



## **Proposed Variation No. 4 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027**

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly notes the publication of proposed Variation No. 4 of the Meath County Development Plan (CDP) 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 the 13<sup>th</sup> of June 2025.

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

The Council will be aware of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region (RSES) which was made on 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2019. The RSES presents a Spatial Strategy, devised and informed by a complementary Economic Strategy, which provides a framework for future growth, ensuring the delivery of effective regional development through the realisation of viable and vital places. This includes championing the capital city of Dublin as a smart, climate resilient and global city region; identifying Regional Growth Centres which act as regional economic drivers and supports for their wider catchment areas; and promoting a network of large economically active Key Towns that provide employment and services to their surrounding areas. All of this is supported by Self-Sustaining Growth Towns, Self-Sustaining Towns and a network of multifaceted Rural Places. The RSES identifies Regional Growth Centres and Key Towns within the Region, however Self-Sustaining Growth Towns, Self-Sustaining Towns and Rural areas are to be defined by Development Plans.

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.

### **2.0 Legislative Context**

The role and function of the Regional Assembly, including the scope of the RSES, is provided for in the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. It should be noted that this legislation has been superseded by the Planning and Development Act 2024, which was signed into law on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024. However, the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2024 relevant to the Regional Assembly have not commenced to date, and they will commence on a staged basis in the coming months. Until then, the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, remain in force.

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.

### **3.0 Proposed Variation No. 4**

Meath County Council has published proposed Variation No. 4 seeking to vary the Meath County Development Plan (CDP) 2021-2027 to ensure alignment and consistency between the County Development Plan and the approved Maynooth Joint Local Area Plan (LAP) 2025-2031.

The Maynooth and Environs Joint Local Area Plan (LAP) was adopted by the Elected Members of Meath County Council on the 19<sup>th</sup> of February 2025 and by the Elected Members of the Clane-Maynooth Municipal District on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February 2025.

### **4.0 Submission**

The Regional Assembly notes the publication of proposed Variation No. 4 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 which seeks to vary the County Development Plan having regard to the approval of the final Maynooth Joint LAP 2025-2031 in order to ensure consistency between the approved Maynooth Joint LAP 2025-2031 and the County Development Plan.

The proposed Variation would involve the replacement of the Maynooth Environs Written Statement in Volume 2 of the Meath County Development Plan with the adopted Maynooth Joint LAP 2025-2031 Written Statement. The existing Maynooth Environs Land Use Zoning Map and Maynooth Environs Cultural and Natural Heritage Map in Volume 2 will remain in place.

It is considered that the proposed Variation is consistent with the RSES by bringing the content of the Meath CDP 2021-2027 into alignment with the maps and details published as part of the approved Maynooth Joint LAP 2025, and in this regard, the Regional Assembly supports in principle the proposed amendments to the Meath CDP 2021-2027.

It is considered that 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. 4 of the Meath CDP 2021-2027 and considers it to be 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. 4 to the Meath 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,



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Clare Bannon  
A/Director  
Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly  
13<sup>th</sup> of June 2025