

Draft Westmeath County **Development Plan** **2021 - 2027**



**Chief Executive's Report
on the Material Amendments
to the Draft Plan**

FEBRUARY 2021

Table of Contents

1	Introduction & Overview of the Chief Executive’s Report	1
1.1	<i>Purpose & Contents of the Chief Executive’s Report</i>	1
1.2	<i>Structure of the Report</i>	2
1.3	<i>Synopsis of the County Development Plan Process to Date</i>	2
1.4	<i>Consideration of Amendments and Making of the Development Plan</i>	5
1.5	<i>Approach to Consideration of Submissions</i>	5
1.6	<i>Recommended Modifications to Proposed Material Amendments</i>	7
2	Office of the Planning Regulator Submission Ref: WM-C2-MA-30	8
3	Analysis of Submissions Received on the Material Amendments to Draft Plan per Chapter	37
3.1	<i>Chapter 2 Core Strategy</i>	37
3.2	<i>Chapter 3 Housing Strategy</i>	44
3.3	<i>Chapter 4 Sustainable Communities</i>	48
3.4	<i>Chapter 5 Economic Development & Employment</i>	51
3.5	<i>Chapter 6 Tourism</i>	53
3.6	<i>Chapter 7 Urban Centers & Place Making</i>	57
3.7	<i>Chapter 8 Settlement Plans</i>	59
3.8	<i>Chapter 9 Rural Westmeath</i>	60
3.9	<i>Chapter 10 Transport Infrastructure & Energy</i>	67
3.10	<i>Chapter 11 Climate Action</i>	99
3.11	<i>Chapter 12 Natural Heritage & Green Infrastructure</i>	104
3.12	<i>Chapter 13 Landscape & Lake Amenities</i>	118
3.13	<i>Chapter 14 Cultural Heritage</i>	124
3.14	<i>Chapter 15 Land Use Zoning</i>	129
3.15	<i>Chapter 16 Development Management Standards</i>	130
3.16	Volume 2 Book of Maps	138
3.16	<i>Volumes 3-5 SEA, AA & SFRA</i>	150
4	SEA/AA Screening of the Material Amendments to the Draft Plan	168
5.	Conclusion	169
5.1	<i>Procedure following consideration of the Chief Executive’s Report</i>	169
	APPENDIX 1: List of written submission by Name & Reference No:	170

Note: This Report is submitted to the Elected Members for their consideration.

1 Introduction & Overview of the Chief Executive's Report

1.1 Purpose & Contents of the Chief Executive's Report

The purpose of the Chief Executive's Report is to report on the outcome of the consultation process on the Proposed Material Amendments to the Draft Westmeath Development Plan 2021-2027, set out the Chief Executive's response to the issues raised in the submissions, and to make recommendations on the proposed amendments, as appropriate. The report forms part of the statutory procedure for the preparation of a new Development Plan.

Pursuant to Section 12 (6) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), notice of the preparation of Proposed Material Amendments to the Draft Westmeath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 was given on 15 December 2020. Submissions or observations with regard to the Proposed Material Amendments together with associated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) Determinations and Reports only, were invited for a period of 4 weeks from 15 December 2020 to 20 January 2021 inclusive.

Pursuant to Section 12(8)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), this Chief Executive's Report provides details of submissions and observations received in relation to the proposed Material Amendments as follows:

- Lists the persons or bodies who made submissions or observations during the prescribed public consultation period
- Provides a summary of the recommendations, submissions and observations made by the Office of the Planning Regulator
- Summarises the submissions or observations made by any other persons during the prescribed public consultation period
- Gives the response of the Chief Executive to the issues raised, taking account of:
 - Directions of the members of the authority regarding the preparation of the Draft Development Plan
 - The proper planning and sustainable development of the area
 - The statutory obligations of the Local Authority
 - Any relevant policies or objectives of the Government or of any Minister of the Government.

This Chief Executive's Report on submissions or observations received in relation to the proposed Material Amendments to the Draft Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2017 is hereby submitted to the members of the Planning Authority for consideration.

1.2 Structure of the Report

Section One of this report consists of an outline of the structure of the report, sets out the Development plan process to date, together with the next steps in making the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027. A report on the consultation undertaken for the Proposed Material Amendments to the Draft Plan which resulted in 36 no. submissions during the statutory public consultation stage (Stage 3) is also set out.

Section Two provides a summary of the recommendations, submissions and observations made by the Office of the Planning Regulator together with the Chief Executive's response and recommendations in response to same.

Section Three includes an analysis of the submissions received relevant to the proposed Material Amendments (arranged by chapter, zoning map or Volume) followed by the Chief Executive's response and recommendations in response the issues raised.

Section Four sets out the SEA and AA considerations as part of the process.

Section Five outlines the Chief Executives Recommendation on this report.

1.3 Synopsis of the County Development Plan Process to Date

1.3.1 Preliminary Consultation Process: Pre-Draft Plan

The Pre-Draft consultation stage was undertaken from 16 February 2018 until 20 April 2018. Ninety-three submissions were received during the Pre-Draft consultation period. The opinions and views set out in the written submissions, and of those expressed and recorded at the public consultation events/stakeholder meetings, were considered and a Chief Executive Report dated 31 May 2018 set out the response of the Chief Executive to the issues raised together with recommendation for the preparation of the Draft Plan.

Pursuant to Section 11 (b) (ii) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended, the County Development Plan review process was suspended between 22nd October 2018 until 28th June 2019, pending the preparation of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) RSES, which was subsequently made on June 28th 2019.

1.3.2 Draft Plan Consultation Process

The Draft Plan consultation stage was originally advertised to take place from 28 February 2020 until 05 May 2020. This consultation period was, however, further extended up until 30 June 2020 due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. 158 submissions were received during this Draft Plan consultation period. The extent and detail of the submissions and observations received highlights the significant level of public interest in the plan-making process. The consultation process comprised a number of elements:

a) Publicity

Notice advising of public consultation on the Draft Plan was placed in the Westmeath Examiner and Westmeath Independent on 28 February 2020. The notice provided details of where the Draft Plan was available for inspection and directed the public to a dedicated online Consultation Portal. Details of the duration of the formal consultation period was also set out. Details of consultations were also advertised on all Council social media platforms.

The Draft Plan was made available in all public libraries and on the dedicated Development Plan review webpage, and forwarded to all Elected Members, prescribed bodies, stakeholder groups and the Public Participation Network (PPN) groups (approx. 736 groups) within the County.

b) Public Information Sessions

A number of 'Public Information Drop-In Sessions' were held during the consultation period, to which all members of the public and other interested groups were invited, as follows:

Location	Date	Time
Mullingar Library, Áras an Chontae, Mullingar	Tuesday 3rd March 2020	3.00 -7.00pm
Castlepollard Civic Offices, Castlepollard	Wednesday 4th March 2020	3.00 -7.00pm
Moate Library, Moate	Thursday 5th March 2020	3.00 -7.00pm
Aidan Heavy Library, Civic Centre, Athlone	Tuesday 10th March 2020	3.00 -7.00pm

Consultation material and presentation information was on display and available at each meeting. Copies of the Draft Plan and associated documentation was also made available for viewing at local libraries and at Council Offices. Plans were also available for purchase from the Planning Department.

c) Webinar

In response to requirement to restrict movements owing to the Covid-19 Pandemic, a live webinar event was held by Westmeath County Council on 16 June 2020 in relation to the Draft Plan. Presentations were provided on the content of the Plan, the associated SEA and AA processes undertaken and a demonstration was given on how to submit an observation to the Draft Plan by way of the Westmeath Public Consultation Portal. A question and answer session were also conducted as part of the webinar. Approximately 80 attendees joined the live event.

d) Online and Social Media

A dedicated webpage and a specific Public Consultation Portal was employed to keep members of the public up to date with the process of the preparation of the Development Plan. The majority of submissions received in relation to the Draft Plan were via the Consultation Portal, where all submissions were also published for public viewing.

Regular notifications relating to the Plan review were issued through the Council's Facebook and Twitter feeds. During the consultation period there was a total reach of 68,669 people with 1,550 direct engagements through social media posts via Twitter and Facebook. During the consultation period there was a total reach of 68,669 people with 1,550 engagements through social media posts via Twitter and Facebook. Westmeath County Council's dedicated webpage for the Draft Plan had a total of 1,908 views during this consultation phase.

In accordance with Section 12(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, (as amended), not later than 22 weeks after the notice of the Draft Plan going on display, the Chief Executive prepared a report listing the submissions, summarising the issues and giving recommendations. This report issued to the Elected Members for their consideration on 21 September 2020. Under Section 12(5) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, (as amended), the members considered the Draft Plan and the Chief Executive's Report on submissions received and resolved, following Council meetings dated 16, 17, 18, 19 and 24 November 2020, to accept the Draft Westmeath County Development Plan subject to a number of proposed Material Amendments.

Consultation Process on the Material Amendments to the Draft Plan

Consultation on the Proposed Material Amendments to the Draft Westmeath County Development Plan 2021- 2017 together with associated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) Determinations and Reports was carried out for a period of 4 weeks from 15 December 2020 to 20 January 2021 inclusive. The key elements of the consultation programme are set out below:

Notices of the Proposed Material Amendments to the Draft Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 were published in both the Westmeath Examiner and Westmeath Independent on 15 December 2020. The notices included information on how to make a submission on the Proposed Material Amendments and associated Environmental Reports and Determinations together with information on their display.

Notices of the Proposed Material Amendments together with information on public consultation issued to the prescribed bodies.

The Draft Material Amendments and associated Environmental Reports and Determinations were put on public display in Westmeath County Council Civic Office, Mullingar and Athlone Civic Centre and Castlepollard, Moate and Kilbeggan libraries.

The Westmeath County Council website included details of the consultation on the Proposed Material Amendments including information on how to make a submission by post or via the online Consultation Portal.

Notice of the Proposed Material Amendments and updates were issued via Westmeath County Council's social media platforms.

36 submissions were received during the Proposed Material Amendments consultation period. Under the Planning and Development Act 2000, (as amended), the final (third) phase of public consultation is solely limited to the Proposed Material Amendments to the Draft Plan.

A list of all the persons/bodies that made submissions or observations during the prescribed consultation period is provided in Appendix 1.

1.4 Consideration of Amendments and Making of the Development Plan

In accordance with Section 12(9) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended), the members of the Planning Authority are required to consider the material amendments to the Draft Plan and the Chief Executive's Report within six weeks of receiving the report. Having considered the Chief Executive's Report, the members can make the plan with or without the proposed amendments, except where they decide to accept the amendments subject to a further modification of a minor nature.

A further modification to a Material Amendment

- a. May be made where it is minor in nature and therefore not likely to have significant effects on the environment or adversely affect the integrity of a European Site,
- b. shall not be made where it relates to:
 - an increase in the area of land zoned for any purpose
 - an addition to or deletion from the Record of Protected Structures.

In accordance with Section 12 (11) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended), in making the development plan, the members are restricted to considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which the development plan relates, the statutory obligations of any local authority in the area and any relevant policies or objectives for the time being of the Government or any Minister of the Government.

1.5 Approach to Consideration of Submissions

Following the upload of all submissions to the online consultation portal, each submission was read first to allocate the issues raised to the appropriate Proposed Material Amendment of the Draft Development Plan. In general, Submission Ref. Nos WM-C2-MA-3, WM-C2-MA-11 and WM-C2-MA-12 welcomed the material amendments made to the Draft Plan.

As set out in the table below, a number of submissions (or elements thereof) were received in relation to issues which do not relate to any proposed material amendment. Accordingly having regard to Section 12(8)

of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) these submissions cannot be considered at this stage in the plan making process.

Submission Reference	Topic
WM-C2-MA-1	Greenway linking Coosan National School
WM-C2-MA-5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rural Settlement and Housing policy 2. Cross Boundary Infrastructure and Local Authority Collaboration 3. Green Infrastructure
WM-C2-MA-8, WM-C2-MA-13, WM-C2-MA-15, WM-C2-MA-16 and WM-C2-M-23	Request that Lough Suedy be afforded High Amenity Status
WM-C2-MA 9	<p>Request that the proportion of population growth allocated to the lower levels of the settlement hierarchy, including rural areas, be re-examined.</p> <p>Requests for additional policy objective requiring residential development to be undertaken on a phased sequential basis in a manner which seeks to develop sites closest to town centres as a priority.</p>
WM-C2-MA 17	Request to amend Section 10.23.2 of the Draft Plan to include large-scale industrially cut/harvested cutover peatlands as a preferred location for windfarms.
WM-C2-MA-18	Right of Way - "Access to Slevin's Lough and Lough Drin" in Appendix 6 and Map 52.
WM-C2-MA-25	Inclusion lands at Rathwire.
WM-C2-MA-35	<p>DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities</p> <p>Reference to Enterprise and Employment zoned lands to the south of Clonmellon</p>
WM-C2-MA-31	Request update Chapter 10 with regard to the use of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and biogas.

Table 1. List of submissions not relating to Material Amendments to the Draft Plan

Of the 36 submissions and observations received during the prescribed public consultation period, a total of 95 issues were raised therein. In total, 221 material amendments were put on public display.

In summary, this report recommends that the Development Plan:

- be made with 68 of the proposed Material Amendments as displayed;
- be made with 13 of the proposed Material Amendments as displayed subject to modification of a minor nature.
- be made without 14 of the proposed Material Amendments as displayed.

It is recommended the remaining Proposed Material Amendments be made as displayed unless otherwise provided for in accordance with the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended.

1.6 Recommended Modifications to Proposed Material Amendments

Proposed Material Amendments to the Draft Plan, as originally displayed in December 2020, are identified through the use of green print for additional text, deletions to text are shown in red print with strikethrough.

In terms of modifications to Proposed Material Amendments, as recommended under this report, the omission of any text from a proposed Material Amendments is shown in its original colour text as displayed with strikethrough, with any modifications in the form of additional text to the proposed Material Amendments shown in italics blue print, for example:

Insert new CPO after CPO 12.24 of the plan as follows:

~~Investigate~~ *Develop* a protocol in relation to the application of an ecosystems services scoring approach to inform the assessment of planning applications.

2 Office of the Planning Regulator Submission Ref: WM-C2-MA-30

Notice of the proposed material amendments was issued to the Office of the Planning Regulator under section 12(7)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). A further Notice under 12(5)(aa), was also issued to the Office as required, setting out, following consideration of the draft plan and the Report of the Chief Executive, where the planning authority, after considering the submission of the Office of the Planning Regulator, decided not to comply with any recommendation made in the draft plan and Report of the Chief Executive, together with reasons for the decision.

2.1 Introduction

This section contains, under a series of themes (as set out in the submission received), a summary of the recommendations raised in the submission of the Office of Planning Regulator (OPR) to the proposed material alterations to the Draft Plan together with the response and recommendations of the Chief Executive in relation to the issues raised.

The OPR acknowledges the work of the Council in preparing the material alterations to the Draft Plan and recognises that the material amendments have addressed a number of issues raised in their original submission to the Draft Plan. It is suggested, however, that areas of policy conflict remain between the amended Draft Development Plan and national policies in areas such as promoting compact and sequential development, renewable energy, and sustainable rural settlements in particular.

2.2 Summary of Issues Raised and Response of the Chief Executive

The following four key themes are set out and addressed hereunder:

1. Core strategy and National Planning Framework
2. Wind Energy
3. Rural Settlement Policy
4. Compact growth and sequential development

1. Core strategy and National Planning Framework

The OPR advises that the Draft Plan should be consistent with population growth targets to 2026 and 2031 as set out under the NPF implementation Roadmap. Notwithstanding the acknowledgement that the integrity of the current settlement strategy and distribution of growth is consistent with the national and regional policy framework and should be retained, it is advised that the overall population targets should be reduced.

Whilst acknowledging that the process of review of the Development Plan is at an advanced stage, the submission also makes reference to the recently published Ministerial Circular relating to “Structural Housing Demand in Ireland and Housing Supply Targets”, and the associated Section 28 Guidelines: “Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning”, and the requirement to demonstrate

Chief Executive’s Report on Material Amendments to the Draft CDP 2021-2027

general consistency with the NPF and Economic Social and Research Institute (ESRI) NPF housing demand scenario. In this regard, it is suggested that the figures in Table 12 of Appendix 1 of the recently released Circular exceed the housing requirements prescribed in Table 9 of the Housing Strategy.

OPR MA Recommendation 1:

The planning authority is required to amend the county population projections for 2026 and 2031 so that they fully align with the NPF Implementation Roadmap (transitional population projections) set out in Appendix 2 and taking account of the Implications and Safeguards set out in section 3(a). The planning authority is advised that there is no policy or regulatory basis for exceeding the transitional population projections under the NPF Implementation Roadmap in the manner presented in the Core Strategy.

Chief Executive Response:

The Planning Authority acknowledges reference to recently published Ministerial Circular relating to “*Structural Housing Demand in Ireland and Housing Supply Targets*”, and the associated Section 28 Guidelines: “*Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning*”. In this regard it should be noted that the plan review process has commenced for the Westmeath County Development Plan and consultation on the Draft Plan had closed prior to the release of the aforementioned documents.

It is noted that the NPF points towards the delivery of enhanced methodologies and statutory guidelines taking into consideration the varying housing needs that are required to be met. National Policy Objective 36 indicates that ‘New statutory guidelines, supported by wider methodologies and data sources, will be put in place under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act to improve the evidence base, effectiveness and consistency of the planning process for housing provision at regional, metropolitan and local authority levels’. National Policy Objective 37 further states that a ‘Housing Need Demand Assessment’ (HNDA) is to be undertaken for each Local Authority Area in order to correlate and accurately align future housing requirements. The HNDA is..to be supported, through the establishment of a coordination and monitoring unit to assist Local Authorities and Regional Assemblies in the development of the HNDA (DHPLG, Regional Assemblies and the Local Authorities)’.

CPO 3.13 of the Draft Plan and the associated Proposed Material Amendment CH 3.2 already provides for the review of the HNDA in conjunction with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government having consideration to the outcomes of any revised Development Plan Guidelines, and where appropriate, take any steps considered necessary to align with the approach set out in these guidelines.

In advance of the release of anticipated HDNA Guidelines and Toolkit, it is considered that this policy could be further enhanced through the inclusion of a non-material modification to CPO 1.13 to include reference to recently published Ministerial Circular relating to “*Structural Housing Demand in Ireland and Housing Supply Targets*”, and the associated Section 28 Guidelines: “*Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning*”.

It is further considered that CPO 2.18 (*Monitor development for compliance with the objectives of the Core*

Strategy and adjust, where necessary, the approach taken to the consideration of development proposals in order to ensure effective alignment with National and Regional policy and objectives) should be similarly altered to reflect housing supply targets as set out under said Section 28 Guidelines.

The preparation of HNDAs, and the Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning Guidelines, is provided for under National Planning Objectives' 36 and 37 of the National Planning Framework (NPF). The NPF sets out "... key evidence inputs which inform and drive the HNDA model, as follows: 1) Demographic trends, affordability trends and wider economic trends ... 2) Housing Stock Profile Pressures (and existing need) and management issues ... 3) Estimating Future Housing Need and Demand ...". The recent Guidelines are only concerned with Input 3, and it is considered, at this time, that further detail on the evidence-base will be necessary to assess need and demand. It is anticipated that this information will be made available in the future.

In the absence of the forthcoming HNDA Guidelines (and thus an agreed standardised methodological approach to the HNDA), any demonstration of consistency with the NPF 50:50 City Scenario necessitates more detailed interrogation of the assumptions and methodologies inherent in the current ESRI scenarios. It is anticipated that guidance will be provided as to how such information should be integrated into the HNDA and/or when the tool (as noted in National Policy Objective 20 of the National Planning Framework) will be released to support the ongoing County Development Plan and Core Strategy processes.

Notwithstanding the above, the Chief Executive's Report on the Draft Westmeath County Development Plan (September 2020) in response to written submission from the OPR on the issue, sets out the methodology applied to the Draft Plan in terms of population projections.

In determining population projections for County Westmeath, it is important to note that in addition to the consideration of population targets prescribed by the NPF Implementation Roadmap (2018), Westmeath County Council included, in accordance with Section 10 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), a Core Strategy that is consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and with specific planning policy requirements specified in guidelines under subsection (1) of section 28.

Specifically, for County Westmeath, this includes ensuring consistency with:

- Athlone's prescribed population target (30,000) as prescribed by the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy – aligning with its role as a regional driver and to promote its sustainable and compact growth
- Delivering Mullingar's role as a Key Town
- Delivering the role of the Self Sustaining Growth Towns and Self Sustaining Towns as envisaged under the NPF and RSES
- Supporting the sustainable development of rural areas, with a special focus on activating the potential for the renewal and development of smaller towns and villages in line with the objectives of the NPF including NPO 15 and 16.

