

29th May 2023

Forward Planning,
Economic Development and Enterprise Directorate,
Limerick City & County Council,
Merchants Quay,
Limerick

Re: Adopted Caherconlish Local Area Plan 2023-2029

A chara,

The Office of the Planning Regulator (the Office) acknowledges the adoption of the Caherconlish Local Area Plan 2023-2029 (the LAP) by the elected members of Kilmallock Municipal District, Limerick City and County Council on the 20/04/23. The Office also acknowledges receipt of your letter of 28/04/23, further to section 31(AO)(5) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (the Act). The Office has reviewed the adopted plan in accordance with the legislative requirements set out in section 31(AO) of the Act.

The Office welcomes the adopted LAP, which sets out a positive, evidence-based and implementation-focussed strategy for Caherconlish that is consistent with national and regional policy objectives and represents a best practice approach in a number of areas.

In particular, the Office commends the planning authority for the inclusion of a detailed settlement capacity audit and infrastructure assessment including costing estimates to inform the land use zoning objectives. The Office considers this to be a best practice approach.

The adopted LAP also addresses climate action and sustainable transport in a very positive way by providing for new pedestrian routes within the town, and improving pedestrian and cycling routes between the village and the GAA pitch and between the village square and the Millennium Centre. The LAP will contribute to the ambitious modal shift targets, under the Limerick City and County Development Plan 2022-2028, to increase active and sustainable transport trips, supported by clear objectives to improve walking and cycling infrastructure. This approach is consistent with the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy and is welcomed by the Office.

The Office also welcomes the approach to implementation and monitoring in the plan. The identification of a lead organisation responsible for the implementation of each of the 13 key actions within a specified time period demonstrates that the planning authority has carefully considered action implementation. Importantly, this strategy will enable the planning authority to objectively review the success of the LAP and identify instances where further action might be required to ensure that the objectives of the plan are achieved. The Office therefore commends this monitoring strategy as a best practice approach.

The Office acknowledges the decision of the planning authority not to make the LAP in compliance with Recommendation 2 of the Office's submission of 28/11/22 to the draft LAP and MA Recommendation 1 of the Office's submission of 06/03/23 to the material alteration of the draft LAP. However, having:

- carried out an inspection of the area concerned;
- reviewed the details of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (s.3.3.2), which confirms that an assessment of the LAP area has been carried out as part of the development plan process;
- considered the precautionary approach taken by the planning authority in the zoning of land and the mitigations under objective IU O4); and
- consulted with the Office of Public Works;

The Office accepts the reasons given by the Chief Executive in the 31(AO)(5) notice letter and has determined that no further action is warranted in respect of this matter.

The Office also welcomes the proposal of planning authority to engage specialist consultants to carry out any future SFRA required for LAPs in the county in order to ensure consistency with NPO 57 and adherence to *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2009).

Finally, the Office would like to thank the planning authority for engaging positively with the Office during the plan preparation process and for addressing the matters raised in the recommendations and observations included in our submissions.

In conclusion, the Office welcomes the adoption of the Caherconlish Local Area Plan 2023-2029 and looks forward to continued engagement with Limerick City and County Council in the implementation of national and regional policy at the local level.

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 diagonal slash at the end.

Anne Marie O'Connor

Deputy Planning Regulator and Director of Plans Evaluations
