

1st August 2024

Central Planning Unit,
Donegal County Council,
County House,
Lifford

Re: Adopted Donegal County Development Plan 2024-2030

A chara,

The Office of the Planning Regulator (the Office) acknowledges the adoption of the Donegal County Development Plan 2024 - 2030 (the Plan) by the members of Donegal County Council on 16 May 2024.

The Office also acknowledges receipt of your notice letter dated 24 May 2024, further to section 31(AM)(6) of the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as amended (the Act).

The Office has reviewed the adopted Plan, and notes the decision of the planning authority not to comply, in whole or in part, with a majority of the recommendations included in its submission on the draft Plan and the majority of the recommendations made in its submission at material alterations stage.

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

However, in relation to recommendations of the Office concerning:

- the zoning of certain lands for residential uses (Recommendation 5 and 6 and MA Recommendations 2 and 3);
- the designation of certain lands within settlement frameworks (MA Recommendation 5);
- the zoning of certain lands for business / enterprise uses (Recommendation 14);

- the inclusion of certain policies affecting the nature and extent of development along national roads (Recommendation 15);
- the zoning of certain lands within flood risk zone A/B (MA Recommendation 8); and
- the designation of certain lands, supported by specific policy, within settlement frameworks, without evidence of consideration of the potential impacts on the conservation objectives of the European sites affected (MA Recommendation 6),

the Office has made a recommendation to the Minister in respect of a proposed draft direction in accordance with the legislative requirements set out in section 31(AM) of the Act.

The Office's recommendation to the Minister of a proposed draft direction and notice letter pursuant to section 31(AM), has been made available on the Office's [website](#). This is now part of an ongoing process further to section 31 of the Act.

With the exception of the specific matters raised in the 31AM(8) notice, the Office welcomes the making of a Plan to provide for the planned development of Donegal over the plan period in a manner that is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

In particular, the Office fully acknowledges the scale of work involved in preparing the core strategy and the detailed settlement strategies for Buncrana, Ballybofey / Stranorlar and Bundoran and the frameworks for the smaller settlements. Notwithstanding concern about the allocation of growth to the lower settlement tiers, the Office considers the Plan to provide a positive framework for the future development of the county and its settlements.

Further, the Office commends the planning authority for including a dedicated chapter on climate change, which reflects the importance of the issue in the planning system. This is regarded as best practice. The Office also recognises the positive approach taken to the facilitation of renewable energy, including appropriate policies and maps.

The Office also acknowledges the positive approach taken in the Plan to Traveller accommodation and to public rights of way.

With the exception of the specific issues detailed in the section 38AM(8) notice, the Office is generally satisfied with the manner in which its recommendations and observations have been addressed during the Plan preparation process.

In conclusion, the Office generally welcomes the adoption of the Donegal County Development Plan 2024-2030, and looks forward to continued positive engagement with the planning authority into the future.

Is mise le meas,

—

A handwritten signature in black 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 Regulator and Director of Plans Evaluations

—