In light of the aforementioned policy requirements, Westmeath County Council presented a Core Strategy that sought to address requirements as set out above, and present a Core Strategy that is consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy as outlined by Section 10 (1A) and having regard to the NPF (p25) which states that:

“In setting overall targets for future growth, it is a pattern of development that is being targeted, rather than precise numbers. From a long-term, national perspective, the targeted location, relative scale and proportionality of growth will assist in monitoring and assessing delivery and performance”

It should be noted that Westmeath County Council undertook a detailed analysis of a number of growth trajectories and population scenarios in order to comply with the previously stated policy requirements. These scenarios were developed further in response to this submission and are presented in more detail as an addendum at the end of this Section. As demonstrated, these scenarios provided the evidence base to indicate that simultaneous achievement of the stated Implementation Roadmap county targets and the aforementioned NPF and RSES core policy objectives and targets is not possible.

In particular, given the context in County Westmeath, it was not considered practicable to present a Core Strategy that would result in any of the following listed scenarios, simply to ensure strict compliance with the precise population numbers set out in the NPF Roadmap;

- The population target for Athlone as a Regional Centre (i.e. 30,000 by 2031) not being provided for;
- A reduction in Mullingar’s population target and thereby, a constraint in delivering its role as a Key Town;
- Effectively, no population growth outside Athlone and Mullingar;
- All settlements grow at a nominal rate except smaller towns, villages, rural nodes and the open countryside, which remain stagnant;
- A decline in rural population.

In the context of the above, Westmeath County Council has developed a Core Strategy that is consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. This approach also takes account of population targets as required by Section 10(2A)(b) of the Planning and Development Act; satisfies the requirements of the RSES population target for Athlone; provides for Mullingar as a Key Town, Self Sustaining Growth Towns and Self-Sustaining Towns; and supports the sustainable development of rural areas by encouraging growth and arresting decline. The adopted approach is also set out in a manner that promotes a pattern of development, at targeted locations, relative scale and proportionality of growth that is in line with the national perspective.

In seeking to determine a settlement strategy for Westmeath, with Athlone as a Regional Growth Centre and Mullingar as a Key Town, which achieves relevant NPF Roadmap and RSES population targets and aligns

with national and regional objectives, various growth trajectories and population scenarios for the County were investigated to 2031 incorporating the most recent CSO data on migration (specifically). These scenarios, and the non-intervention scenario, were above the NPF Roadmap targeted trajectory for the county. (An overview of these scenarios is set out under the Chief Executive's Report on the Draft Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (September 2020) at 3.4 *Addendum - Overview of Explored Population Scenarios*).

Westmeath is one of several identified counties within the NPF Implementation Roadmap (p4) where population growth is projected to be at or above the NPF/ NDP national average baseline. The published NPF/NDP national average baseline is 10.75% over 2016 to 2026, 15.3% over 2016 to 2031 and 23% over 2016 to 2040. In County Westmeath, as demonstrated under Scenario 1, the non-intervention demographic projection of population anticipates an increase of 19.2% between 2016- 2026. Between 2016-2031, the increase is anticipated to be 29.8%, substantially above the national average baseline.

The Roadmap further states that;

In all individual counties where population growth is projected to be at or above the NPF/ NDP national average baseline, provision shall be made to enable planning for aggregate growth within that county up to that figure for each Census year and related intercensal period i.e. to 2026 and, subject to review, 2031 (NPF Implementation Roadmap, p5)

The demographic analysis undertaken in Scenario 1 assumes a continuation of the prevailing trends in mortality, fertility and migration with respect to the CSO's highest migration assumption (and as estimated from 2016-2019 respectively). Under this scenario, the county population increases by 19.2% between 2016-2026 with the population reaching 105,785 in 2026. Between 2016-2031, the increase is anticipated to be 29.8%, with the county reaching a population of 115,219. Thus, in accordance with the Implementation Roadmap, provision shall be made for aggregate growth in County Westmeath up to 105,785 in 2026 and 115,219 to 2031, subject to review. These figures exceed the stated Roadmap county targets by 7.4% in 2026 and 12.4% in 2031.

Under Proportional Intervention Scenario C' (Overview of Explored Population Scenarios - Scenario 6 below), as utilised within the Draft Development Plan, the county population grows to reach 104,213 in 2026 (5.4% above the Roadmap high target of 98,500) and 111,044 in 2031 (8.3% above the Roadmap high target of 102,500). These figures, while exceeding the stated Implementation Roadmap figures, are lower than those depicted as part of the demographic analysis undertaken as part of Scenario 1. As such, while in excess of the stated county targets, the scenario aligns with the provision contained within the Roadmap (p5) which allows for aggregate growth up to 105,785 in 2026 and indeed 115,219 to 2031 (subject to review).

Proportional intervention (Pi) 'Scenario C' (Overview of Explored Population Scenarios - Scenario 6 below) and the chosen growth scenario as set out under the Draft Plan targets a pattern of development which is aligned with the key principles set out in the NPF and RSES. While the overall county population exceeds

the NPF Roadmap county targets, this scenario ensures that growth is appropriately channelled towards the urban centres of the county in a manner fully aligned with the settlement hierarchy and spatial strategy set out in the RSES while also safeguarding the sustainable development of the rural remainder of the county. Moreover, this is permissible under the explicit provision within the NPF Implementation Roadmap around individual counties where population growth is projected to be at or above the NPF/ NDP national average baseline (as discussed above).

The population targets for Westmeath as set out under the NPF Implementation Roadmap have informed the making of the Draft Plan and commitments to monitor the implementation of the Plan in line with these indicated targets are set out. In this regard provisions have been included to ‘monitor ongoing developments ... and review the operation and implementation of this Plan. This includes adjustments as needed to ensure the effectiveness of its alignment with National and Regional policy and objectives’. Specific supporting policy objectives are also set out at CPO 2.11 to “ensure that the future spatial development of Westmeath is in accordance with the National Planning Framework 2040 (NPF) including the population targets set out under the Implementation Roadmap, and the Regional, Spatial and the Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019-2031” and CPO 2.28 which provides a commitment to “monitor development for compliance with the objectives of the Core Strategy and adjust, where necessary, the approach taken to the consideration of development proposals in order to ensure effective alignment with National and Regional policy and objectives”.

As such it is considered that the Core Strategy and the associated population targets set out for Westmeath are in accordance with the policy provision as set out at a national and regional level under the NPF and RSES and in accordance with the requirements of the NPF Implementation Roadmap including associated population targets.

The selected scenario (referred to as a proportional intervention (Pi) ‘Scenario C’) envisages growth rates to 2031 which are proportional to each tier of the settlement hierarchy. This aligns with the approach to settlement typologies detailed in the NPF. The NPF states that the translation of policy responses to the various settlement typologies presented in the NPF should also consider the scale and location of settlements and accordingly, the requisite nature and scale of development appropriate at these locations.

While the Implementation Roadmap county targets for 2026 and 2031 are exceeded somewhat, the selected scenario ensures the simultaneous achievement of several critical policy objectives in a manner which would not be possible under the alternative scenarios:

- This scenario ensures that Athlone’s RSES target is achieved by 2031, comprising a growth rate of 40.5% from its 2016 population base (as reported by the most recent census). Between 2021 and 2027, it envisages that Athlone will grow by 14% or 3,460 people in total.
- Importantly, this scenario also ensures the achievement of the NPF’s objectives around supporting the sustainable development of rural settlements by encouraging growth and arresting decline in areas that have experienced low population growth or decline in recent decades. This scenario

ensures a 5% growth rate in the rural remainder of the County between 2021 and 2027 and a 6% growth rate in serviced rural areas during the same period.

- A key concern of Westmeath County Council is ensuring that the county grows in a manner where growth is proportionate to the role of settlements and their placement in the settlement hierarchy, while also protecting the vitality and viability of rural areas. Proportional Intervention Scenario C ensures the simultaneous achievement of these core policy objectives in a manner not possible under the alternative scenarios explored.

Having considered all of the above and the particular circumstances that apply to County Westmeath, it is not considered practicable to revise the Core Strategy, in a manner that that satisfies each element of national and regional development objectives without adversely impacting on the balanced development of the County.

It should be noted that the Draft Plan has been prepared in the absence of the anticipated publication of revised Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities and the implications that any guidance therein might have for the associated Westmeath Housing Needs Demands Assessment.

Notwithstanding, it is considered that the Core Strategy is underpinned by a robust methodology. Furthermore, the Council is committed to complying with the pending Section 28 Development Plan Guidelines and associated toolkit for preparing Housing Need Demand Assessments. In this regard, policy has been included to amend the plan where necessary to include compliance with Section 28 guidelines, therefore consistent with the related policies and objectives of the relevant Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) and the National Planning Framework.

It is recommended however that minor modifications be made in association with Proposed Amendment CH 3.2 (CPO 1.13) and CPO 2.18, to include reference to the recently published Ministerial Circular relating to *“Structural Housing Demand in Ireland and Housing Supply Targets”*, and the associated Section 28 Guidelines: *“Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning”*.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment CH 3.2 subject to the following minor modifications.

CPO 3.13

Support the ongoing monitoring and review of the HNDA, **over the lifetime of the Plan**, in conjunction with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government **having consideration to the housing requirements set out under Section 28 Guidelines “Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning” and its associated Ministerial Circular (or subsequent update) relating to Structural Housing Demand in Ireland and Housing Supply Targets” together with the outcomes of any revised Development Plan Guidelines and HNDA Toolkit, and where appropriate, take any steps considered necessary to align with the approach set out in these guidelines. This will include monitoring and maintenance of a record of**

residential development permitted as single rural houses.

CPO 2.18

Monitor development for compliance with the objectives of the Core Strategy *and the housing requirements set out under Section 28 Guidelines “Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning” and its associated Ministerial Circular (or subsequent update) relating to Structural Housing Demand in Ireland and Housing Supply Targets*” and adjust, where necessary, the approach taken to the consideration of development proposals in order to ensure effective alignment with National and Regional policy and objectives.

2. Renewable Energy & Climate Action

The Office notes that the amendments to CPO 10.132 (Proposed Amendment CH 10.38 - separation distances between wind turbines and residential dwellings) introduce a more restrictive policy than that provided for in the Draft Plan. The OPR previously recommended removal of this policy from the plan under Recommendation 6 on the Draft Plan. Furthermore, an analysis of the implications of using this policy has been carried out which concludes that the policy would preclude the development of a wind energy project with a turbine height of over 100 or 150 metres in the vast majority of the county, including within areas of medium capacity for wind energy.

With regard to Proposed Material Amendment BOM 36, it is stated that there is no evidence or policy based rationale for changing Area 7, which is identified as having medium wind energy capacity in the current Development Plan to low wind energy capacity. A further clarification was submitted by the OPR on this matter which noted that Area 7 is identified as having medium capacity for wind energy in the Draft Development Plan and that there would appear to be insufficient evidence or policy-based rationale for this change.

It is advised that the material alterations to CPO 10.135 (Proposed Amendment CH 10.39-location of industrial scale windfarms) do not address issues raised in Recommendation 8 of the OPR’s submission to the Draft Plan.

The OPR considers that limitations placed on wind energy development through separation distances and designation of capacity for wind energy, would result in conflicting policies in the plan, having regard to existing policy objectives which seek to promote wind energy development, giving rise to implications for the implementation of the plan.

OPR MA Recommendation 2:

- a) Remove amended policy objective CPO 10.132 in its entirety from Chapter 10 of the draft development plan as the inclusion of such mandatory separation distances between wind turbines and residential dwellings would severely restrict the potential for wind farm development in the county, would undermine other policy objectives supporting wind farm

development and be contrary to national policy and Ministerial guidance on wind energy development.

- b) Remove material alteration BOM 36 to Change Area 7 from medium energy capacity to low wind energy capacity which is not evidence based and would undermine other policy objectives promoting wind farm development in the development plan such as CPO 10.131 and CPO 10.133.
- c) Amend policy objective CPO 10.135 to delete the definition for industrial scale / large-scale wind energy production projects as the relevant guidelines do not provide a basis for the inclusion of a definition for industrial scale / large scale energy projects or for an alternative policy framework that would apply in such cases.
- d) Indicate how the development plan will contribute to meeting national renewable energy targets, including specific targets in megawatts for wind energy potential in the county, in order to fully implement the Specific Planning Policy Requirement contained in the Interim Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate Change and in accordance with the provisions of section 28(1C) of the Act.

Chief Executive Response:

OPR Recommendation MA 2 (a)

In response to the request to remove amended policy objective CPO 10.132 (separation distances between wind turbines and residential dwellings) to ensure consistency of development plans with specific planning policy requirements specified in the “Wind Energy Guidelines 2006” and the “Draft Revised Wind Energy Guidelines 2019” it should be noted that Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines were issued, in December 2019, for public consultation. The purpose of the guidelines is to ensure a consistency of approach throughout the country for the treatment of planning applications for wind energy developments. The guidelines were also prepared within a wider national and EU energy policy context in line with binding EU and international obligations on Ireland to play its part in tackling both the causes and effects of climate change. As such, the Draft Plan also recognises the importance of wind energy, in addition to other renewable energy sources, in achieving national targets in relation to reducing fossil fuel dependency and greenhouse gas emissions.

The Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines provide for the following:

- A setback requirement for visual amenity purposes of 4 times the tip height to be applied between a wind turbine and the nearest point of the curtilage of any residential property in the vicinity of the proposed development, subject to a mandatory minimum setback of 500 metres.
- Include a policy of zero shadow flicker and recommend planning authorities or An Bord Pleanála to impose condition(s) to ensure that no existing dwelling or other affected property will experience shadow flicker as a result of the wind energy development.

Having regard to the submission of the OPR, it is acknowledged that the separation distances as set out under the Draft Plan and (proposed amended policy objective CPO 10.132) are contrary to that set out under the Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines, December 2019 (and the 2006 Wind Energy Guidelines).

Notwithstanding the above, given that there is limited scope to introduce further modification, which must be of a minor nature, it is considered that the removal of the policy as presented in the Draft Plan, would constitute a Material Amendment that is not minor in nature (and in relation to which, if made, the public would not be afforded the opportunity to make a submission or comment), as such it is recommended that the Plan be made without the proposed Material Alteration.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Plan be made without the proposed Material Amendment CH 10.38.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.38 - Amend CPO 10.132 in the plan as follows:

Provide the following separation distances between wind turbines and residential dwellings:

- 500 metres, where the *tip height of the wind turbine blade generator* is greater than 25 metres but does not exceed 50 metres.
- 1000 metres, where the *tip height of the wind turbine blade generator* is greater than 50 metres but does not exceed 100 metres.
- 1500 metres, where the *tip height of the wind turbine blade generator* is greater than 100 metres but does not exceed 150 metres.
- More than 2000 metres, where the *tip height of the wind turbine blade generator* is greater than 150 metres.

OPR Recommendation MA 2 (b)

With respect to Proposed Material Amendment BOM 36 (OPR MA Recommendation 2(b)), concerning the Wind Energy Capacity Map, it is considered that the proposed change of Area 7 from medium wind energy capacity to low wind energy capacity, it should be noted that the Wind Energy Capacity Map was generated using the landscape character assessment together with wind speed data provided by SEAI. In terms of the proposed change of the classification of Area 7 from “medium capacity” to “low capacity” for wind energy development, it is considered that such an amendment is not justified given the landscape character of the area in question and as such the Draft Plan should be made without the proposed Material Amendment.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Plan be made without the proposed Material Amendment BOM 36.

OPR Recommendation MA 2 (c)

With regard to Proposed Material Amendment CH 10.39 (OPR MA Recommendation 2 (c)), relating to the definition of industrial scale/large-scale energy wind energy production projects, it is recognised that the Wind Energy Guidelines do not include definitions associated with ‘Industrial Scale’ wind turbines and as

such it is considered that terminology in the Plan be updated in line with Section 2.3 of the Draft Revised Wind Energy Guidelines (December 2019) and in particular reference to ‘taller’ and ‘commercial wind turbines’. The guidelines advocate careful site selection as well as choice of wind turbine type and layout is the most effective way of minimising landscape and visual impacts.

It is considered that the proposed amendment to strictly direct (as opposed to “Encourage”) windfarms onto cutaway peatlands in the County is not consistent with national policy in the area and as such the Draft Plan should also be made without Proposed Amendment CH 10.39 (below) subject to minor modification to update terminology associated with ‘Industrial Scale Wind Turbines’ to ‘taller commercial wind turbines’.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Plan be made without Proposed Amendment CH 10.39 subject to minor modification to update terminology associated with ‘Industrial Scale Wind Turbines’ to ‘taller commercial wind turbines’.

Amend CPO 10.135 in the plan as follows;

~~To strictly direct~~ ~~Encourage large scale energy production projects~~, *taller commercial wind turbines* in the form of Wind Farms, onto cutover cutaway peatlands in the County, subject to environmental, landscape, habitats and wildlife protection requirements being addressed.

In the context of this policy, ~~industrial scale/large scale energy production~~ *taller commercial wind turbines* projects are defined as follows:

Projects that meet or exceed any of the following criteria:

- Height: over 100m to blade tip, or
- Scale: More than five turbines, or
- Output: Having a total output of greater than 5MW

Developments sited on peatlands have the potential to increase overall carbon losses. Proposals for such development should demonstrate that the following has been considered:

- Peatland stability; and
- Carbon emissions balance.

OPR Recommendation MA 2 (d)

In response to OPR Recommendation MA 2(d), which considers how the Development Plan will contribute towards meeting national renewable energy targets it should be noted that the Planning Authority has included a stand alone chapter in the Draft Plan to address climate adaptation and mitigation. In terms of the contribution of the Plan to realising targets on renewable energy and climate change mitigation, the Plan is committed to reducing carbon footprint by integrating climate action into the planning system in support of national targets for climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, as well as targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

The Draft Plan recognises the contribution that wind and solar energy make to meeting national renewable energy targets. In this regard, the plan strongly supports the development of renewable energy resources. The Council has demonstrated its commitment to promoting renewable energy development by granting approximately 330ha of solar farms in recent years. It is acknowledged in the plan that the Council is open to new and innovative renewable energy sources and technological solutions to addressing climate change. In this regard, the Council will seek to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to progress the transition to green energy.

Whilst the information requested is not available at this time, enhanced policy is proposed which commits to working with key stakeholders in the carrying out of an assessment of how the implementation of the Plan will contribute to realising overall national targets on renewable energy and climate change, and in particular wind energy production and the potential wind energy resource.

Material Amendment CH 11.3 has been proposed as follows:

Insert new CPO after CPO 11.8 of the plan as follows;

“Work with key stakeholders to carry out an assessment of how the implementation of the Plan will contribute to realising overall national targets on renewable energy and climate change, and in particular wind energy production and the potential wind energy resource”

Such an approach will inform the implementation of the plan and as such it is recommended that the Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as set out above.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Plan be made with proposed Material Amendment CH 11.3.

3. Rural Settlement Policy

The submission states that the material alterations (CH 9.1, CH 9.5, CH 9.6) to policy objectives CPO 9.1 (*Persons who demonstrate extraordinary and exceptional circumstances, regard shall be had to those circumstances in consideration of the application*), CPO 9.21 (*Landowners for this purpose being defined as persons who own the land 5 years prior to the date of planning application*) and CPO 9.22 (*Landowners for this purpose being defined as persons who own the land 5 years prior to the date of planning application*) which includes pre-draft alterations introduce further conflicts with national policies, in particular NPO 19. It is advised that no changes have been made to CPO 9.2 in response to Recommendation 10 to the Draft Plan. Whilst the OPR acknowledges the inclusion of a new policy objective which commits to the review of rural housing policy in line with Circular Letter PL 2/2017 or pursuant to Section 28 Guidelines, it considers that such an approach does not adequately address previous concerns raised in its submission.

OPR MA Recommendation 3:

Having regard to the material alterations to policy objectives CPO 9.1 – Areas Under Strong Urban Influence, CPO 9.21 – Water Catchment Areas and CPO 9.22 – Areas of High Amenity including the pre-draft alterations, the planning authority is required to delete aspects of the aforementioned policies that are not consistent and based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in a rural area and siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans as set out in National Policy Objective 19. The planning authority is advised that this includes, inter alia references to bloodline / family ties, and landownership periods as policy support for applications for rural housing. Further, policy objectives CPO 9.1 and 9.2 should also include requirements in respect of appropriate design criteria for rural housing and the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.

