserted within Section 1.12 of Chapter One of the Plan:

“The Monaghan County Development Plan (MCDP) was prepared concurrently with both the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Northern & Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (NWRA RSES) and a significant amount of synergy was achieved between the provisions of the MCDP and the provisions of both the NPF and the NWRA RSES as a consequence. However, for the purposes of clarity the provisions of the NPF and the NWRA RSES will take precedence over the provisions of MCDP.”

### **Consistency and alignment with Regional Spatial Strategies**

The accompanying Variation report states that The Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 (MCDP) was under review during the preparation of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the NPF was adopted prior to the publication of the draft MCDP. The MCDP was also prepared concurrently with the preparation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly Area (NWRA RSES) with the result that both policy documents achieved a high degree of consistency and synergy between the provisions of the MCDP and the provisions of both the NPF and the NWRA RSES.

The report further sets out an assessment of the alignment between the NPF, NWRA RSES and the MCDP focusing on the NPF National Strategic Outcomes, the Overarching Environmental Regional Policy Objectives and 274 no. Regional Policy Objectives of the NWRA RSES. The report acknowledges that the MCDP was adopted prior to the material alterations to the draft NWRA RSES being agreed and the final strategy being made. However, according to the report, of the twenty-seven material alterations made to the Strategy, only twelve of them have relevance to the MCDP. The report further assesses these against the provisions of the MCDP and no conflicts were found to arise.

It is highlighted that County Monaghan has an easterly focus and borders the Eastern and Midland Region and therefore the County Development Plan shall be cognisant of the long-term strategic planning and economic framework of the adjoining Eastern and Midland Region as expressed in the EMRA Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031. It is recognised that the Monaghan County Development Plan was prepared concurrently with the NWRA RSES. The strategic objectives set out in the MCDP, in terms of the county's relationship with the eastern economic corridor, the need to improve linkages and communication between Monaghan and its neighbouring counties (SO3) and the importance of capacity and investment in national roads

network (SO8) are considered to align with the relevant regional policy objectives of the EMRA RSES particularly around inter-regional accessibility and co-operation and the significance of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and cross border network that influences the County.

### **Other matters**

It is highlighted that the Monaghan County Development Plan written statement refers to 'Draft' NWRA RSES and to the Regional Planning Guidelines. Section 4.3 of the Plan refers to *"Although the emerging Regional, Spatial and Economic Strategy (for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly) will imminently replace the RPGs, it is taken that the potential opportunities for growth identified in the Guidelines remain relevant to the new County Development Plan."* Given the making of the NWRA RSES, it is considered that these references are removed by way of minor amendments to the development plan within the variation process.

### Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA)

The proposed Variation underwent a Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and concluded that the proposed Variation will not result in any significant adverse environmental effects and therefore it was determined that a SEA is not required. A Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) was also carried out and concluded that the proposed Variation will not result in likely significant effects on European sites.

### Conclusion

Having regard to the above, the Regional Assembly welcomes the proposed Variation which clarifies the alignment of planning policy at county and local levels with Regional and National Policy, and which is consistent with the EMRA Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2019-2031.

Regards,



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Jim Conway  
Director  
Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly  
October 8<sup>th</sup> 2020.