



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

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Proposed Variation No. 2 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly notes the publication of the proposed variation No. 2 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 and sets out hereunder observations on behalf of the Assembly. The submission has been prepared by the executive and approved by the members of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) at the meeting on 12th April 2024.

1.0 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 28th June 2019. In line with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the planning authority shall ensure, when making a variation to the development plan, that it is consistent with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region, thus ensuring full alignment between local, regional and national planning policy. In this regard, the Regional Assembly welcomes the proposed variation to the Development Plan.

2.0 Legislative Context

Under Section 27C of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly, 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 its core strategy, is consistent with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. If, in the opinion of the Regional Assembly the proposed draft variation of the development plan and its core strategy is 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 it is consistent.

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

3.0 Proposed Variation No. 2

Louth County Council has published proposed Variation No. 2 seeking to vary the Louth County Development Plan (CDP) 2021-2027 to make technical updates to a number of chapters across the plan to ensure compliance with the *'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines'*. The chapters proposed for amendment include Chapter 3 Housing, Chapter 4 Social and Community, and Chapter 13 Development Management Guidelines.

3.1 Purpose of the Draft Variation

In a report prepared as part of the proposed variation, Louth County Council outline that it is intended to update their County Development Plan to take account of the *'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities'* published by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in January 2024, that were issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). Section 28 provides that planning authorities shall have regard to Ministerial Guidelines and shall apply any specific planning policy requirements (SPPRs) of the Guidelines, within the meaning of Section 28 (1C) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), in the performance of their functions.

3.2 Proposed Variation

Section 2.0 of the report published as part of the proposed variation sets out the proposed amendments to the text in Volume 1 (written statement) of the Louth CDP 2021-2027. There are a total of 20 no. amendments proposed in the variation which are summarised in Table 1 that follows;

Table 1: Summary of Sections and Tables proposed to be amended within the Louth County Development Plan 2021 – 2027

LCDP 2021-2027	Section/Table/Policy Objective/Figure	Topic	Proposed Change
Chapter 3 Housing	Section 3.2.1 (page 3-1)	Legislative Changes and Policy Responses	Amendments to text including the year of the publication of updated Design Standards for New Apartments
	Section 3.11 (page 3-11)	Densities	Update and amend text to include reference to the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines
	Section 3.13 (page 3-13)	Principles for Quality Design and Layout	Omit text, and image pertaining to the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines and associated Urban Design Manual. Insert image of ‘Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines’.
	Section 13.3.1 Figure 3.1 (Page 3-15)	Placemaking	Omit Figure 3.1 – Urban Design Manual Criteria
	Policy Objective HOU 20 (page 3-17)	Policy Objective	Omit reference to ‘Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas’ and include reference to ‘Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines’.
Chapter 4 – Social and Community	Section 4.5	Community Facilities and Social Infrastructure	Amended text in this section to omit the reference to Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (May 2009)
	Policy Objective SC11 (page 4-6)	Policy Objective	Include reference to Community, Social and Cultural Infrastructure Audit in lieu of Social Infrastructure Assessment
Chapter 13 – Development Management Guidelines	Section 13.8.1 (Page 13-9)	Introduction	Omit reference to: i) The Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development In Urban Areas, DEHLG, (2009) ii) Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide, DEHLG, (2009); Insert reference to ‘Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments’, ‘Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines’ and the ‘National Policy on Architecture’.
	Section 13.8.4 (Page 13-9)	Density and Plot Ratio	Omit the reference to Appendix A of the Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas Guidelines and replace with a reference to Appendix B of the Amend text in accordance with ‘Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines’