Chief Executive Response:

Whilst the Planning Authority notes the comments in relation to rural housing need and compliance with NPO 19, in relation to Material Amendments CH 9,1, 9.5 and 9.6, it should be noted that the European Commission issued an infringement notice against Ireland in 2007 in relation to the “local needs criteria” in the 2005 Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities. This infringement notice was subsequently deferred pending the outcome of an infringement case taken against Belgium, now referred to as the Flemish Decree case and on which the European Court of Justice (ECJ) delivered its Judgement in 2013.

In its 2013 Judgement, the ECJ ruled that the Flemish Decree (requirement to demonstrate “a sufficient connection” to an area) constituted an unjustified restriction on fundamental freedoms under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (the EU Treaty), in particular that it breached article 43 of the EU Treaty on the freedom of movement of citizens. In order to avoid the up-scaling of the previous infringement notice against Ireland and referral of the matter to the ECJ for determination, the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government have indicated their intention to revise the 2005 Guidelines to ensure that rural housing policies and objectives contained in local authority development plans comply with article 43 of the EU Treaty on the freedom of movement of citizens.

In the interim, there is an obligation on planning authorities, in line with Circular Letter PL 2/2017 dated 31 May 2017, to ensure that existing 2005 Rural Housing Guidelines Policy specifically to the application of the “local housing needs residency criteria” remain in place pending the conclusion of the national policy review process and issue of advice otherwise by the Department.

Under Circular Letter PL 2/2017 Planning Authorities are required to “defer amending their rural housing policy/ local housing need criteria in existing statutory development plans either by way of the cyclical review or variation procedures”. This is considered prudent in order to avoid planning authorities adopting different approaches on the matter in the interim”.

Accordingly, having regard to Circular Letter PL 2/2017, in advance of revised guidance on rural generated housing, and in the absence of a comprehensive assessment of the need to tailor a wider approach to rural

housing policy having regard to the provisions of the National Planning Framework, it is considered that the Plan should be made without proposed Material Amendments CH 9.1, CH 9.5 and CH 9.6 in relation to rural housing policy and that the Draft Plan be made with Material Amendment CH 9.2 as follows:

Material Amendment CH 9.1

Amend CPO 9.1 of the plan follows (Local Housing Need)

Persons who demonstrate extraordinary and exceptional circumstances, regard shall be had to those circumstances in consideration of the application.

Material Amendment CH 9.5

Amend CPO 9.21 of the plan follows (residential development not related to farming or forestry practices in defined water catchment areas of Lough Owel and Lough Lene)

Landowners for this purpose being defined as persons who own the land 5 years prior to the date of planning application.

Material Amendment CH 9.6

Amend CPO 9.22 of the plan follows (development not related to farming practices and tourism in all High Amenity Areas)

Landowners for this purpose being defined as persons who own the land 5 years prior to the date of planning application.

Material Amendment CH 9.2

Insert new CPO after CPO 9.1 of the plan as follows:

In line with Circular Letter PL 2/2017, review rural housing policy in line with Development Plan or other relevant Guidelines issued by the Minister in this area having regard to NPO 19.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

In relation to rural housing policy:

It is recommended that the Plan be made without proposed Material Amendment CH 9.1.

It is recommended that the Plan be made made with Material Amendment CH 9.2.

It is recommended that the Plan be made without proposed Material Amendment CH 9.5.

It is recommended that the Plan be made without proposed Material Amendments CH 9.6

High Amenity Areas

Whilst welcoming the reinstatement of deletions made to the High Amenity Area (HAA) at Lough Lene together with the deletion made to the HAA to the west of Lough Derravaragh provided for in Material Amendment CH BOM 35 (MA Recommendation 4), concern is raised that deletions to the north and east of Lough Derravaragh remain unchanged from the Draft Plan.

MA Recommendation 4:

Having regard to NPO 60 (*Conserve and enhance the rich qualities of natural and cultural heritage of Ireland in a manner appropriate to their significance*) of the NPF and the concerns raised in the SEA Environmental Report about the piecemeal erosion and potential to undermine the long-term protection of important High Amenity designations through housing and further subdivision of these areas, the planning authority is required to retain the current High Amenity designations affecting the Lough Derravaragh High Amenity Area.

Chief Executive Response:

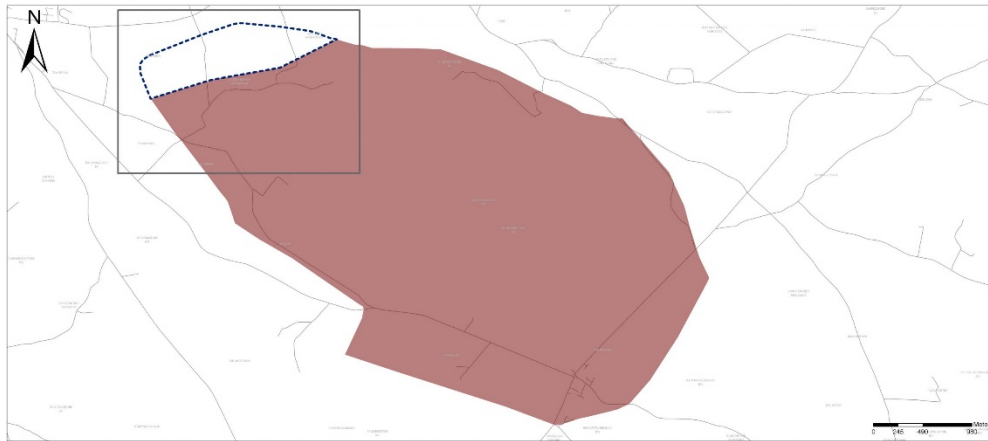
The Planning Authority acknowledges the value of Lough Derravaragh as a highly significant asset, both environmentally and culturally as well as being an important sustainable tourism resource. The high scenic quality and recreational and amenity value of the lake is also recognised as an important asset for the County. In this regard it is a policy to promote, in association with Fáilte Ireland, the sustainable tourism potential of Areas of High Amenity centered around the Lakelands and to provide for the continued expansion of the tourism sector, capitalising on our natural and cultural heritage assets, whilst safeguarding these resources for future generations. The areas immediately adjacent to the High Amenity area are, likewise, also sensitive landscapes as development in these areas proximate may affect directly or indirectly the quality and integrity of the High Amenity areas.

It is considered that the proposed deletions to the north and east of Lough Derravaragh HAA as provided for in the Draft Plan, would dilute the level of protection afforded to the lake, with the potential to result in adverse effects upon the factors for which this landscape area has been designated. Furthermore, the piecemeal erosion of this important High Amenity designation will reduce the protection of the overall landscape and undermine the long-term integrity of this important asset, which is designated as a High Amenity Area, Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area reflecting its significant environmental status.

Notwithstanding the above, given that there is limited scope to introduce further modification, which must be of a minor nature, it is considered that the reinstatement of the High Amenity designations affecting the Lough Derravaragh High Amenity Area, would constitute a Material Amendment that is not minor in nature (and in relation to which, if made, the public would not be afforded the opportunity to make a submission or comment), and as such it is recommended that the Plan be made with Proposed Amendment BOM 34 and Proposed Amendment BOM 35 and that no further material amendments be made at this time.

Proposed Amendment BOM 34

Include previously omitted lands as part of Lough Lene High Amenity Area.



BOM 34 : Change of High Amenity Area at Lough Lene

**High Amenity Area
Material Alteration
2021 - 2027**



KEY

- High Amenity Area
- Material Alteration

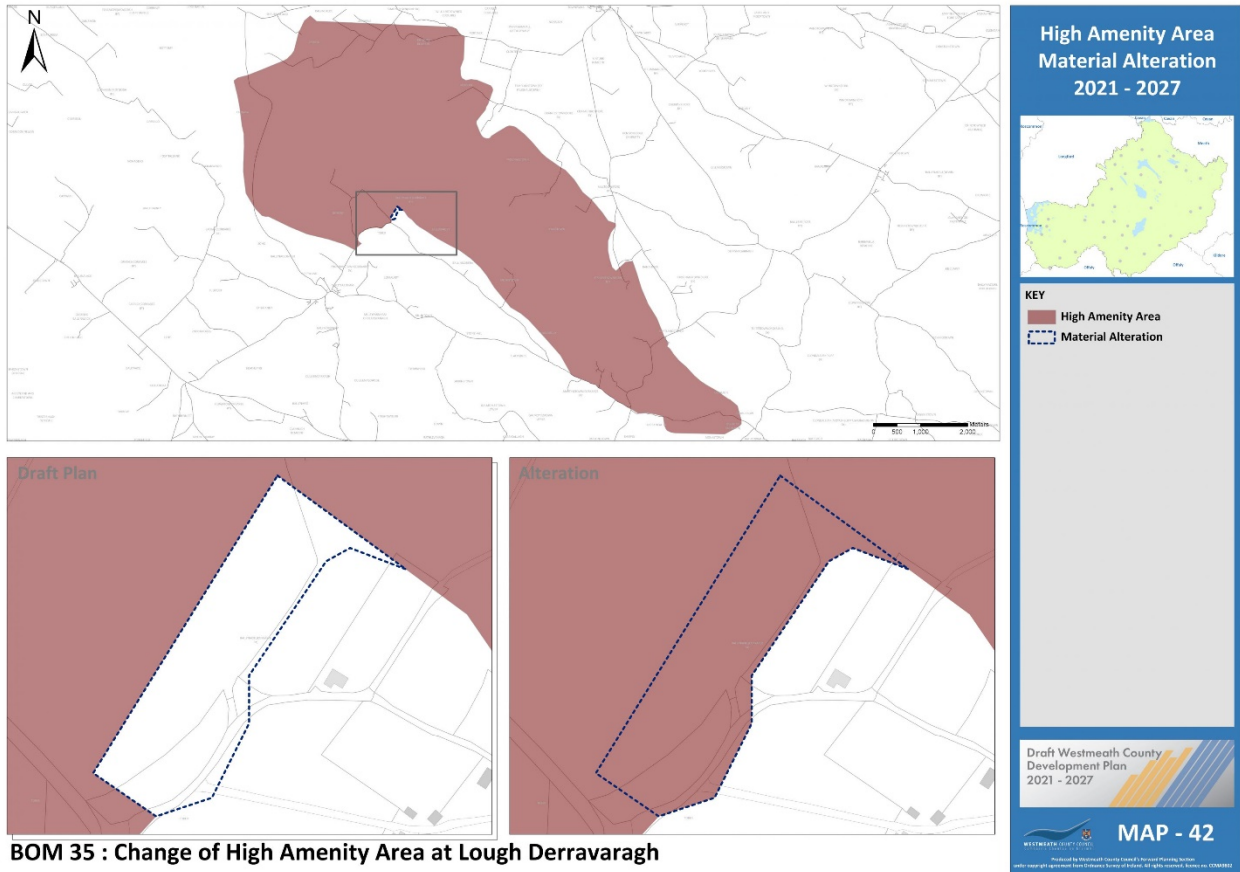
Draft Westmeath County
 Development Plan
 2021 - 2027


MAP - 42

Produced by Westmeath County Council's Technical Planning Section
 2020-2021 All Rights Reserved. All other rights reserved. © 2020-2021

Proposed Amendment BOM 35

Include previously omitted lands as part of Lough Derravaragh High Amenity Area.



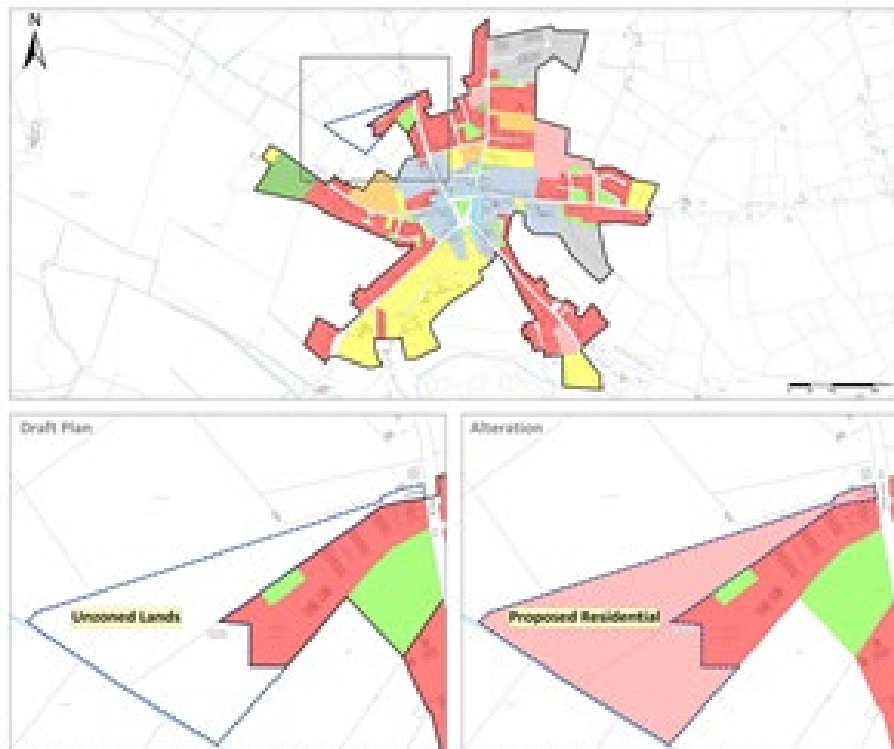
Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Plan be made with Material Amendment BOM 34.

It is recommended that the Plan be made with Material Amendment BOM 35.

4. Compact Growth & Sequential Development

The OPR notes that a number of material alterations propose to zone further land for residential development, resulting in leapfrogging to areas at the edge/outside of settlements remote from infrastructure and services or which would result in policy conflicts with other policies in the Plan. In this regard, reference is made to Material Amendments BOM 1 (Castlepollard), BOM 13 (Killucan), BOM 16 (Rochfordbridge), and BOM 29 (Glasson).



BOM 1 : Proposed Change of Zoning from Unzoned Lands to Proposed Residential

**Castlepollard
Material Alteration
Zoning Map
2021 - 2027**

KEY

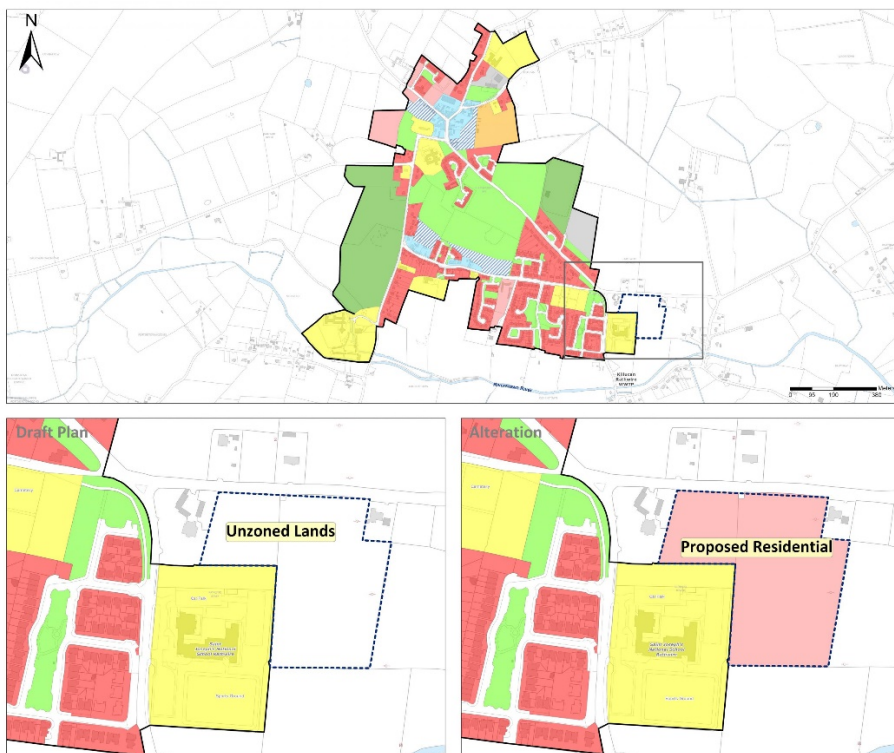
Land Use Zoning

- Community, Educational & Institutional
- Consolidation Site
- Enterprise & Employment
- Established Residential
- Expanded Settlement Centre
- Mixed Use
- Open Space
- Proposed Residential
- Sporting Recreational

Development Boundary
Material Alterations

Draft Westmeath County
Development Plan
2021 - 2027

MAP - 01



BOM 13 : Proposed Change of Zoning from unzoned lands to Proposed Residential

**Killucan Rathwire
Material Alteration
Zoning Map
2021 - 2027**

KEY

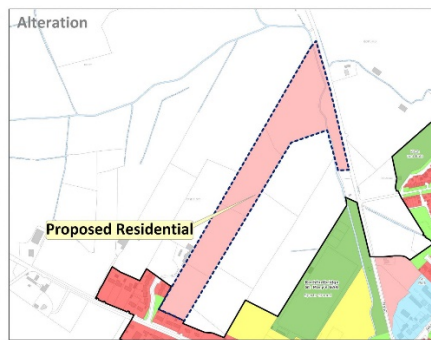
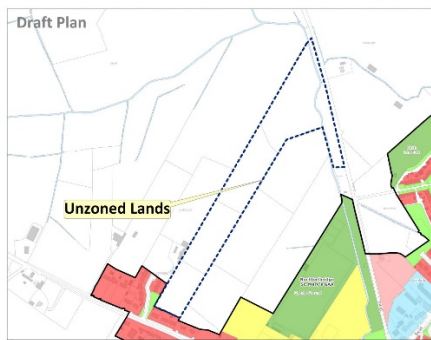
Land Use Zoning

- Community, Educational & Institutional
- Consolidation Site
- Enterprise & Employment
- Established Residential
- Expanded Settlement Centre
- Mixed Use
- Open Space
- Proposed Residential
- Sporting Recreational

Development Boundary
Material Alterations

Draft Westmeath County
Development Plan
2021 - 2027

MAP - 10



BOM 16 : Proposed Change of Zoning from unzoned lands to Proposed Residential

**Rochfortbridge
Material Alteration
Zoning Map
2021 - 2027**

KEY

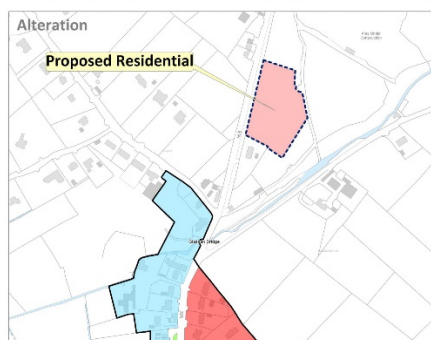
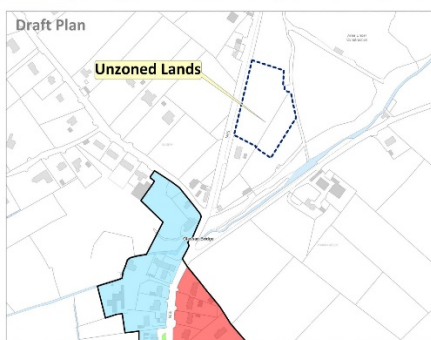
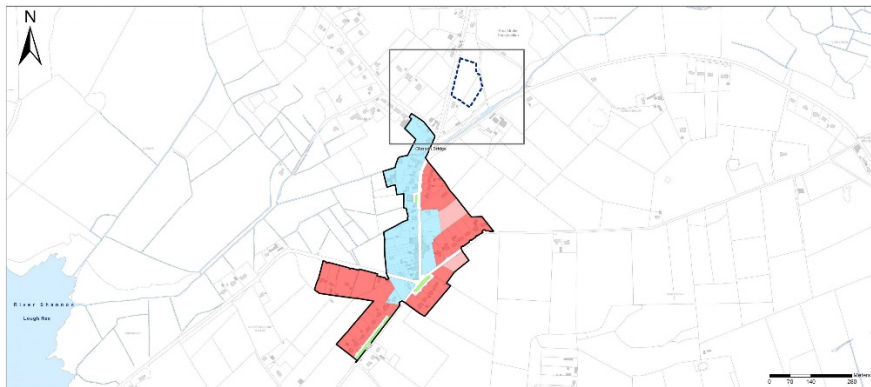
Land Use Zoning

- Enterprise & Employment
- Established Residential
- Expanded Settlement Centre
- Community, Education & Institutional
- Mixed Use
- Open Space
- Proposed Residential
- Sporting Recreational

