

10th August 2023

Planning Department,
Clare County Council,
New Road,
Ennis,
Co. Clare,
V95 DXP2

Re: Adopted Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029

A chara,

The Office of the Planning Regulator (the Office) acknowledges the adoption of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (the Development Plan) by the members of Clare County Council on the 9th March 2023.

The Office also acknowledges receipt of your letter of 16th March, further to section 31(AM)(6) of the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as amended (the Act). The Office has reviewed the adopted Development Plan in accordance with the legislative requirements set out in section 31(AM) of the Act.

Where the recommendations of the Office were not complied with, the Office gave careful consideration to the reasons of the Chief Executive and the elected members and, with the exception of certain specific matters, accepted that these reasons addressed the matters raised by the Office.

You will be aware that the Office made a recommendation to the Minister regarding a proposed Direction in accordance with section 31(AM) of the Act in relation to the following recommendations of the Office:

- MA Recommendation 3, MA Recommendation 4, MA Recommendation 5 and MA Recommendation 6 – Residential zoning amendments;
- Recommendation 12 – Exceptional circumstances for access to national roads;
and
- Recommendation 13 and MA Recommendation 9 – Flood risk management.

The Office's recommendations to the Minister under section 31AM(8) and 31AN(4), and the Minister's draft and final Direction, are available on the [Office's website](#).

Notwithstanding the above, the Office is satisfied with the manner in which the vast majority of its recommendations and observations were addressed at draft plan and material alterations stages.

The Office appreciates the extent to which land use zoning objectives, settlement boundaries and opportunity sites were included in the Development Plan for the metropolitan area and the settlements. The clear direction provided by the core strategy provides certainty for all parties and will enable the planning authority to focus on qualitative planning issues, land activation and implementation in future Local Area Plans.

In addition, the identification of village growth areas will help to promote the consolidation of the extensive network of existing rural villages, including through brownfield development, and has the potential to revitalise these settlements through residential and economic development.

The Development Plan proactively embraces many of the challenges and opportunities identified in the *Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework* (NPF) and the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy* (RSES) by directing future housing and economic growth to the key town of Ennis and to the larger settlements, with strong policy commitments for compact growth, regeneration, economic development and climate action.

The Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Spatial Plan is one of five city regions identified to drive national and regional growth under the NPF and RSES. Although the Development Plan includes positive objectives for the future development of the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area (LSMA) and takes account of the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Transport Strategy, stronger recognition of the metropolitan area and more effective co-ordination with the Limerick City and County Development Plan 2022-2028 will be necessary to fully realise the potential benefits of a strong metropolitan area for County Clare.

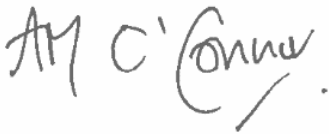
In this regard, the planning authority will need to work closely with infrastructure providers, relevant government departments, the Southern Regional Assembly and with

Limerick City and County Council to resolve the existing constraints on the growth of the LSMA within County Clare.

Regarding renewable energy, the Development Plan sets out a rational, evidence-based strategy for the development of the county's renewable energy resources to build on the significant contribution that County Clare has already made to the generation of renewable wind energy, nationally. In terms of climate change mitigation and adaptation, excepting the matters raised in the Direction in respect of flood risk management on specific sites, the Office welcomes the positive approach taken by the planning authority.

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

Is mise le meas,



Anne Marie O'Connor

Deputy Planning Regulator and Director of Plans Evaluations
