



09th December 2024

Mr. Liam Conneally  
Chief Executive  
Galway County Council  
Áras an Chontae  
Prospect Hill  
Galway  
H91 H6KX

**Section 31 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)**  
**Decision to Issue a Direction to Galway County Council regarding the**  
**Loughrea Local Area Plan 2024-2030**

Dear Liam,

I am writing to inform you of the following in relation to the section 31 draft Direction that issued to Galway County Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2024, and the subsequent consideration by the Office of the Planning Regulator ('the Office') of your report in connection with the *Loughrea Local Area Plan 2024-2030*, as adopted by the elected members of Galway County Council on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

The Office notified the Minister pursuant to section 31AP(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 ('the Act') on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and recommended that I, as Minister, issue the Direction.

The draft Direction, as issued, can be summarised as follows:

- Part 2(a) – Delete an identified material alteration from the adopted Local Area Plan, such that the subject lands revert to unzoned.

A copy of the notice letter and proposed final Direction was submitted to me, as Minister, by the Office along with a copy of your Chief Executive's Report on the draft Direction, prepared under section 31(8) of the Act.

Accordingly, having reviewed and considered the Office of the Planning Regulator's notice letter, your report of October 2024 on the draft Direction and submissions received, I am of the opinion that the



Direction should be issued in line with the recommendations of the Office. In the above regard, I refer you to the Statement of Reasons set out in the enclosed Direction.

In reaching my decision to issue the Direction I have noted your recommendations as Chief Executive under section 31(9) of the Act. I further note the Office's consideration of, and response to, those matters in its subsequent recommendation to me, as Minister, under section 31AP(4) of the Act.

Accordingly, Galway County Council should **TAKE NOTICE** that on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024 I have issued a Direction pursuant to section 31 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). Pursuant to section 31(17) of the Act this Direction is deemed to have immediate effect and its terms are considered to be incorporated into the plan. A copy of this Direction is enclosed.

In light of the foregoing, Galway County Council is required, pursuant to section 31(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 to comply with this Direction so as to rectify the matter in a manner that, in my opinion, will ensure that the *Loughrea Local Area Plan 2024-2030* sets out an overall strategy for proper planning and sustainable development and meets the requirements of the Act.

The Council should ensure that the Direction is available for inspection at its offices and on its website.

My officials remain available to assist you, as necessary, in complying with the foregoing process.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Dillon TD

Minister of State for Local Government and Planning

Copied to:

- Cathaoirleach, Galway County Council, Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Co. Galway, H91 H6KX
- Director, Northern and Western Regional Assembly, The Square, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon, F45 W674.
- Office of the Planning Regulator, Fourth Floor, Park House, Grangegorman, 191-193A North Circular Road, Dublin 7, D07 EWV4.

**DIRECTION IN THE MATTER OF SECTION 31  
OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (as amended)  
Loughrea Local Area Plan 2024-2030**

“Local Area Plan” means the Loughrea Local Area Plan 2024-2030.

“Planning Authority” means Galway County Council.

“County Development Plan” means Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028.

“RSES” means the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region.

The Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in exercise of the powers conferred on him by section 31 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (No.30 of 2000) (“the Act”), and the Housing, Local Government and Heritage (Delegation of Ministerial Functions) Order 2024 (S.I. No. 234 of 2024), and consequent to a recommendation made to him by the Office of the Planning Regulator under section 31AP(4) of the Act, hereby directs as follows:

- (1) This Direction may be cited as the Planning and Development (Loughrea Local Area Plan 2024-2030) Direction 2024.
- (2) The Planning Authority is hereby directed to take the following step with regard to the Local Area Plan:
  - (a) Delete Material Alteration MA35 from the adopted Local Area Plan - i.e. the subject lands revert to unzoned from Community Facilities.


**STATEMENT OF REASONS**

- I. The Local Area Plan includes a material alteration to the draft Local Area Plan to zone land as Community Facilities located on the far side of the N65 national road with no existing or planned access by walking, cycling or public transport from Loughrea, inconsistent with the objectives of the RSES and County Development Plan for sustainable growth which prioritises connectivity by way of safe, secure walking and cycling routes and public transport (RPO 6.30 of

the RSES and County Development Plan Policy Objectives PM.4 and PM.6), and supports the provision of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure for shorter local journeys (County Development Plan Policy Objectives GCTPS 4 and WC 4).

- II. The Local Area Plan includes a material alteration to zone land as Community Facilities adjoining the N65 national road which is inconsistent with RPO 6.5 of the RSES and Policy Objective NR 1 of the County Development Plan to protect the strategic capacity and safety of the national roads network and associated national road junctions, and sections 2.4, 2.5 and 2.7 of the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012) (which the Policy Objective NR 1 requires to be implemented).
- III. The Local Area Plan has not been made in a manner consistent with, and has failed to implement, a recommendation of the Office of the Planning Regulator made under section 31AO of the Act.
- IV. The Minister is of the opinion that the Local Area Plan as made is inconsistent with the objectives of the Development Plan of the area, which is a requirement of section 19(2) of the Act.
- V. The Minister is of the opinion that the Local Area Plan as made is not consistent with the objectives of the RSES, contrary to section 19(2) and section 27(1) of the Act.
- VI. The Minister is of the opinion that the Local Area Plan as made is not consistent with National Policy Objective 27 of the National Planning Framework.
- VII. The Minister is of the opinion that the Local Area Plan as made fails to set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- VIII. The Local Area Plan is not in compliance with the requirements of the Act.

GIVEN under my hand



Alan Dillon TD

Minister of State for Local Government and Planning

9<sup>th</sup> December 2024