Development Boundary
Material Alterations

Draft Westmeath County
Development Plan
2021 - 2027

MAP - 12



BOM 29 : Proposed Change of Zoning from unzoned lands to Proposed Residential

**Glasson
Material Alteration
Zoning Map
2021 - 2027**

KEY

Land Use Zoning

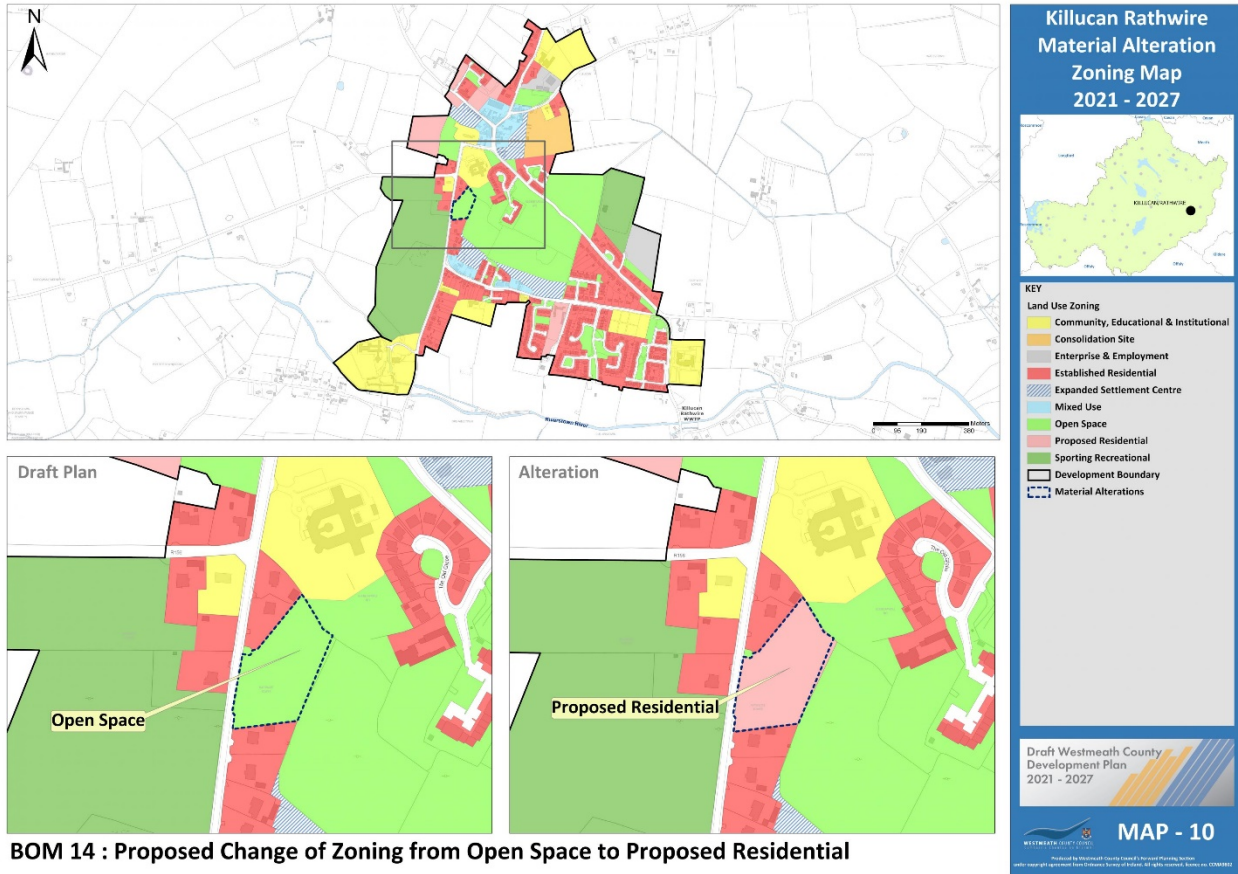
- Established Residential
- Mixed Use
- Open Space
- Proposed Residential

Development Boundary
Material Alterations

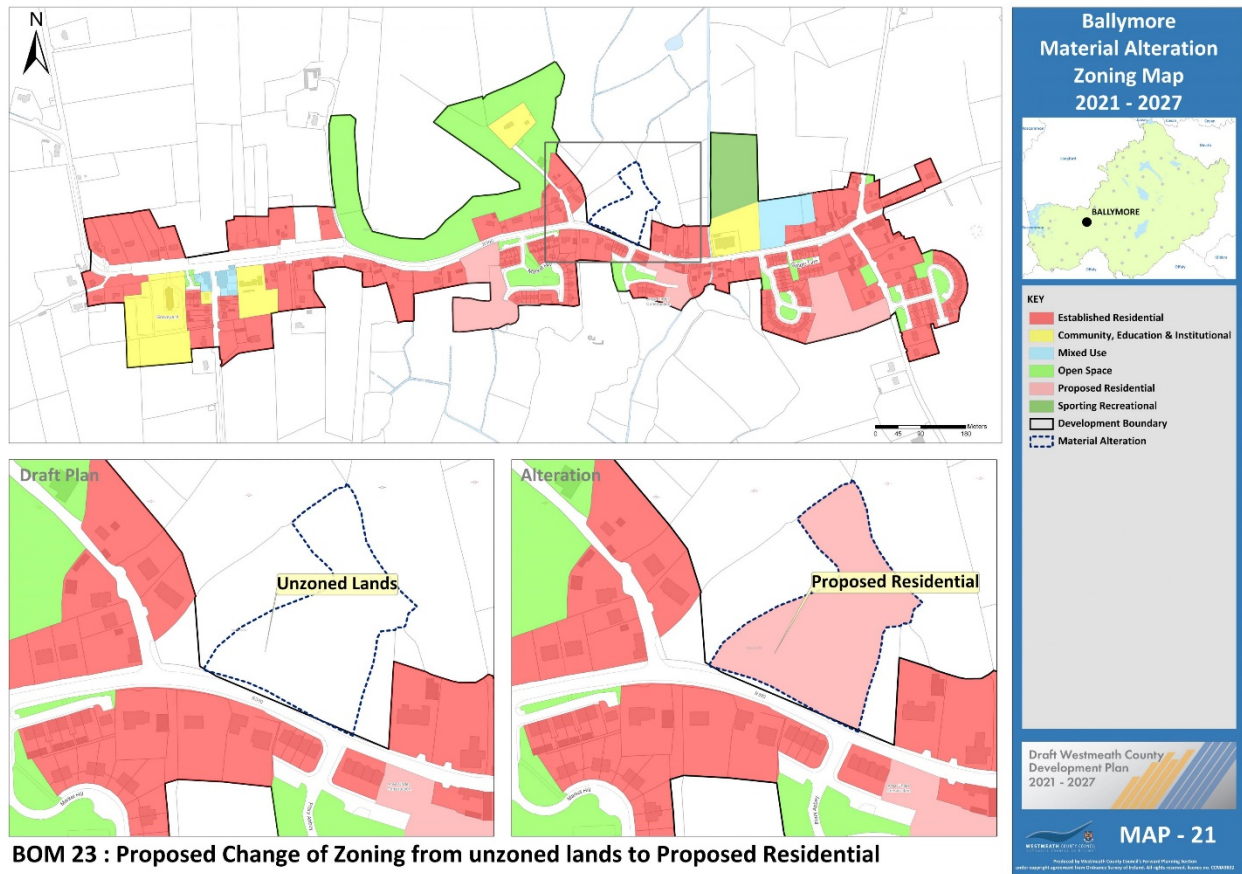
Draft Westmeath County
Development Plan
2021 - 2027

MAP - 25

With regard to proposed Material Amendment BOM 14 (Killucan-Rathwire), it is further stated that the rezoning of land from open space to proposed residential use would contravene CPO 8.164 of the Plan (*Ensure that the landscape setting between Killucan and Rathwire is maintained in order to protect the distinct identity, character and form of both settlements (See Map 11).*)



Concern is also raised in relation to Proposed Material Amendment BOM 23 and the zoning of additional land for residential development in Ballymore removed from the village centre, which it is submitted is at odds with Section 8.6.2 of the plan and having regard to the absence of headroom in the wastewater treatment plant.



Reference is made to the lack of infrastructural assessment to support residential development at these locations. In summary, the OPR considers that the above material amendments are inconsistent with a number of number of local and national policy objectives which seek to promote compact and sequential growth.

OPR MA Recommendation 5:

Having regard to national policy objectives supporting compact and sequential development in particular NPO 3c, NPO 16 and NPO 72a, and the anticipated population growth and requirement for zoned land in Castlepollard, Killucan Rathwire, Rochfortbridge, Glasson and Ballymore as set out in the core strategy, the Office considers that the proposed material alterations seeking to zone further land for residential development in these settlements are not justified and would result in leapfrogging of development to more remote areas removed from services / infrastructure or would be in conflict with other policy objectives in the draft county development plan. To address the issues raised, the planning authority is required to remove the following zoning changes from the development plan:

- BOM 1 – change zoning from unzoned to Proposed Residential in Castlepollard;
- BOM 13 – change zoning from unzoned to Proposed Residential in Killucan Rathwire;
- BOM 14 - change from Open Space to Proposed Residential in Killucan Rathwire
- BOM 16 – change zoning from unzoned to Proposed Residential in Rochfortbridge;

- e) BOM 23 - change from unzoned to Proposed Residential in Ballymore;
- f) BOM 29 – change zoning from unzoned to Proposed Residential in Glasson.

Chief Executive Response:

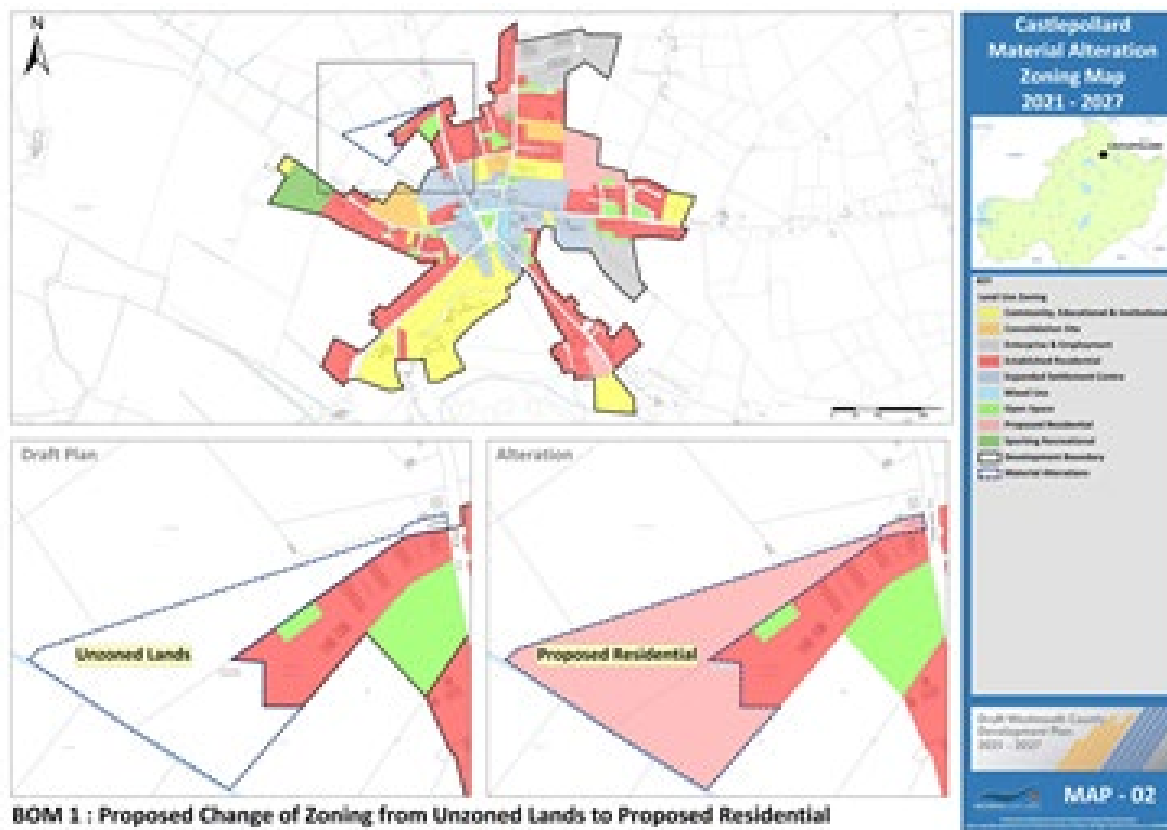
Material Amendment BOM 1

In respect of Material Amendment BOM 1, it should be noted that the amount of lands zoned for residential development in the plan is underpinned by the Westmeath Core Strategy and accompanying Housing Strategy. The Core Strategy and Housing Strategy are evidence based, using robust and verified methodologies, that define the housing and population requirements for County Westmeath for the Plan period, whilst maintaining consistency with National and Regional Policy (namely NPF and RSES).

Furthermore, the amount and location of zoned lands required was also guided by the NPF and RSES requirements to promote consolidation of existing settlements and more compact forms of growth. As such, it is an objective of the Draft Plan, in line with national and regional policy, to facilitate infill and brownfield development within the existing built footprint of urban settlements. These greenfield sites, removed from the established settlement boundary do not provide for brownfield or the sequential development of the town and in this regard, it is not considered that the proposed lands, in this instance, fulfil this objective.

The SEA report considers that zoning lands in response to this submission would be premature and would not wholly align with objectives relating to sustainable development.

It is considered that there is no evidence-based need or planning rationale for the proposed zoning changes having regard to the quantum of land zoned for residential in Castlepollard, opportunities for infill development inside the current development boundary, its position in the county settlement hierarchy, its projected growth to 2027. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Plan be made without proposed Amendment MA BOM 1.



Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Plan be made without Material Amendment BOM 1.

Material Amendment BOM 13

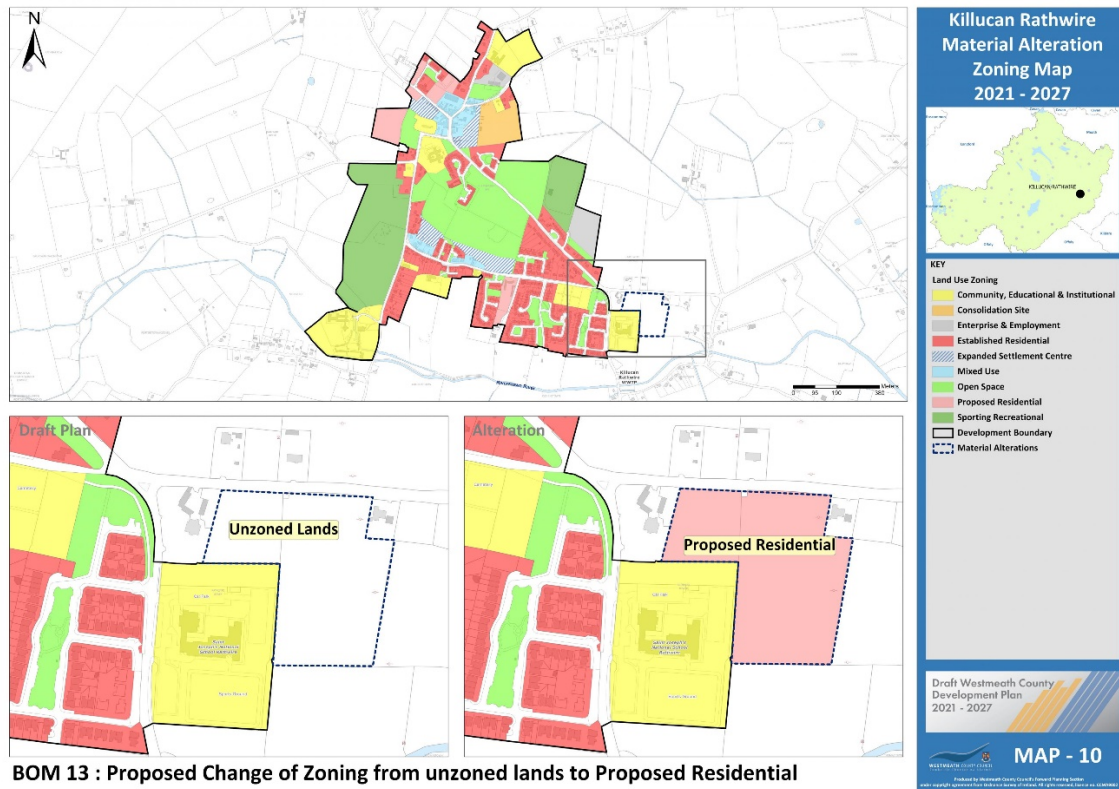
Having regard to Material Amendment BOM 13, Killucan-Rathwire is defined as a ‘Self Sustaining Town’ in the Core Strategy. Such towns are considered ‘towns with a low level of jobs and services and are characteristically commuter towns with good transport links and capacity for continued commensurate growth to become more self-sustaining’. It is considered that there are sufficient lands zoned in this settlement, to cater for the population and housing provision during this Plan period.

Furthermore, the amount and location of zoned lands required was also guided by the NPF and RSES requirements to promote consolidation of existing settlements and more compact forms of growth. As such, it is an objective of the Draft Plan, in line with national and regional policy, to facilitate infill and brownfield development within the existing built footprint of urban settlements.

This greenfield site, situated outside the development boundary of Killucan-Rathwire, does not provide for brownfield or the sequential development of the town and in this regard, it is not considered that the proposed lands, in this instance, fulfils this objective.

Having regard to the above, it is considered that there is no evidence-based need or planning rationale for the proposed additional residential zoning to be included as part of the Plan at this time. The addition of
Chief Executive’s Report on Material Amendments to the Draft CDP 2021-2027

these lands would result in a housing and population growth that would be considered unsustainable over the lifetime of this plan. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Plan be made without proposed Amendment MA BOM 13.



Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Plan be made without Material Amendment BOM 13.

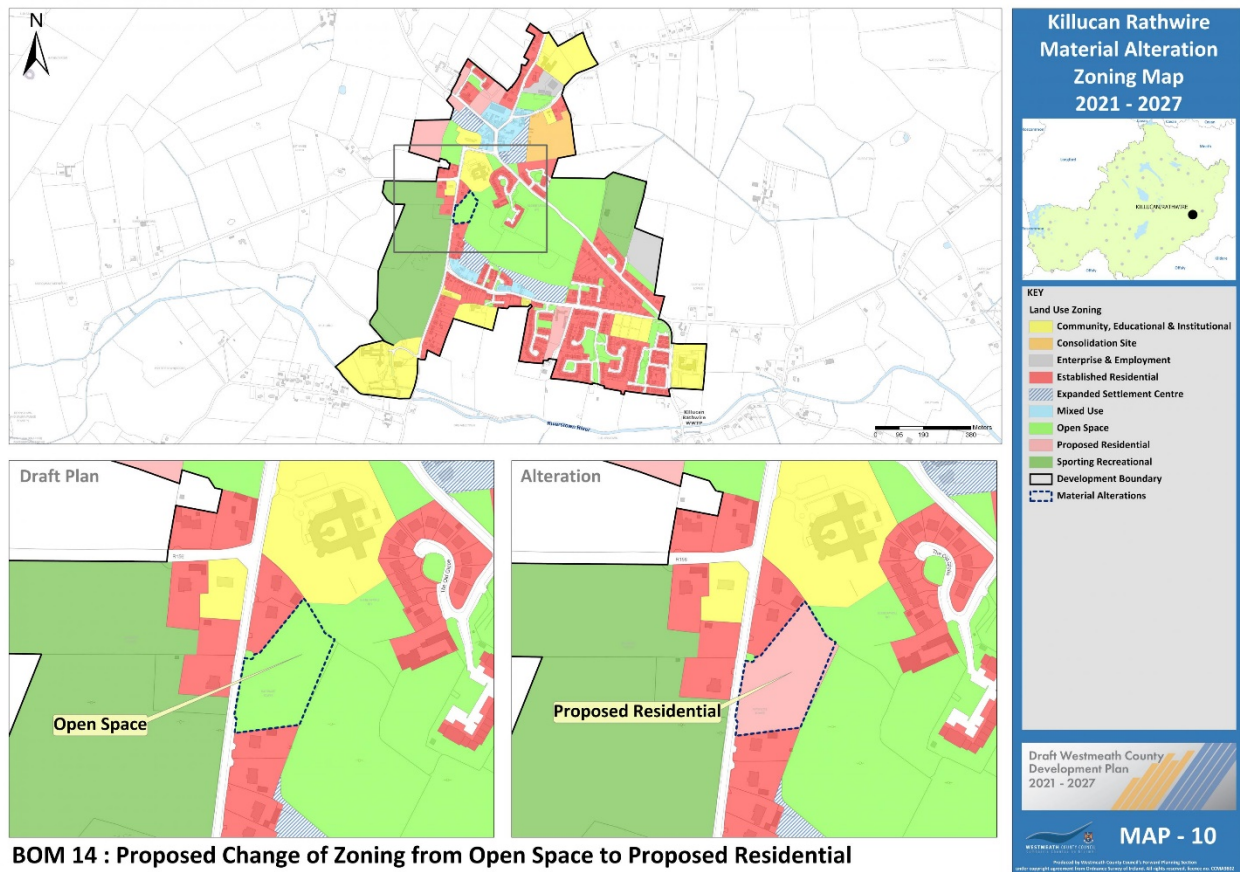
Material Amendment BOM 14

In relation to Material Amendment BOM 14, it is considered that there is sufficient land zoned in Killucan-Rathwire to cater for the population and housing provision during this plan period. Furthermore, the amount and location of zoned lands required was also guided by the NPF and RSES requirements to promote consolidation of existing settlements and more compact forms of growth. As such, it is an objective of the Draft Plan, in line with national and regional policy, to facilitate infill and brownfield development within the existing built footprint of urban settlements.