Section 13.8.6 (Page 13-10)	Building Heights	Include a reference to Appendix D Design Checklist of 'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines' and any associated Design Manual
Section 13.8.8	Design Statement	Omit reference to Urban Design Manual; Insert a reference to Appendix C 'Supplemental Information for Planning Applications' and Appendix D Design Checklist of the 'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines'
Section 13.8.9.1 (Page 13-11)	Privacy	Omit reference to minimum of 22m separation distance. Amend the text to reflect the revised minimum separation distance of 16m as set out in the 'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines'
Section 13.8.10 (Page 13-11)	Daylight and Sunlight	Omit reference: 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice (2011) and BS 8206-2008 – 'Lighting for Buildings – Part 2: Code of Practice for Daylighting'. Insert a reference to A New European Standard for Daylighting in Buildings IS EN17037:2018, UK National Annex BS EN17037:2019 and the associated BRE Guide 209 2022 Edition (June 2022) as set out in section 5.3.7 of the 'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines'.
Section 13.8.15 (Page 13-13)	Public Open Space	Omit reference to 15% public open space of the total site area. Amend the text to reflect the change in public open space requirements as per Section 5.3.3 of 'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines'.
Section 13.8.17 (Page 13-14)	Private Open Space	Update text and amend Table 13.4 to reflect the revised minimum private open space requirements as set out in Table 5.1 of the 'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines'.
Section 13.8.28 (Page 13-16)	Design Standards for New Apartments	Update the year of publication of the Design Standards for New Apartments to 2023
Section 13.16 (Page 13-41)	Transport	Omit reference to Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities; and replace with reference to 'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines'. Insert a reference to the 'National Sustainable Mobility Policy'
Section 13.16.11 (Page 13-45)	Parking Standards that reflect the Demand and Location	Remove text relating to existing criteria and amend text to reflect new guidelines

	Table 13.10 (Page 13-44)	Car and Cycle Parking	Update Table 13.10 'Parking Areas in County Louth' to take account of the criteria/parking tiers set out in Table 3.8 of the 'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines
	Table 13.11 (Page 13-45)		Update the Car Parking Standards for residential dwellings in Table 13.11 to reflect the car parking requirements set out in SPPR 3 of the 'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines'.
	Various	Section numbers and Table numbers	All section numbers and Table numbers will be reviewed and updated to take account of any sections or tables deleted as a result of the proposed variation

Source: Planning report of proposed variation No. 2 to Louth CDP 2021-2027

4.0 Submission

The Regional Assembly acknowledges proposed variation No. 2 of the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 which seeks to vary the Development Plan having regard to the publication of the *'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities'* published by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in January 2024.

The proposed variation will update the Louth CDP 2021-2027 whereby current references to the now revoked *'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)'* will be omitted and replaced with the latest ministerial guidance for new residential development as set out in the *'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities'* and associated appendices. Arising from same, the proposed variation provides updates across a number of chapters within the County Development Plan where the previous guidelines are referenced including notable updates to development management standards to be applied for new residential developments in the county (e.g. housing densities, public open space, private open space, car parking standards, etc.).

It is considered that the proposed variation is consistent with the RSES by bringing the content of the Louth CDP 2021-2027 into line with the updated Section 28 Guidelines issued in 2024 on this matter, and, in this regard, the Regional Assembly supports in principle the proposed amendments to the Louth CDP 2021-2027.

In addition, the RSES sets out 16 Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs) which are aligned with national policy, specifically the National Planning Framework. These are cross referenced and aligned with the three Key Principles of the RSES; Healthy Placemaking, Climate Action and Economic Opportunity. The most relevant RSO which supports the proposed variation is RSO 2, 'Compact Growth and Urban Regeneration', which is to *'promote the regeneration of our cities, towns and villages by making better use of under-used land and buildings within the existing built -up urban footprint and to drive the delivery of quality housing and employment choices for the Region's citizens'*. This aligns with National Strategic Outcome 1 of the National Planning Framework.

The proposed variation will align with RSO 2 of the RSES, and Regional Policy Objectives 3.3, 5.4 and 9.10 that relate to national standards for residential development. In addition, the proposed variation is considered complementary to the Guiding Principles for Healthy Placemaking as set out in Section 9.4 of the RSES. The proposed variation amendments do not impact on the core strategy chapter of the Development Plan. Accordingly, the Regional Assembly does not have any objection to the proposed variation No. 2 of the Louth CDP 2021-2027 as placed on public display and consider it consistent with the RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019-2031.

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

The proposed variation underwent a screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and concluded that the proposal does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment as it would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects, taking account of the relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

Furthermore, a screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) was also carried out and concluded that the proposed variation will not have any likelihood for significant effects on any European sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. The AA screening therefore concluded that it is not considered necessary to undertake any further stages of the Appropriate Assessment process. The proposed variation does not therefore require an Appropriate Assessment or the preparation of a Natura Impact Report (NIR).

6.0 Conclusion

It is considered that proposed variation No. 2 to the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027, is consistent with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019-2031, having regard to the observations outlined above.

Regards,



Clare Bannon
A/Director
Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly
15th April 2024