This greenfield site does not provide for brownfield or the sequential development of the town and in this regard, it is not considered that the proposed lands, in this instance, fulfil this objective. The site in question is located between the settlements of Killucan and Rathwire on lands zoned “Open Space” as part of a larger area of tree planted open landscape providing an important visual break between Killucan and Rathwire. These lands provide an attractive landscape feature that adds character to this self-sustaining town. Policy objective CPO 8.164 supports the maintenance of this “Open Space” as seeks to “Ensure that the landscape

setting between Killucan and Rathwire is maintained in order to protect the distinct identity, character and form of both settlements”. As such, it is considered important to retain the Open Space zoning on these lands. The SEA also raises concerns with regard to the rezoning of this site for residential use.

Having regard to the above, it is considered that there is no evidence-based need or planning rationale for the proposed additional residential zoning to be included as part of the Plan at this time. The addition of these lands would result in a housing and population growth that would be considered unsustainable over the lifetime of this plan. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Plan be made without proposed Amendment MA BOM 14.



Chief Executive Recommendation:

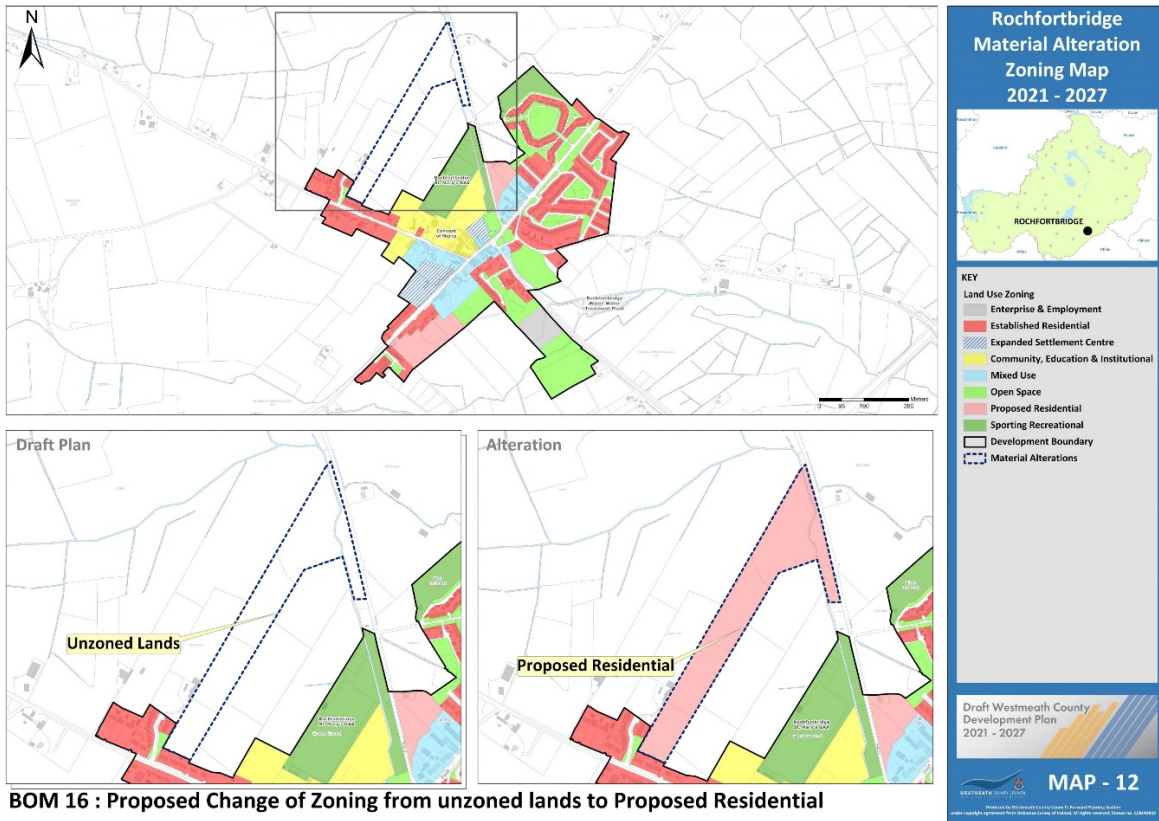
It is recommended that the Plan be made without Material Amendment BOM 14.

Material Amendment BOM 16

In response to Material Amendment BOM 16, it is noted that the Draft Plan provides an evidence-based rationale for the extent of lands zoned for residential purposes in Rochfortbridge. Rochfortbridge is defined as a ‘Self Sustaining Town’ in the Core Strategy. Such towns are considered ‘towns with a low level of jobs and services and are characteristically commuter towns with good transport links and capacity for continued commensurate growth to become more self-sustaining’. It is considered that there are sufficient lands zoned in this settlement, to cater for the population and housing provision during this Plan period.

Furthermore, the amount and location of zoned lands required was also guided by the NPF and RSES requirements to promote consolidation of existing settlements and more compact forms of growth. As such, it is an objective of the Draft Plan, in line with national and regional policy, to facilitate infill and brownfield development within the existing built footprint of urban settlements. These greenfield sites removed from the established settlement boundary does not provide for brownfield or the sequential development of the town and in this regard, it is not considered that the proposed lands, in this instance, fulfil this objective. The SEA report considers that zoning the subject lands would be premature and would not wholly align with objectives relating to sustainable development.

Having regard to the above, it is considered that there is no evidence-based need or planning rationale for the proposed additional residential zoning to be included as part of the Plan at this time. The addition of these lands would result in a housing and population growth that would be considered unsustainable over the lifetime of this plan. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Plan be made without proposed Amendment MA BOM 16.

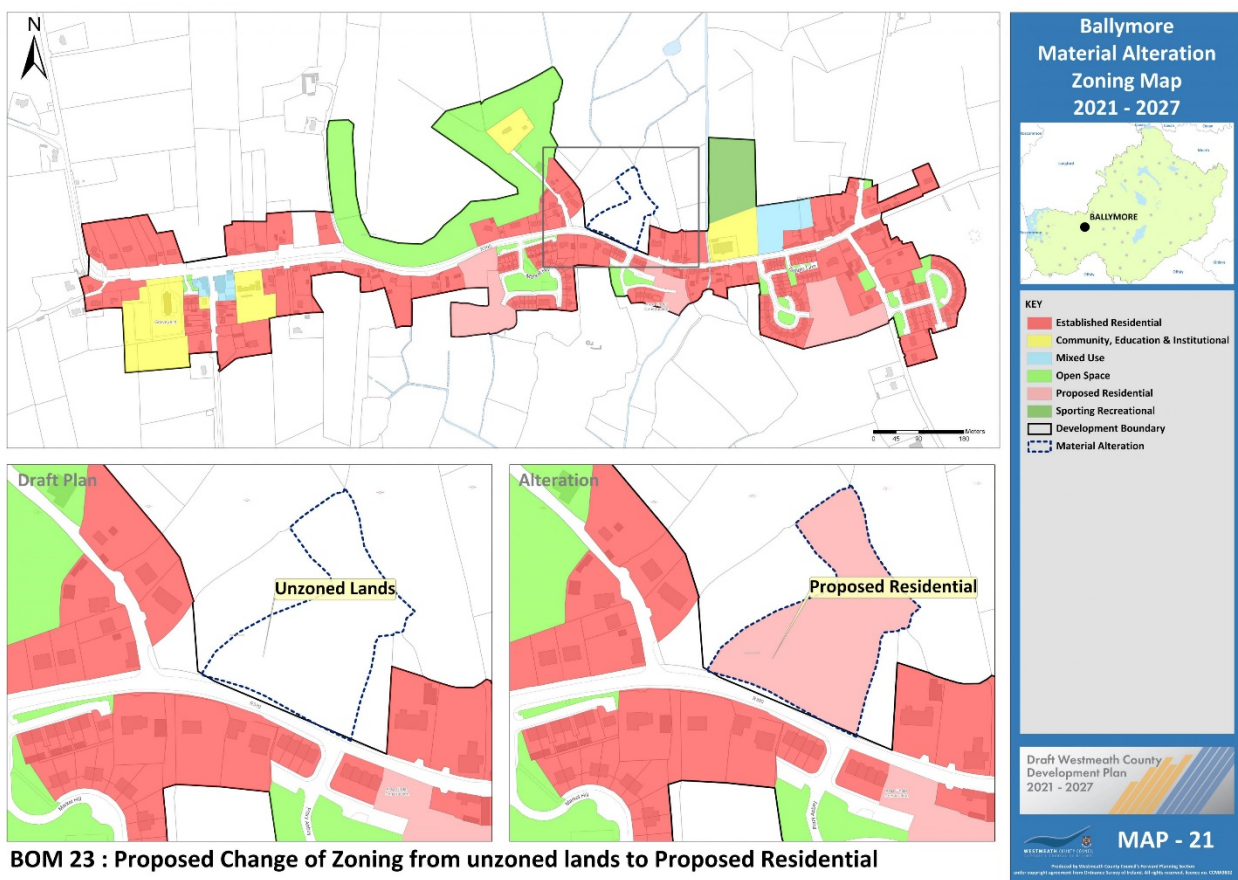


Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Plan be made without Material Amendment BOM 16.

Material Amendment BOM 23

Having regard to Material Amendment BOM 23, the Planning Authority acknowledge the deficiencies in the existing wastewater network together with the extent of land zoned for residential development in Ballymore. The site in question comprises of a greenfield plot to the north of the settlement which currently acts a visual break in the elongated streetscape providing uninterrupted views of the rural hinterland. Furthermore, the site is located within a Zone of Archaeological Potential. The majority of land zoned for residential development in Ballymore is located to the south of the Main St, where opportunities exist for infill development and compact urban growth. The development of the subject lands would not give rise to sequential growth. It is considered that there is sufficient land zoned in Ballymore for residential purposes to meet population requirements up to 2027 and accordingly, it is recommended that the Plan be made without proposed Amendment MA BOM 23.



Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Plan be made without Material Amendment BOM 23.

Material Amendment BOM 29

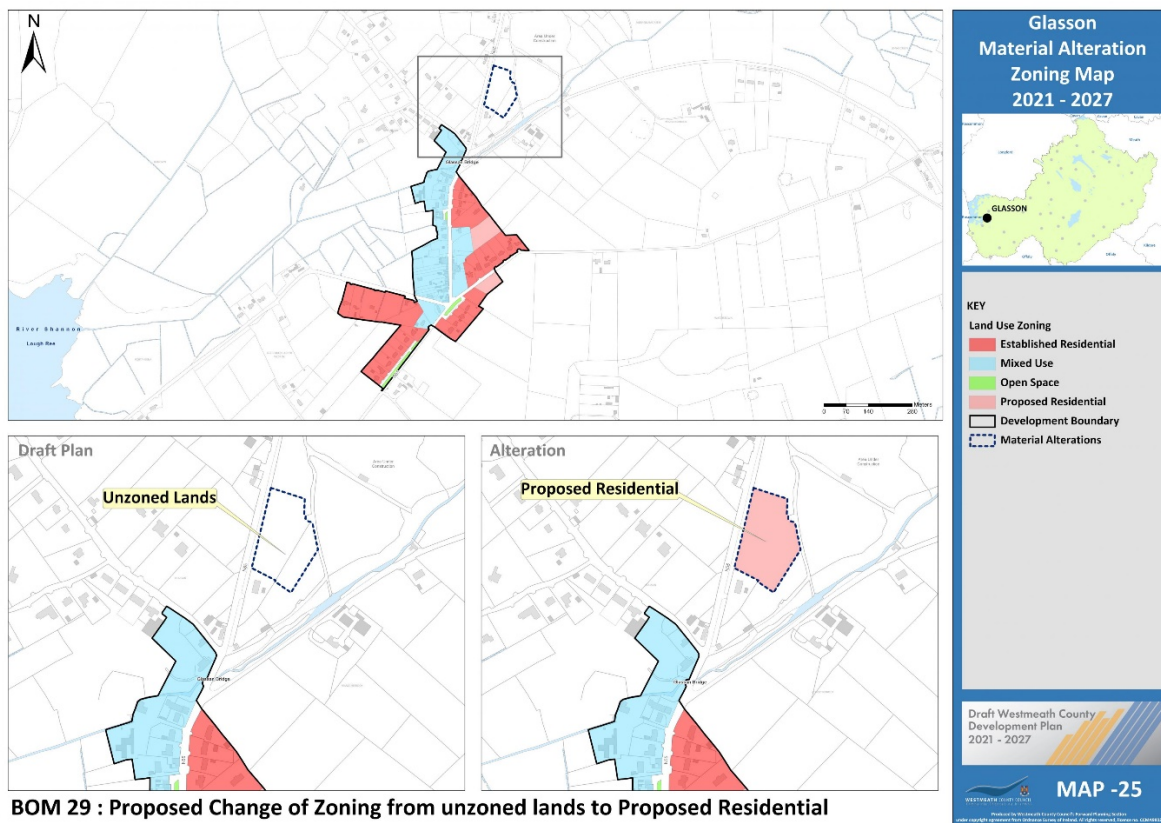
Finally, in response to Material Amendment BOM 29, Glasson is designated as a rural serviced settlement in the Draft Plan, wherein it is an objective to provide important local level residential, retailing and community functions to their associated rural hinterlands. In these areas, emphasis is placed on maintaining towns and villages as local service centres by way of orderly consolidation and expansion of services.

It is an objective of the Plan, in line with national and regional policy, to facilitate infill and brownfield development within the existing built footprint of urban settlements. This greenfield site outside the established settlement boundary does not provide for brownfield or the sequential development of Glasson, considering the existence of alternative suitable sites within the existing village envelope.

The amount of lands zoned for residential development as part of the Draft Plan is underpinned by the Westmeath Core Strategy and accompanying Housing Strategy. The Core Strategy and Housing Strategy are evidence based, using robust and verified methodologies, that define the housing and population requirements for County Westmeath for the Plan period, whilst maintaining consistency with National and Regional Policy (namely NPF and RSES). Based on these housing and population requirements, the Draft Plan provides an evidence-based rationale for the extent of lands zoned for residential purposes.

The SEA Report considers that expanding the development boundary/zoning these lands would be premature and would not wholly align with objectives relating to sustainable development.

Having regard to the above, it is considered that there is no evidence-based need or planning rationale for the proposed additional residential zoning to be included as part of the Plan at this time. The addition of these lands would result in a housing and population growth that would be considered unsustainable over the lifetime of this plan. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Plan be made without proposed Amendment MA BOM 29.



BOM 29 : Proposed Change of Zoning from unzoned lands to Proposed Residential

Having regard to the above, it is considered that there is no evidence-based need or planning rationale for the proposed additional residential zoning to be included as part of the Plan at this time. The addition of these lands would result in a housing and population growth that would be considered unsustainable over the lifetime of this plan. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Plan be made without proposed Amendment MA BOM 29.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Plan be made without Material Amendment BOM 29.

3 Analysis of Submissions Received on the Material Amendments to Draft Plan per Chapter

3.1 Chapter 2 Core Strategy

Chapter 2 Proposed Amendment CH 2.1
<p>Insert new text under Section 2.3 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Westmeath benefits from a strategic national road network reflecting its central location in the country. The N/M4 Dublin to Sligo (including connection via the N5 to Castlebar/Westport) corridor and the N/M6 Dublin to Galway corridor through County Westmeath are included as part of the EU TEN-T Comprehensive Network. In addition, the N51, N52, N55 and N62 national secondary roads, are important road corridors in County Westmeath. Together the EU TEN-T Network and the national roads identified provide important strategic links within and through the county and region, including providing critical international connectivity.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-35.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues: Submission requests that CH 2.1 be modified to include the N61 as a strategic road connection linking the Regional Growth Centres of Athlone and Sligo.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The contents of the NWRA submission are noted with regards to strategic road link between Athlone and Sligo via the N61 and as such reference should be included in the interests of context.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed subject to the following minor modification.</p> <p>Insert new text under Section 2.3 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Westmeath benefits from a strategic national road network reflecting its central location in the country. The N/M4 Dublin to Sligo (including connection via the N5 to Castlebar/Westport) corridor and the N/M6 Dublin to Galway corridor through County Westmeath are included as part of the EU TEN-T Comprehensive Network. In addition, the N51, N52, N55, N61 and N62 national secondary roads, are important road corridors in County Westmeath. Together the EU TEN-T Network and the national roads identified provide important strategic links within and through the county and region, including providing critical international connectivity.</p>

Chapter 2

Proposed Amendment CH 2.9

Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 2.8 as follows;

Investigate the feasibility of providing serviced sites at appropriate locations in towns and villages across the county, in consultation with public infrastructure agencies such as Irish Water and local communities.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-35.

Summary of Issues: The NWRA suggests that as part of the process a prioritised schedule of deliverables would result and that the time frame for delivery would be included in the interests of monitoring and implementation.

Chief Executive’s Response:

The merits of the submission are noted. In this regard it is considered appropriate, as part of any future implementation (having regard to funding, resources, Government policy etc.) that a prioritised schedule of deliverables together with a schedule for implementation be established. As such it is not considered necessary to amend the Plan at this stage.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Insert new CPO after CPO 2.8 as follows:

Investigate the feasibility of providing serviced sites at appropriate locations in towns and villages across the county, in consultation with public infrastructure agencies such as Irish Water and local communities.

Chapter 2

Proposed Amendment CH 2.10

Proposed Amendment: Amend text in Section 2.17 of the plan as follows:

Table 2.9 identifies the area in the development plan already zoned for a mixture of residential and other uses; and includes the size of the area in hectares, and the potential number of housing units that can be accommodated in the area.

Land Use Zoning	Area (Ha)	Housing Yield*
Proposed Residential	8.76	175
Consolidation Site	44.45	444
Mixed Use	7.59	15

Table 2.9: Quantum of land zoned for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020

Table 2.8: Core Strategy Table

Settlements	Population 2016	Population 2027	Population Change 2016-2027	Quantity of Land Area Required (Ha)	Land for Residential in this plan up to 2027 (Ha) Proposed Residential ** (Ha)	Proposed Residential (Brownfield)	Proposed Residential*** (infill)	Consolidation Sites (Ha)	Total Equivalent Area Zoned 2021-2027 Proposed Residential	Housing Yield*
Tier 1 Regional Growth Centre										
Athlone (Ex. Roscommon)	16,612	22,154	5542	UAP		> 30%	> 30%			2590
Tier 2 Key Town										
Mullingar	20,928	26,003	5075	LAP		> 30%	> 30%			1340-2010
Tier 3 Self-Sustaining Growth Towns										
Castlepollard;	1163	1399	236	5.15	5.65	0.61	1.64	4.90	6.63	133-199
Moate;	2763	3325	562	12.26	11.68	5.62	5.22	3.95	12.47	249-374
Kinnegad;	2754	3303	549	11.98	11.26	4.25	3.24	3.92	12.04	241-362
Kilbeggan;	1288	1550	262	5.72	6.47	0	3.22	4.89	7.45	75-149
TOTAL				35.11	35.06	10.48	13.32	17.66	38.59	698-1,084
Tier 4 Self-Sustaining Towns										
Rochfortbridge;	1473	1713	240	5.24	5.42			0	5.42	27-54
Killucan /Rathwire	1370	1593	223	4.87	4.37			3.04	4.98	25-50

TOTAL				10.11	9.79			3.04	10.40	52-104
Tier 5 Towns and Villages										
Clonmellon;	664	759	95	3.45	3.15			1.76	3.50	18-35
Tyrrellspass;	483	552	69	2.51	2.71			0	2.71	14-27
Delvin	740	845	105	3.82	4.76			1.02	4.96	25-50
TOTAL				9.78	10.62			2.78	11.17	57-112
Tier 6 Rural (Serviced)										
<i>Multyfarnham, Ballymore, Ballynacargy, Ballinalack, Milltownpass, Collinstown, Glasson, Castletown-Geoghegan</i>										
TOTAL				13.03	12.87			1.07	13.16	
Tier 6 Rural Remainder										
Rural WM	31,131	33,798	2667							

** Lands zoned for 'Mixed Use', 'Expanded Settlement' and 'Existing Residential' have, based on previous experience, the capacity to deliver only nominal levels of residential growth over the lifetime of the Plan. In this regard, such lands are expected to provide capacity for a housing yield of c.15 units per year over the 6-year lifetime of the Plan.*

*** Lands relate to the zoning objective 'Proposed Residential'. Part of residentially zoned lands identified will be absorbed by serviced sites (indicated at Chapter 8 Settlement Plans) at a lower density.*

**** Figures for infill and brownfield land within each settlement form part of the overall figures for 'Land for residential in this plan up to 2027 (Ha)' and do not provide supplementary land for residential development.*

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-35.

Summary of Issues: The NWRA requests that Athlone, as a Regional Growth Centre, be treated in a more holistic manner and that population figures pertaining to the whole of this settlement be presented, maybe as a separate row in table 2.17. The submission requests that relevant figures in the RSES, for the western part of Athlone, be referenced in the document in order to better inform stakeholders and to facilitate collaboration. The NWRA is concerned that Athlone may lose opportunity to benefit from its status as a regional growth centre due to the uncertainty surrounding the timeframes for the delivery of a joint UAP and the governance structures pertaining to it.

Chief Executive's Response:

The contents of the NRWA submission and the intention to promote the development of Athlone through a joint-approach are welcomed.

In term of the presentation of population figures of Athlone as a Regional Growth Centre, it should be noted that the Core Strategy Table should be read in conjunction with the proceeding Table 2.6, which

sets out a population forecast for Athlone town, including a breakdown of population between Co. Westmeath and Co. Roscommon. This matter will be further addressed in the forthcoming Joint Urban Area Plan for Athlone.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Amend text in Section 2.17 of the plan as follows:

Table 2.9 identifies the area in the development plan already zoned for a mixture of residential and other uses; and includes the size of the area in hectares, and the potential number of housing units that can be accommodated in the area.

Land Use Zoning	Area (Ha)	Housing Yield*
Proposed Residential	8.76	175
Consolidation Site	44.45	444
Mixed Use	7.59	15

Table 2.9: Quantum of land zoned for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020

Table 2.8: Core Strategy Table

Settlements	Population 2016	Population 2027	Population Change 2016-2027	Quantity of Land Area	Land for Residential in this plan up to 2027	Proposed Residential	Proposed Residential***	Consolidation Sites (Ha)	Total Equivalent Area Zoned 2021	Housing Yield*
Tier 1 Regional Growth Centre										
Athlone (Ex. Roscommon)	16,612	22,154	5542	UAP		> 30%	> 30%			2590
Tier 2 Key Town										
Mullingar	20,928	26,003	5075	LAP		> 30%	> 30%			1340-2010
Tier 3 Self-Sustaining Growth Towns										

Castlepollard ;	1163	1399	236	5.15	5.65	0.61	1.64	4.90	6.63	133-199
Moate;	2763	3325	562	12.26	11.68	5.62	5.22	3.95	12.47	249-374
Kinnegad;	2754	3303	549	11.98	11.26	4.25	3.24	3.92	12.04	241-362
Kilbeggan;	1288	1550	262	5.72	6.47	0	3.22	4.89	7.45	75-149
TOTAL				35.11	35.06	10.48	13.32	17.66	38.59	698-1,084
Tier 4 Self-Sustaining Towns										
Rochfortbridge;	1473	1713	240	5.24	5.42			0	5.42	27-54
Killucan /Rathwire	1370	1593	223	4.87	4.37			3.04	4.98	25-50
TOTAL				10.11	9.79			3.04	10.40	52-104
Tier 5 Towns and Villages										
Clonmellon;	664	759	95	3.45	3.15			1.76	3.50	18-35
Tyrrellspass;	483	552	69	2.51	2.71			0	2.71	14-27
Delvin	740	845	105	3.82	4.76			1.02	4.96	25-50
TOTAL				9.78	10.62			2.78	11.17	57-112
Tier 6 Rural (Serviced)										
<i>Multyfarnham, Ballymore, Ballynacargy, Ballinalack, Milltownpass, Collinstown, Glasson, Castletown-Geoghegan</i>										
TOTAL				13.03	12.87			1.07	13.16	
Tier 6 Rural Remainder										
Rural WM	31,131	33,798	2667							

* Lands zoned for 'Mixed Use', 'Expanded Settlement' and 'Existing Residential' have, based on previous experience, the capacity to deliver only nominal levels of residential growth over the lifetime of the Plan. In this regard, such lands are expected to provide capacity for a housing yield of c.15 units per year over the 6-year lifetime of the Plan.

** Lands relate to the zoning objective 'Proposed Residential'. Part of residentially zoned lands identified will be absorbed by serviced sites (indicated at Chapter 8 Settlement Plans) at a lower density.

*** Figures for infill and brownfield land within each settlement form part of the overall figures for 'Land for residential in this plan up to 2027 (Ha)' and do not provide supplementary land for residential development.

<p>CHAPTER 2</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 2.11</p>
<p>Proposed Amendment:</p> <p>Insert new text above section entitled “Implementation & Monitoring” as follows:</p> <p>The Core Strategy sets out a vision for Westmeath and strategic aims required to deliver an ecosystem services approach. In this regard, the Policy Objectives of the Core Strategy relevant to this vision include CPO 2.12, 2.13 and 2.17.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-32.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues: Acknowledgement of inclusion of the material amendment in the Plan.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of the amendment are noted and welcomed.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Insert new text above section entitled “Implementation & Monitoring” in Chapter 2 as follows:</p> <p>The Core Strategy sets out a vision for Westmeath and strategic aims required to deliver an ecosystem services approach. In this regard, the Policy Objectives of the Core Strategy relevant to this vision include CPO 2.12, 2.13 and 2.17.</p>

Summary Table – Chapter 2

<p>Proposed Amendment CH 2.1 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed, subject to minor modifications.</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 2.9 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 2.10 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 2.11 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p>

3.2 Chapter 3 Housing Strategy

Chapter 3 Proposed Amendment CH 3.2
<p>Proposed Amendment: Amend CPO 3.13 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Support the ongoing monitoring and review of the HNDA, over the lifetime of the Plan, in conjunction with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government having consideration to the outcomes of any revised Development Plan Guidelines, and where appropriate, take any steps considered necessary to align with the approach set out in these guidelines. This will include monitoring and maintenance of a record of residential development permitted as single rural houses.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-35.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues: The NWRA supports the proposal and in the interests of clarity suggests the data on other types of residential development be recorded in a manner similar to rural housing.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The submission supporting the proposal is noted, as is the request to record data on “other types of residential developments”. Section 2.4 Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) of the Draft Plan identifies the purpose of the HNDA tool, which is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist local authorities to develop long-term strategic views of housing need across all tenures. • Provide a robust evidence base to support decisions about new housing supply, wider investment and housing related services that inform an overall national housing profile. • Inform policies about the proportion of social and affordable housing required, including the need for different types and sizes of provision. • Provide evidence to inform policies related to the provision of specialist housing and housing related services. <p>It is considered that the Draft Development Plan policies adequately address this issue and that the sentiments of the submission are already captured under Section 2.4.</p> <p>It is noted that the NPF points towards the delivery of enhanced methodologies and statutory guidelines taking into consideration the varying housing needs that are required to be met. National Policy Objective 36 indicates that ‘New statutory guidelines, supported by wider methodologies and data sources, will be put in place under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act to improve the evidence base, effectiveness and consistency of the planning process for housing provision at regional, metropolitan and local authority levels’. National Policy Objective 37 further states that a ‘Housing Need Demand Assessment’ (HNDA) is to be undertaken for each Local Authority Area in order to correlate and accurately align future housing requirements. The HNDA is...to be supported, through the establishment of a coordination and monitoring unit to assist Local Authorities and Regional Assemblies in the development of the HNDA (DHPLG, Regional Assemblies and the Local Authorities)’.</p>

The plan is also committed to ongoing monitoring and review of the HNDA and in this regard a further change to Proposed Amendment CH 3.2 is not considered necessary save for the inclusion of reference to Section 28 Guidelines “Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning” and its associated Ministerial Circular (or subsequent update) relating to Structural Housing Demand in Ireland and Housing Supply Targets” as set out in response to OPR MA Recommendation 1.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Reference CE Recommendation in response to OPR MA Recommendation 1 as set out below for reference:

It is recommended that the Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment CH 3.2 subject to the following minor modifications.

CPO 3.13

Support the ongoing monitoring and review of the HNDA, *over the lifetime of the Plan*, in conjunction with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government *having consideration to the housing requirements set out under Section 28 Guidelines “Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning” and its associated Ministerial Circular (or subsequent update) relating to Structural Housing Demand in Ireland and Housing Supply Targets” together with the outcomes of any revised Development Plan Guidelines and HNDA Toolkit, and where appropriate, take any steps considered necessary to align with the approach set out in these guidelines. This will include monitoring and maintenance of a record of residential development permitted as single rural houses.*

CPO 2.18

Monitor development for compliance with the objectives of the Core Strategy *and the housing requirements set out under Section 28 Guidelines “Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning” and its associated Ministerial Circular (or subsequent update) relating to Structural Housing Demand in Ireland and Housing Supply Targets”* and adjust, where necessary, the approach taken to the consideration of development proposals in order to ensure effective alignment with National and Regional policy and objectives).

Chapter 3

Proposed Amendment CH 3.3

Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 3.13 as follows:

In developments of 20 units or above, the development should achieve, where possible, a minimum of 5% of units designed and built to facilitate occupation by persons with a disability without structural changes, in accordance with 'Universal Design Guidelines for Homes 2015'.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-35.

Summary of Issues: The NWRA fully supports this provision and suggest that in the interests of clarity guidance be given to stakeholders on how this requirement will apply to apartment blocks in terms of unit distribution.

Chief Executive's Response:

The submission supporting the proposal is noted, as is the suggestion seeking clarification and guidance.

In this regard, Section 3.4 of the Draft Plan supports the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016 sets out a framework of initiatives to provide for the housing needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged households. The strategy has nine strategic aims, one of which seeks to address the specific housing needs of people with an intellectual and/or physical disability, moving from congregated settings in line with good practice, including through the development of frameworks to facilitate housing in the community.

In addition, an evidence-based methodological approach has been adopted to ensure that the County Westmeath Housing Strategy meets the housing needs of the county and its residents while remaining in keeping with local, regional and national guidelines. The Strategy is underpinned by a Housing Needs Demand Assessment which provides a robust baseline to inform and guide policies and objectives under the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

CPO 3.3, seeks to 'secure the provision of social and affordable housing accommodation, to meet the needs of all households and the disadvantaged sectors in the county, including the elderly, first time buyers, single person households on modest incomes, people with disabilities, and special needs etc'. Further, CPO 3.6 seeks to 'support independent living for people with disabilities and the elderly and where possible, to ensure that housing is integrated within proposed or existing residential developments and located close to existing community facilities'. CPO 3.10, set out to 'continue to reflect household size and composition, including the accommodation needs of single parent families, single homeless persons, persons with disabilities and the elderly, etc. in accommodation provisions'.

Whilst the merits of the proposed Amendment are fully acknowledged, it is considered that, in the absence of supporting legislative provision (similar to Part V) a requirement that a specific percentage of housing be allocated for this purpose, in the absence of any national guidance in the area, is outside the remit of the Plan.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made without the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Summary Table – Chapter 3

Proposed Amendment CH 3.2 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed, subject to minor modifications.

Proposed Amendment CH 3.3 be made without the proposed Material Amendment as displayed

3.3 Chapter 4 Sustainable Communities

Chapter 4 Proposed Amendment CH 4.3
<p>Proposed Amendment: Amend CPO 4.28 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Encourage the use of existing educational facilities and school playing fields for other community purposes. In new schools, it will be a requirement consideration should be given in the design of the school to provide dual use facilities and take account of community requirements.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-35.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues: The NWRA would encourage retention of the CPO contained in the Draft in order to foster sustainable development and inclusivity.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The sentiments of the submission are noted in respect of school design to support community access to facilities. It is considered that the objective is suitably provide to be applied in a manner which allows flexibility for school authorities to make their own decisions around the use of facilities.</p> <p>As such a change to Proposed Amendment CH 4.3 is not considered necessary.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Amend CPO 4.28 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Encourage the use of existing educational facilities and school playing fields for other community purposes. In new schools, it will be a requirement consideration should be given in the design of the school to provide dual use facilities and take account of community requirements.</p>

Chapter 4 Proposed Amendment CH 4.4
<p>Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 4.33 of the plan as follows;</p> <p>To work with the Department of Education & Skills in relation to the planning and design of future education facilities.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-17.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues: The submission requests the addition of the following to CPO: <i>“To encourage Compulsory Purpose of lands adjacent to schools, including schools recently built, to facilitate possible future expansion and not to build on amenity areas, including pitches, playgrounds, gardens and other greenspace. Also encourage horticulture at schools, and planting of native hedges and trees (broadleaf).”</i></p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The sentiments of the submission are noted with regard to future expansion of schools within the county.</p> <p>It should be noted that, through engagement with the Department of Education and Skills, the Plan facilitates the provision of new and the expansion of existing schools through land use zoning and designation of particular sites. Table 15.1 sets out the Land Use Zoning Matrix for the Plan. Each land use zoning type has an objective and an explanation which sets the context for the consideration of future development and indicates whether development is permitted, open for consideration or not normally permitted on such zoned lands. Proposed Amendment CH 4.4 is considered sufficiently robust in supporting the delivery and expansion of school facilities in a manner which allows flexibility for school authorities in the planning and design of future facilities.</p> <p>It is considered that the Draft Development Plan policies adequately address this issue.</p> <p>In this regard a change to Proposed Amendment CH 4.3 is not considered necessary.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Insert new CPO after CPO 4.33 of the plan as follows;</p> <p>To work with the Department of Education & Skills in relation to the planning and design of future education facilities.</p>

Summary Table – Chapter 4

Proposed Amendment CH 4.3 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 4.4 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

3.4 Chapter 5 Economic Development & Employment

Chapter 5 Proposed Amendment CH 5.4
<p>Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 5.33 as follows:</p> <p>To zone appropriately sized land banks for enterprise & employment development within the Joint Urban Area Plan for Athlone and the Mullingar Local Area Plan and support the development of FDI/IDA appropriate business premises within the respective plans.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-4, WM-C2-MA-35</p>
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>TII submission notes and welcomes commitment to zone appropriately sized land banks for enterprise and employment development within the Joint Urban Area Plan for Athlone and the Mullingar Local Area Plan.</p> <p>It further highlights potential implications for the national road network and assessment in the context of policy Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines ‘Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (DoECLG, 2012). TII would welcome consultation on the Athlone and Mullingar Local Area Plan process and is available for consultation in relation to zoning proposals for land banks for enterprise and employment in Athlone and Mullingar where there may be implications for the national road network in the area.</p> <p>Submission from NWRA supports the proposal to zone land, it requests that it be clarified in an amended CPO in the interest of fairness and transparency that no advantage will be bestowed on particular landowners.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The contents of the submissions welcoming the inclusion of new CPO to zone appropriately sized land banks for enterprise and employment development within the Joint Urban Area Plan for Athlone and the Mullingar Local Area Plan are noted.</p> <p>Zoning and policy provision associated with lands in Athlone and Mullingar will be considered as part of any future Athlone Urban Area Plan and Mullingar Local Area Plan following completion of the County Development Plan review process. TII and other relevant stakeholders will be consulted as part of this process.</p> <p>It should be noted that Area Based Transport Assessments will also inform the preparation of these plans, and the Council is committed to engagement with TII, NTA and other relevant stakeholders in this regard.</p> <p>The zoning of land is founded on the principle of achieving the proper planning and sustainable development of an area. It should be noted that the issue of landownership is not a material consideration in relation to same.</p>

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 5.33 as follows:

To zone appropriately sized land banks for enterprise & employment development within the Joint Urban Area Plan for Athlone and the Mullingar Local Area Plan and support the development of FDI/IDA appropriate business premises within the respective plans.

Summary Table – Chapter 5

Proposed Amendment CH 5.4 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

3.5 Chapter 6 Tourism

Chapter 6 Proposed Amendment CH 6.5
<p>Proposed Amendment:</p> <p>To amend text in Section 6.3 of the plan as follows;</p> <p>6.3.9 Fáilte Ireland’s Guidance on Sustainable Tourism</p> <p>Fáilte Ireland promotes the incorporation of the principles of sustainability in the tourism policy section of the County Development Plan. Fáilte Ireland has developed five key principles that ensure developments achieve a balance between appropriate tourism development and economic, environmental and social sustainability. Developments will be assessed having regard to compliance with these and the associated policies.</p> <p>Principle 1: Tourism, when it is well managed and properly located, should be recognised as a positive activity which has potential to benefit the host community, the place itself and the visitor alike. Sustainable tourism planning requires a balance to be struck between the needs of the visitor, the place and the host community.</p> <p>Principle 2: Our landscapes, our cultural heritage, our environment and our linguistic heritage all have an intrinsic value which outweighs their value simply as a tourism asset. However, sustainable tourism planning makes sure that they can continue to be enjoyed and cherished by future generations and not prejudiced simply by short term considerations.</p> <p>Principle 3: Built development and other activities associated with tourism should in all respects be appropriate to the character of the place in which they are situated. This applies to the scale, design and nature of the place as well as to the particular land use, economic and social requirements of the place and the surroundings.</p> <p>Principle 4: Strategic tourism assets – including special landscapes, important views, the setting of historic buildings and monuments, areas of cultural significance and access points to the open countryside, should be safeguarded from encroachment by inappropriate development.</p> <p>Principle 5: Visitor accommodation, interpretation centres and commercial / retail facilities serving the tourism sector should generally be located within established settlements thereby fostering strong links to a whole range of other economic and commercial sectors and sustaining the host communities. Sustainable tourism facilities, when properly located and managed can, especially if #accessible by a range of transport modes, encourage longer visitor stays, help to extend the tourism season and add to the vitality of settlements throughout the year. Underlying these principles for Sustainable Tourism, the definitions of economic, environmental and social sustainability against which any tourism project assessed are defined as follows:</p>

Economic sustainability must be considered to ensure that the tourism sector is managed. The key strengths of the County include landscape, heritage, natural environment, lifestyle and amenity pursuits. The sector is highly affected by seasonality and there are extremes in visitor numbers at key attractions contrasted with smaller attractions which struggle to maintain visitor numbers. These ‘peaks and troughs’ should be carefully managed to ensure the protection of natural resources. Tourism innovation should also be encouraged – particularly where it brings about environmental benefits. Finally, for projects to be economically sustainable they should meet the needs of the permanent and also visitor population alike, so the preparation of robust business plans for all such developments will ensure proposals are viable and sustainable.

Environmental sustainability will be central to the development and protection of a viable tourism sector and this is a key consideration in a County where tourism attractions are located in environmentally sensitive areas and close to historic areas where the quality of the built heritage and environment must be protected from inappropriate development – whether tourism related or not. The ‘mainstreaming’ of policy guidance tools such as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will undoubtedly address any deficits in relation to many of these key policy areas.

Social Sustainability is arguably more difficult to assess. Many of the potentially negative impacts of tourism development can however be addressed through careful consideration of the social and cultural nature of the receiving environment. The impacts that large-scale developments can have on existing local communities policies can be assessed having regard to the impact of visitor numbers on local quality of life, culture and heritage – with a particular emphasis placed on unique areas such as culturally sensitive areas where small impacts over time may have a significant cumulative effect.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-36.

Summary of Issues:

Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.

Chief Executive’s Response:

The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

To amend text in Section 6.3 of the plan as follows;

6.3.9 Fáilte Ireland’s Guidance on Sustainable Tourism

Fáilte Ireland promotes the incorporation of the principles of sustainability in the tourism policy section of the County Development Plan. Fáilte Ireland has developed five key principles that ensure developments achieve a balance between appropriate tourism development and economic, environmental and social

sustainability. Developments will be assessed having regard to compliance with these and the associated policies.

Principle 1: Tourism, when it is well managed and properly located, should be recognised as a positive activity which has potential to benefit the host community, the place itself and the visitor alike. Sustainable tourism planning requires a balance to be struck between the needs of the visitor, the place and the host community.

Principle 2: Our landscapes, our cultural heritage, our environment and our linguistic heritage all have an intrinsic value which outweighs their value simply as a tourism asset. However, sustainable tourism planning makes sure that they can continue to be enjoyed and cherished by future generations and not prejudiced simply by short term considerations.

Principle 3: Built development and other activities associated with tourism should in all respects be appropriate to the character of the place in which they are situated. This applies to the scale, design and nature of the place as well as to the particular land use, economic and social requirements of the place and the surroundings.

Principle 4: Strategic tourism assets – including special landscapes, important views, the setting of historic buildings and monuments, areas of cultural significance and access points to the open countryside, should be safeguarded from encroachment by inappropriate development.

Principle 5: Visitor accommodation, interpretation centres and commercial / retail facilities serving the tourism sector should generally be located within established settlements thereby fostering strong links to a whole range of other economic and commercial sectors and sustaining the host communities. Sustainable tourism facilities, when properly located and managed can, especially if #accessible by a range of transport modes, encourage longer visitor stays, help to extend the tourism season and add to the vitality of settlements throughout the year. Underlying these principles for Sustainable Tourism, the definitions of economic, environmental and social sustainability against which any tourism project assessed are defined as follows:

Economic sustainability must be considered to ensure that the tourism sector is managed. The key strengths of the County include landscape, heritage, natural environment, lifestyle and amenity pursuits. The sector is highly affected by seasonality and there are extremes in visitor numbers at key attractions contrasted with smaller attractions which struggle to maintain visitor numbers. These ‘peaks and troughs’ should be carefully managed to ensure the protection of natural resources. Tourism innovation should also be encouraged – particularly where it brings about environmental benefits. Finally, for projects to be economically sustainable they should meet the needs of the permanent and also visitor population alike, so the preparation of robust business plans for all such developments will ensure proposals are viable and sustainable.

Environmental sustainability will be central to the development and protection of a viable tourism sector and this is a key consideration in a County where tourism attractions are located in environmentally sensitive areas and close to historic areas where the quality of the built heritage and environment must be protected from inappropriate development – whether tourism related or not. The ‘mainstreaming’ of

policy guidance tools such as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will undoubtedly address any deficits in relation to many of these key policy areas.

Social Sustainability is arguably more difficult to assess. Many of the potentially negative impacts of tourism development can however be addressed through careful consideration of the social and cultural nature of the receiving environment. The impacts that large-scale developments can have on existing local communities policies can be assessed having regard to the impact of visitor numbers on local quality of life, culture and heritage – with a particular emphasis placed on unique areas such as culturally sensitive areas where small impacts over time may have a significant cumulative effect.

Chapter 6

Proposed Amendment CH 6.10

Proposed Amendment:

Insert new CPO after CPO 6.15 of the plan as follows:

Promote sustainable tourism in ways that positively enhance the environment and liaise with tourism providers to encourage the provision of “eco-tourism” schemes including the development of a “Circular Economy” approach to tourism.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.

Summary of Issues:

Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.

Chief Executive’s Response:

The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Insert new CPO after CPO 6.15 of the plan as follows:

Promote sustainable tourism in ways that positively enhance the environment and liaise with tourism providers to encourage the provision of “eco-tourism” schemes including the development of a “Circular Economy” approach to tourism.

Summary Table – Chapter 6

Proposed Amendment CH 6.5 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 6.10 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

3.6 Chapter 7 Urban Centers & Place Making

Chapter 7 Proposed Amendment CH 7.4
<p>Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 7.25 of the plan as follows:</p> <p style="color: green;">In order to promote the development of brownfield / infill and back land sites, the Council will consider, in appropriate circumstances, the implementation of mechanisms such as the preparation of site development briefs, use of compulsory acquisition of lands and development incentives.</p> <p>Insert new CPO after CPO 7.25 of the plan as follows:</p> <p style="color: green;">Monitor the development of greenfield land and rural housing in the open countryside versus brownfield / infill and back land development over the plan period.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-35.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues: The NWRA supports the practice of monitoring generally, the proposal to monitor rural housing in the urban regeneration section of the plan is unusual and clarification is sought as to why this section is chosen. The comparative could also be given to all types of development not just housing. It would also be informative if targets were set for levels of development. The monitoring proposal should equally apply to development in urban areas unless there is a good reason for not doing so. In the definition of brownfield sites reference is made to ‘other operations’. It would be informative if further elaboration and clarification was given on what those are.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The sentiments of the submission are noted, and in this regard, the Proposed Amendment has been included in order to provide details of how it is proposed to balance the development of greenfield sites and rural housing in the open countryside with brownfield / infill and back land sites, to ensure that the development plan satisfies the requirements of the NPF in particular NPO 3. In line with national policy, this include mechanisms such as the preparation of site development briefs, use of compulsory acquisition and development incentives together with measures to monitor development.</p> <p>Brownfield sites are classified under the Plan as <i>“any land which has been subjected to building, engineering or other operations excluding temporary uses or urban green spaces. These sites generally comprise of redundant lands and/or buildings”</i>. Other operations in this instance refers to previous developments on the lands.</p> <p>Having regard to the foregoing a change to Proposed Amendment CH 7.4 is not recommended.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p>

Insert new CPO after CPO 7.25 of the plan as follows:

In order to promote the development of brownfield / infill and back land sites, the Council will consider, in appropriate circumstances, the implementation of mechanisms such as the preparation of site development briefs, use of compulsory acquisition of lands and development incentives.

Insert new CPO after CPO 7.25 of the plan as follows:

Monitor the development of greenfield land and rural housing in the open countryside versus brownfield / infill and back land development over the plan period.

Summary Table – Chapter 7

Proposed Amendment CH 7.4 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

3.7 Chapter 8 Settlement Plans

Chapter 8 does not contain any material amendments to the Draft Plan.

3.8 Chapter 9 Rural Westmeath

Chapter 9 Proposed Amendment CH 9.1
<p>Proposed Amendment: Amend CPO 9.1 as of the plan follows:</p> <p>Areas Under Strong Urban Influence</p> <p>To accommodate demand from individuals for permanent residential development in defined ‘Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence’ who have strong links to the area and who are an intrinsic part of the rural community, subject to good planning practice, environmental carrying capacity and landscape protection considerations.</p> <p>Local Housing Need</p> <p>Permit residential development in areas defined ‘Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence and Stronger Rural Areas’ subject to the following circumstances:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Persons who are actively engaged in agriculture, horticulture, forestry, bloodstock and peat industry, 2. Members of farm families seeking to build on the family farm, 3. Landowners for this purpose being defined as persons who own the land 5 years prior to the date of planning application. 4. Persons employed locally whose employment would provide a service to the local community, 5. Persons who have personal, family or economic ties within the area, including returning emigrants 6. Persons who wish to return to farming and who buy or inherit a substantial farm-holding which is kept intact as an established farm unit, will be considered by the Council to be farmers and will be open to consideration for a rural house, as farmers. Where there is already a house on the holding, refurbishment or replacement of this house is the preferred option. 7. Persons who demonstrate extraordinary and exceptional circumstances, regard shall be had to those circumstances in consideration of the application. <p>The local area for the purpose of this policy is defined as the area generally within a 10km radius of the applicant’s family home.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-33, WM-C2-MA-35.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>The NWRA supports the proposal and suggests that criteria be added in the interests of transparency to describe what constitutes extraordinary and exceptional circumstances and how these accord with proper planning. The EMRA note that the Planning Authority resolved not to comply with the recommendation of the Chief Executive in relation to rural housing. It is further stated that the content of their original submission to the Draft Plan should be taken into consideration in advance of finalising the Draft Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027.</p>

Chief Executive's Response:

The contents of the above submissions are acknowledged.

Whilst the Planning Authority note the comments in relation to rural housing, it should be noted that the European Commission issued an infringement notice against Ireland in 2007 in relation to the "local needs criteria" in the 2005 Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities. This infringement notice was subsequently deferred pending the outcome of an infringement case taken against Belgium, now referred to as the Flemish Decree case and on which the European Court of Justice (ECJ) delivered its Judgement in 2013.

In its 2013 Judgement, the ECJ ruled that the Flemish Decree (requirement to demonstrate "a sufficient connection" to an area) constituted an unjustified restriction on fundamental freedoms under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (the EU Treaty), in particular that it breached article 43 of the EU Treaty on the freedom of movement of citizens. In order to avoid the up-scaling of the previous infringement notice against Ireland and referral of the matter to the ECJ for determination, the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government have indicated their intention to revise the 2005 Guidelines to ensure that rural housing policies and objectives contained in local authority development plans comply with article 43 of the EU Treaty on the freedom of movement of citizens.

In the interim, there is an obligation on planning authorities, in line with Circular Letter PL 2/2017 dated 31 May 2017, to ensure that existing 2005 Rural Housing Guidelines Policy specifically to the application of the "local housing needs residency criteria" remain in place pending the conclusion of the national policy review process and issue of advice otherwise by the Department.

Under Circular Letter PL 2/2017 Planning Authorities are required to "defer amending their rural housing policy/ local housing need criteria in existing statutory development plans either by way of the cyclical review or variation procedures". This is considered prudent in order to avoid planning authorities adopting different approaches on the matter in the interim".

Accordingly, having regard to Circular Letter PL 2/2017, in advance of revised guidance on rural generated housing, and in the absence of a comprehensive assessment of the need to tailor a wider approach to rural housing policy having regard to the provisions of the National Planning Framework, it is considered that the Plan should be made without proposed Material Amendments CH 9.1, as recommended in response to OPR MA Recommendation 3.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Reference response to OPR MA Recommendation 3.

In relation to rural housing policy:

It is recommended that the Plan be made without proposed Material Amendment CH 9.1.

It is recommended that the Plan be made made with Material Amendment CH 9.2.

It is recommended that the Plan be made without proposed Material Amendment CH 9.5.

It is recommended that the Plan be made without proposed Material Amendment CH 9.6)

Chapter 9

Proposed Amendment CH 9.3

Proposed Amendment: Amend CPO 9.5 in the plan as follows:

Continue to monitor and review rural nodes in the County, across the lifetime of the Plan, in order to ensure compatibility with environmental protection objectives. **This shall include a review of the extent and representation of each individual node where appropriate.**

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-36.

Summary of Issues: The submission notes Proposed Amendment and in light of this the submission requests the inclusion of a new CPO as follows:

“That loughnavally village should be a centre for sustainable tourism facilities in support of the heritage offering at the hill of uisneach and that provision should be made to overcome any deficiency in services or environmental protection objectives to accommodate such facilities”.

Chief Executive’s Response:

The contents of the submission are noted.

Rural nodes are unserviced settlements intended to support appropriately scaled development capable of being serviced by local arrangements (e.g. individual wastewater treatment system). The intention of the motion is to review rural nodes in the County, from an environmental perspective and as such it is not considered that the proposed change is relevant to the proposed Material Amendment.

Notwithstanding, in terms of Loughnavalley, the tourism potential associated with Uisneach is recognised and the plan highlights the potential of activity tourism to contribute to economic growth in rural areas.

The Plan adequately provides for the development of tourism related services in Loughnavalley, appropriate to the settlements designated role as set out under the Settlement Hierarchy however the inclusion of a policy that departs from the consideration of development relative to a Settlements role in the Hierarchy and which provides for provision to be made to overcome any deficiency in services or environmental protection objectives is considered material in nature and cannot be considered at this stage in the process.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed:

Amend CPO 9.5 in the plan as follows:

Continue to monitor and review rural nodes in the County, across the lifetime of the Plan, in order to ensure compatibility with environmental protection objectives. **This shall include a review of the extent and representation of each individual node where appropriate.**

Chapter 9

Proposed Amendment CH 9.4

Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 9.20 of the plan as follows:

Resist the creation of new accesses for single houses onto national roads, in order to safeguard the carrying capacity and safety of the national road network.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-4.

Summary of Issues:

TII welcomes the introduction of proposed CPO, however it is suggested that the CPO does not fully accord with the provisions of Section 2.5 of the Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines ‘Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (DoECLG, 2012). TII recommends amendment to the proposed text, as outlined below; Amend Text for inclusion in the Development Plan as follows; ‘Resist the creation of new access and intensification of existing accesses for single houses onto national roads, in order to safeguard the carrying capacity and safety of the national road network’.

Chief Executive’s Response:

The contents of the submission which seek to maintain and protect the safety, capacity and efficiency of national roads and associated junctions is noted.

The Draft Plan, at CPO 10.3, supports the implementation of Spatial Planning and National Roads - Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012.

COP 10.42 further seeks to ‘maintain and protect the safety, capacity and efficiency of National Roads and associated junctions in accordance with the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DECLG, (2012) and the Trans-European Networks (TEN-T) Regulations’ and CPO 10.43 seeks to ‘protect national roads from inappropriate access in order to protect the substantial investment in the national road network, to preserve the carrying capacity and safety of the National Road Network and to prevent the premature obsolescence of the network’.

CPO 10.45 provides policy to ‘prevent, except in exceptional circumstances, the creation of additional access points from new developments or the generation of increased traffic from existing accesses to national roads, to which speed limits greater than 60 kph apply’.

As such it is not considered necessary to amend the policy in this instance having regard to the stage in the process and the extent of existing policy in the area.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the above, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Insert new CPO after CPO 9.20 of the plan as follows:

Resist the creation of new access for single houses onto national roads, in order to safeguard the carrying capacity and safety of the national road network.

Chapter 9

Proposed Amendment CH 9.7

Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 9.26 of the plan as follows:

Ensure that agriculture development is in compliance with the EU “A Farm to Fork strategy” 2020 and parallel to the 14-point EU Nature Restoration Plan in the EU “Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 - Bringing nature back into our lives”.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-31, WM-C2-MA-35.

Summary of Issues:

Submissions WM-C2-MA-31, WM-C2-MA-35 support this proposal. It is noted that the NWRA suggests that it would be useful for stakeholders if information is given on how it is proposed to implement this CPO in terms of resources and targets.

Chief Executive’s Response:

The contents of the submissions are noted.

In this regard the plan provides the policy framework for assessing development proposals in line with the above policy and together with other policies in the area, for example, CPOs 9.26 – 9.34 provide extensive policy objectives which support environmentally sustainable agricultural practices in a manner that does not impinge on the visual amenity of the countryside and that protects watercourses, wildlife habitats and areas of ecological importance from the threat of pollution.

The Draft Plan also supports the role of rural areas and the countryside in sustaining the rural economy and its role as a key resource for agriculture and agri-food, forestry, energy production and carbon reduction, tourism, recreation, mineral extraction and/or other new and emerging rural based enterprises, in an environmentally sustainable manner.

These policies support stakeholders (e.g. farmers) in their proposals to make food systems sustainable. This, aligned with other means (e.g. the CAP), are intended, under this EU Program, to help change practices and current tools to more sustainable ones.

The Council is committed (resources permitting), where appropriate, to engaging with stakeholders and state agencies to support the development of initiatives (together with their implementation) in the area. As such it is recommended that the Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Insert new CPO after CPO 9.26 of the plan as follows:

Ensure that agriculture development is in compliance with the EU “A Farm to Fork strategy” 2020 and parallel to the 14-point EU Nature Restoration Plan in the EU “Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 - Bringing nature back into our lives”.

Chapter 9

Proposed Amendment CH 9.9

Proposed Amendment: Amend CPO 9.48 of the plan as follows:

Encourage the development of forestry, with higher proportions of broadleaf, to a scale and in a manner, which maximises its contribution to the economic and social well-being of the County on a sustainable basis.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14, WM-C2-MA-17.

Summary of Issues: Submission WM-C2-MA-14 supports Proposed Amendment CH 9.9. Submission WM-C2-MA-17 requests an amendment to CPO 9.48 as follows: *“Encourage the development of forestry, with higher proportions of broadleaf, to a scale and in a manner, which maximises its contribution to the economic and social well-being of the County on a sustainable basis. Westmeath should lead the way in promoting native forestry which enhances and protects the environment and communities”.*

Chief Executive's Response:

The support of submission WM-C2-MA-14 is noted and welcomed. The contents of submission WM-C2-MA-17 are noted. This policy objective specifically refers to increasing the proportion of broadleaf forestry within the county. It is considered that the Draft Development Plan policy CPO 9.48 adequately address this issue, the implementation of which, is an operational matter.

In this regard a change to Proposed Amendment CH 9.9 is not considered necessary.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Amend CPO 9.48 of the plan as follows:

Encourage the development of forestry, **with higher proportions of broadleaf**, to a scale and in a manner, which maximises its contribution to the economic and social well-being of the County on a sustainable basis.

Summary Table – Chapter 9

Proposed Amendment CH 9.1 be made without the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 9.2 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 9.3 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 9.4 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 9.5 be made without the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 9.6 be made without the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 9.7 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 9.9 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

3.9 Chapter 10 Transport Infrastructure & Energy

Chapter 10 Proposed Amendment CH 10.2
<p>Proposed Amendment:</p> <p>Amend the text in Section 10.3.5 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>This document, which is currently under review by the Department of Transport, sets out how the vision for a sustainable travel and transport system can be achieved. The policy recognises the vital importance of continued investment in transport to ensure an efficient economy and continued social development. The Government reaffirms its vision for sustainability in transport and sets out five key goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To reduce overall travel demand. ii. To maximise the efficiency of the transport network. iii. To reduce reliance on fossil fuels. iv. To reduce transport emissions. v. To improve accessibility to transport. <p>The National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020 (Department of Transport) which is derived from Smarter Travel, sets out a national policy for cycling, in order to create a stronger cycling culture, a safer environment for cycling and improved quality of life.</p> <p>A new Sustainable Mobility Policy, which will be closely aligned with the national strategic outcomes of 'Project Ireland 2040', will be developed over the course of 2020.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-10.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.</p>
<p>Chief Executive's Response:</p> <p>The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Amend the text in Section 10.3.5 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>This document, which is currently under review by the Department of Transport, sets out how the vision for a sustainable travel and transport system can be achieved. The policy recognises the vital importance of continued investment in transport to ensure an efficient economy and continued social development. The Government reaffirms its vision for sustainability in transport and sets out five key goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To reduce overall travel demand.

- ~~ii. — To maximise the efficiency of the transport network.~~
- ~~iii. — To reduce reliance on fossil fuels.~~
- ~~iv. — To reduce transport emissions.~~
- ~~v. — To improve accessibility to transport.~~

~~The National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020 (Department of Transport) which is derived from Smarter Travel, sets out a national policy for cycling, in order to create a stronger cycling culture, a safer environment for cycling and improved quality of life.~~

A new Sustainable Mobility Policy, which will be closely aligned with the national strategic outcomes of 'Project Ireland 2040', will be developed over the course of 2020.

Chapter 10

Proposed Amendment CH 10.3

Proposed Amendment:

Amend CPO 10.3 in the plan as follows:

Support the implementation of the following national and regional transport policies as they apply to Westmeath:

- *'The National Planning Framework'*.
- *'The RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region'*.
- *'Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 – 2020'*.
- *'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)'*.
- *'Spatial Planning and National Roads - Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012'*.
- *'National Cycling Policy Framework and National Cycle Manual'*.
- *'Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways, 2018'*.
- *'Local Link Rural Transport Programme Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022'*.

The Council also supports the implementation of sustainable transport solutions.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-10.

Summary of Issues:

Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.

Chief Executive's Response:

The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Amend CPO 10.3 in the plan as follows:

Support the implementation of the following national and regional transport policies as they apply to Westmeath:

- *'The National Planning Framework'*.
- *'The RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region'*.
- *'Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 – 2020'*.
- *'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)'*.
- *'Spatial Planning and National Roads - Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012'*.
- *'National Cycling Policy Framework and National Cycle Manual'*.
- *'Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways, 2018'*.
- *'Local Link Rural Transport Programme Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022'*.

The Council also supports the implementation of sustainable transport solutions.

CHAPTER 10

Proposed Amendment CH 10.5

Proposed Amendment:

Insert reference to *'The National Policy Framework Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport in Ireland'* at Section 10.3 of the plan as follows;

National Policy Framework for Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport in Ireland:

'The National Policy Framework for Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport in Ireland 2017-2030' was published in May 2017. It sets out the ambition that all new cars and vans sold in Ireland from 2030 will be zero emission (or zero emission-capable). A range of policy measures aimed at supporting the transition to low emission vehicles are set out in the *'National Policy Framework'*. Furthermore, the *'National Mitigation Plan'* published in July 2017 reiterates this ambition and also includes supporting actions towards this objective.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-31.

Summary of Issues:

Acknowledgement of inclusion of the material amendment in the Plan.

Chief Executive's Response:

The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of the amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Insert reference to *'The National Policy Framework Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport in Ireland'* at Section 10.3 of the plan as follows;

National Policy Framework for Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport in Ireland:

'The National Policy Framework for Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport in Ireland 2017-2030' was published in May 2017. It sets out the ambition that all new cars and vans sold in Ireland from 2030 will be zero emission (or zero emission-capable). A range of policy measures aimed at supporting the transition to low emission vehicles are set out in the *'National Policy Framework'*. Furthermore, the *'National Mitigation Plan'* published in July 2017 reiterates this ambition and also includes supporting actions towards this objective.

Chapter 10

Proposed Amendment CH 10.6

Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 10.9 in the plan as follows:

Support the national Smarter Travel policy and make central tenets of its transport strategy: Killucan Station, a regular bus services to Westmeath towns and villages and the re-opening of light rail on the old Mullingar to Athlone Rail line.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-10.

Summary of Issues:

The submission submits that while the operation, maintenance and renewal of the rail network and stations on the network including the former station referred to, is a matter for Iarnród Éireann in the first instance, the Department is not aware of any decision in relation to the reopening of the station at Killucan. Nor is the Department aware of any plan to re-open rail on the old Mullingar to Athlone Rail line at present.

Chief Executive's Response:

The content of the submission are noted.

While it is recognised by the Council that no decision has been made, nationally, regarding the reopening of either Killucan Railway Station or the old Mullingar to Athlone Railway line, both objectives are considered long-term aims of the Council which it is considered are consistent with national Smarter Travel policy and as such the proposed Material Amendment should be included in the Plan.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 10.9 in the plan as follows:

Support the national Smarter Travel policy and make central tenets of its transport strategy: Killucan Station, a regular bus services to Westmeath towns and villages and the re-opening of light rail on the old Mullingar to Athlone Rail line.

Chapter 10

Proposed Amendment CH 10.7

Proposed Amendment:

Amend CPO 10.11 in the plan as follows:

Improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity to stations and other public transport interchanges and request Iarnród Éireann to provide accommodation for bicycles on inter-city and commuter trains.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.

Summary of Issues:

Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.

Chief Executive's Response:

The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Amend CPO 10.11 in the plan as follows:

Improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity to stations and other public transport interchanges and request Iarnród Éireann to provide accommodation for bicycles on inter-city and commuter trains

Chapter 10
Proposed Amendment CH 10.8
<p>Proposed Amendment: Insert a new CPO after CPO 10.24 as follows:</p> <p>Carry out a permeability and connectivity audit of existing pedestrian and cycle facilities in the towns of Athlone and Mullingar all towns and villages.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-35.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues: The NWRA would support such a proposal and suggests that a prioritisation and time schedule for delivery be included in the CDP.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The contents of the submission welcoming the inclusion of amendment is noted, as is the suggestions to include prioritisation and a time schedule for delivery.</p> <p>The merits of the submission are noted. In this regard it is considered appropriate, as part of any future implementation (having regard to funding, resources, Government policy etc.) that a prioritised schedule of deliverables together with a schedule for implementation be established. As such it is not considered necessary to amend the Plan at this stage.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Insert a new CPO after CPO 10.24 as follows:</p> <p>Carry out a permeability and connectivity audit of existing pedestrian and cycle facilities in the towns of Athlone and Mullingar all towns and villages.</p>

Chapter 10
Proposed Amendment CH 10.10
<p>Proposed Amendment:</p> <p>Amend text in Section 10.4.6 of the plan as follows;</p> <p>10.4.6 Public Transport in Rural Areas</p> <p>The National Transport Authority (NTA) was established in 2009 and is charged with overall responsibility for public transport service provision in County Westmeath. In this regard, the role of the NTA involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Public Service Obligation (PSO) contract between the NTA and Irish Rail; • A PSO contract between the NTA and Bus Éireann; • Direct award contracts for the operation of bus services; and

- The licencing of commercial bus services.

In addition, the NTA provides rural transport services through the Local Link Rural Transport Programme. The key priorities of this programme continue to be directed at addressing rural social exclusion and the integration of rural transport services with other public transport services.

The NTA will develop and expand the Local Link Rural Transport Programme in the following manner:

- seek further integration with other public transport services, including HSE and school transport;
- ensure fully accessible vehicles operate on all services;
- enhance the customer experience;
- increase patronage among children and young people; and
- encourage innovation in the service.

The availability of public rural transport plays a major role in combatting rural isolation and acts as a catalyst in creating models of partnership, at all levels, where key sectors actively engage in transport provision, to ensure equality of access for all.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-9, WM-C2-MA-14.

Summary of Issues:

Submissions express support for the proposed amendment.

Chief Executive's Response:

The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Amend text in Section 10.4.6 of the plan as follows;

10.4.6 Public Transport in Rural Areas

The National Transport Authority (NTA) was established in 2009 and is charged with overall responsibility for public transport service provision in County Westmeath. In this regard, the role of the NTA involves:

- A Public Service Obligation (PSO) contract between the NTA and Irish Rail;
- A PSO contract between the NTA and Bus Éireann;
- Direct award contracts for the operation of bus services; and
- The licencing of commercial bus services.

In addition, the NTA provides rural transport services through the Local Link Rural Transport Programme. The key priorities of this programme continue to be directed at addressing rural social exclusion and the integration of rural transport services with other public transport services.

The NTA will develop and expand the Local Link Rural Transport Programme in the following manner:

- seek further integration with other public transport services, including HSE and school transport;
- ensure fully accessible vehicles operate on all services;

- enhance the customer experience;
- increase patronage among children and young people; and
- encourage innovation in the service.

The availability of public rural transport plays a major role in combatting rural isolation and acts as a catalyst in creating models of partnership, at all levels, where key sectors actively engage in transport provision, to ensure equality of access for all.

Chapter 10

Proposed Amendment CH 10.12

Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 10.41 in the plan as follows:

To make provisions for electric car charging facilities in every town and village in County Westmeath.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-35.

Summary of Issues: The NWRA supports this proposed amendment and suggests that information/clarity be given on the extent and density of charging points being proposed.

Chief Executive's Response:

The support of the proposed Amendment and the contents of the submission are noted.

Provision and density of electricity charging infrastructure for electric vehicles both on street and in new developments will require compliance with car parking standards prescribed in Development Management Standards Chapter 16 of the plan.

In this regard it is policy that all developments should provide facilities for the charging of battery-operated cars at a rate of up to 10% of the total car parking spaces. The remainder of the parking spaces should be constructed so as to be capable of accommodating future charging points, as required.

New residential development should accommodate at least one car parking space equipped with an EV charging points for every ten car parking spaces being provided for the associated development.

The delivery of charging infrastructure in other areas will be provided inline with evolving national policies in the area.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Insert new CPO after CPO 10.41 in the plan as follows:

To make provisions for electric car charging facilities in every town and village in County Westmeath.

Chapter 10

Proposed Amendment CH 10.14

Proposed Amendment: Update Table 10.1 of the plan as follows:

Table 10.1 Schedule of National Road Improvements

Road No:	Project Description
N4	Realignment and Upgrade from Mullingar to Longford County Boundary N4 Mullingar to Longford
N52	Realignment and Upgrade from Kilbeggan to Offaly County Boundary N52 Tullamore to Kilbeggan
N55	Realignment and Upgrade from the N6 Athlone to the Longford County Boundary
N51	Realignment and Upgrade from Delvin to Meath County Boundary
N52	Realignment offline Delvin Bypass
N51/N52	Realignment offline Clonmellon Bypass Realignment and Upgrade from Delvin to the Meath County Boundary including realignment offline Clonmellon Bypass
N62	Realignment from Fardrum to Offaly County Boundary including Ballinahown Bypass

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-4.

Summary of Issues:

TII notes inclusion of a new road improvement objective related to realignment of the N51/N52 to the Meath County Boundary, including realignment offline of a Clonmellon Bypass. TII advise that the inclusion of schemes related to national road improvements, which are in addition to the schemes included in the National Development Plan, are a matter for the Council. Implementation of such additional improvements relating to national roads identified at a local level should be done so in consultation with and subject to the agreement of TII, as TII may not be responsible for the funding of any such schemes or improvements.

Chief Executive's Response:

The merits of the submission are noted.

Westmeath's national road projects are advanced in consultation with TII on an annual basis.

During the lifetime of the new plan and following a review of the current NDP it is possible that new national road projects may be identified to address the unimproved sections of Westmeath's national road network.

It is important that separate objectives remain to continue N52 road improvements from Delvin to Meath Boundary and to deal with any future N51 safety schemes that may arise.

It is considered that the description of National Road improvement projects should be presented in the context of County Westmeath and accordingly it is recommended to amend road projects description in Table 10.1 to reflect this.

It is considered that the proposed change represent a modification to the proposed material Amendment, that is provided for clarification purposes and which is minor modification.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the above, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed subject to the following modification:

Table 10.1 Schedule of National Road Improvements

Road No:	Project Description
N4	<i>Realignment and Upgrade from Mullingar to Longford County Boundary (Part of NDP N4 Mullingar to Longford).</i>
N52	<i>Realignment and Upgrade from Kilbeggan to Offaly County Boundary (Part of NDP N52 Tullamore to Kilbeggan).</i>
N55	Realignment and Upgrade from the N6 Athlone to the Longford County Boundary
N51	<i>Realignment and Upgrade from Delvin to Meath County Boundary.</i>
N52	Realignment offline Delvin Bypass
N52	<i>Realignment and Upgrade from Delvin to the Meath County Boundary including realignment offline Clonmellon Bypass.</i>
N62	Realignment from Fardrum to Offaly County Boundary including Ballinahown Bypass

Chapter 10

Proposed Amendment CH 10.20

Proposed Amendment: Amend text in Section 10.5.3 of the plan as follows:

Stage 2 – Route Identification, Evaluation and Selection

- Potentially feasible routes within the preferred corridor will be identified and assessed. The selection of preferred routes will avoid constraints and meet opportunities to the optimum extent, as advised by the relevant specialists, taking into account project level information and potential mitigation measures that are readily achievable;
- In addition to the constraints identified above, site specific field data may be required to identify the most appropriate routes; and

In addition to environmental considerations, the identification of route corridors and the refinement of route lines is likely to be informed by other considerations. *Regard shall be taken of the ‘Westmeath County Heritage Plan 2018-2023’, ‘Westmeath Biodiversity Action Plan 2014-2020’ and the ‘Westmeath Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024’ or any revision made to these aforementioned publications, in the design of both national and non-national roads.*

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-4, WM-C2-MA-14.

Summary of Issues:

Submission WM-C2-MA-14 supports the Proposed Amendment.

TII submission WM-C2-MA-4 advises that all national road projects are required to be progressed in accordance with statutory processes and TII Publications, including the Project Management Guidelines and Project Appraisal Guidelines. Clarification is requested of this matter in the interests of adherence to the provisions of official policy.

In relation to Section 10.5.3 ‘Corridor and Route Selection Process’ TII requests that the Council give careful consideration to the decision to include the requirement to apply this section of the Development Plan and associated Objective CPO 10.47 to National Development Plan National Road Schemes in order to avoid any unintended consequences and to avoid any ambiguity in relation to the delivery of the National Development Plan National Road Schemes.

In the interests of clarity, TII would not support the requirements of Section 10.5.3 and Objective CPO 10.47 of the Draft Plan relating to ‘Corridor and Route Selection Process’ applying to National Development Plan national road scheme planning, in addition to processes already applied.

Chief Executive’s Response:

The support of submission WM-C2-MA-14 is noted as is the content of TII submission WM-C2-MA-4 which emphasises the requirement to adhere to statutory process. The submission requests clarity in relation to

the application of Section 10.5.3 'Corridor and Route Selection Process' in order to avoid ambiguity in relation to the delivery of the National Development Plan National Road Schemes.

Having regard to the foregoing it is considered that the policy should be modified, in the interest of clarity, to include reference to TII Publications, including the Project Management Guidelines and Project Appraisal Guidelines, as requested by TII.

Accordingly, it is proposed to amend wording of Section 10.5.3 'Corridor and Route Selection Process' as follows:

In addition to environmental considerations, the identification of route corridors and the refinement of route lines is likely to be informed by other considerations. *Give consideration to TII Publications, including the Project Management Guidelines and Project Appraisal Guidelines, in addition, regard shall be taken of the 'Westmeath County Heritage Plan 2018-2023', 'Westmeath Biodiversity Action Plan 2014-2020' and the 'Westmeath Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024' or any revision made to these aforementioned publications, in the design of both national and non-national roads.*

It is considered that the proposed words are a modification to the proposed Material Amendment, and it is recommended that the Council accept this minor modification.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the above, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed subject to the following modification.

Amend text in Section 10.5.3 of the plan as follows:

Stage 2 – Route Identification, Evaluation and Selection

- Potentially feasible routes within the preferred corridor will be identified and assessed. The selection of preferred routes will avoid constraints and meet opportunities to the optimum extent, as advised by the relevant specialists, taking into account project level information and potential mitigation measures that are readily achievable;
- In addition to the constraints identified above, site specific field data may be required to identify the most appropriate routes; and

In addition to environmental considerations, the identification of route corridors and the refinement of route lines is likely to be informed by other considerations. *Give consideration to TII Publications, including the Project Management Guidelines and Project Appraisal Guidelines, in addition, regard shall be taken of the 'Westmeath County Heritage Plan 2018-2023', 'Westmeath Biodiversity Action Plan 2014-2020' and the 'Westmeath Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024' or any revision made to these aforementioned publications, in the design of both national and non-national roads.*

Chapter 10

Proposed Amendment CH 10.23

Proposed Amendment:

Amend CPO 10.59 of the plan as follows:

Allow for the reduction in car parking standards in suitable **town-centre** locations in order to encourage a modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable forms of transport, such as public transport, cycling and walking.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-17.

Summary of Issues:

Submission requests that the following be added to Proposed Amendment CH 10.23 *“Commence process to increasing space for cars in public and private car parks, due to the growing number of larger cars, SUV’s etc on our roads. Repainting of car parks to reflect this to be undertaken by Westmeath County Council.”*

Chief Executive’s Response:

The contents of the submission are noted.

It is considered that the request is an operational matter which is outside the remit of the Plan.

The Draft Plan contains standards with regard to car parking requirements, in addition to national design standards as set out under the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and Building Regulations Technical Guidance Document M.

It is considered that the Draft Development Plan policies adequately address this issue.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the above, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Amend CPO 10.59 of the plan as follows:

Allow for the reduction in car parking standards in suitable **town-centre** locations in order to encourage a modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable forms of transport, such as public transport, cycling and walking.

Chapter 10 Proposed Amendment CH 10.24
<p>Proposed Amendment:</p> <p>Amend CPO 10.64 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Ensure the provision of appropriate Bicycle parking facilities in convenient, secure location and sited as close as possible to the principal destination in all new developments, as part of any new applications in urban areas to assist with supporting modal shift away from private cars to more sustainable modes of transport i.e. Cycling, Walking, Public Transport.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-9.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Amend CPO 10.64 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Ensure the provision of appropriate Bicycle parking facilities in convenient, secure location and sited as close as possible to the principal destination in all new developments, as part of any new applications in urban areas to assist with supporting modal shift away from private cars to more sustainable modes of transport i.e. Cycling, Walking, Public Transport.</p>

Chapter 10 Proposed Amendment CH 10.31
<p>Proposed Amendment:</p> <p>Insert new CPO after Section 10.17 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Support the re-use of former landfill sites in the County for parklands, recreational, nature conservation and/or low carbon or renewable energy use, subject to compliance with all legislative and regulatory requirements.</p> <p>Facilitate and support the regeneration of closed landfill sites in Westmeath. Any application for the reuse of former landfill sites will require a Masterplan to be prepared to include the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the setting of the site • Risk Assessment • Detailed proposal for the after-use of the site • Review of all legislative and regulatory requirements in relation to the remediation of the site • Consultation with the EPA or other relevant statutory agencies • Assessment of the social and economic benefits of the re-use of the site • Analysis of public engagement undertaken. • A “site manual” detailing landfill engineering features and pollution control systems.
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Insert new CPO after Section 10.17 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Support the re-use of former landfill sites in the County for parklands, recreational, nature conservation and/or low carbon or renewable energy use, subject to compliance with all legislative and regulatory requirements.</p> <p>Facilitate and support the regeneration of closed landfill sites in Westmeath. Any application for the reuse of former landfill sites will require a Masterplan to be prepared to include the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the setting of the site • Risk Assessment

- Detailed proposal for the after-use of the site
- Review of all legislative and regulatory requirements in relation to the remediation of the site
- Consultation with the EPA or other relevant statutory agencies
- Assessment of the social and economic benefits of the re-use of the site
- Analysis of public engagement undertaken.
- A “site manual” detailing landfill engineering features and pollution control systems.

Chapter 10

Proposed Amendment CH 10.32

Proposed Amendment:

Insert new CPO after Section 10.17 of the plan as follows:

Promote and encourage the objectives of the ‘*Eastern Midlands Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021*’ (or any subsequent plan) regarding the remediating of historic closed landfills prioritising actions to those sites which are the highest risk to the environment and human health. Any future development of lands incorporating historic closed landfills shall take full consideration of the environmental sensitivities of the local site and follow the national code of practice for assessment and remediation of such sites. This may include obtaining an appropriate authorisation from the EPA to regulate the proposed remediation.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.

Summary of Issues:

Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.

Chief Executive’s Response:

The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Insert new CPO after Section 10.17 of the plan as follows:

Promote and encourage the objectives of the ‘*Eastern Midlands Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021*’ (or any subsequent plan) regarding the remediating of historic closed landfills prioritising actions to those sites which are the highest risk to the environment and human health. Any future development of lands incorporating historic closed landfills shall take full consideration of the environmental sensitivities of the local site and follow the national code of practice for assessment and remediation of such sites. This may include obtaining an appropriate authorisation from the EPA to regulate the proposed remediation.

Chapter 10

Proposed Amendment CH 10.33

Proposed Amendment:

Insert new CPO after CPO 10.120 of the plan as follows;

It is a strategic aim of the county to reduce polluting emissions and support the implementation of measures to improve indoor and outdoor air quality by:

- Participating in, and facilitating national programmes of air quality monitoring,
- Support the development and promotion of the Air Quality Index for Health,
- Support the development of Local Air Quality Management Plans that identify pollution 'hot spots' and aim to reduce pollution through local action on emissions,
- Assessing radon levels in indoor settings in council properties and support the promotion of radon testing all indoor settings.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.

Summary of Issues:

Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.

Chief Executive's Response:

The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Insert new CPO after CPO 10.120 of the plan as follows:

It is a strategic aim of the county to reduce polluting emissions and support the implementation of measures to improve indoor and outdoor air quality by:

- Participating in, and facilitating national programmes of air quality monitoring,
- Support the development and promotion of the Air Quality Index for Health,
- Support the development of Local Air Quality Management Plans that identify pollution 'hot spots' and aim to reduce pollution through local action on emissions,
- Assessing radon levels in indoor settings in council properties and support the promotion of radon testing all indoor settings.

Chapter 10
Proposed Amendment CH 10.34
<p>Proposed Amendment:</p> <p>Amend CPO 10.123 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>CPO 10.123: Require all developments to be designed and operated in a manner that will minimise and contain noise levels, having regard to relevant national guidelines and in the absence of national guidelines, to relevant international standards, where appropriate.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Amend CPO 10.123 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>CPO 10.123: Require all developments to be designed and operated in a manner that will minimise and contain noise levels, having regard to relevant national guidelines and in the absence of national guidelines, to relevant international standards, where appropriate.</p>

Chapter 10
Proposed Amendment CH 10.35
<p>Proposed Amendment: Amend text in Section 10.23 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>In addition, potential applicants are advised to consult with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, The Forestry Service, the Irish Aviation Authority, Failte Ireland and other appropriate statutory and non-statutory bodies in areas which may require special protection. In general, the Council will encourage wind energy, provided such developments would not have an adverse effect on residential amenities, tourism amenities, special landscape character, views or prospects, Natura 2000 sites, protected structures, aircraft flight paths or by reason of noise or visual impact. Applications for such developments will not be encouraged in Areas of High Amenity.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-27, WM-C2-MA-34.</p>

Summary of Issues:

Submissions note the addition of Failte Ireland as a Consultee. It also requests the inclusion of tourism facilities as a “sensitive receptor of wind energy”.

Chief Executive’s Response: The contents of the submissions are noted. Potential Wind Energy applicants are advised to consult with Failte Ireland in the context of protection of tourism amenities. Applications for wind energy development are considered in line with relevant Wind Energy Guidelines and are accompanied by associated environmental appraisals with due consideration to a range of sensitive receptors which include amenities.

The inclusion of tourism amenities as sensitive receptors of wind energy development is considered appropriate and should be included in the plan as set out under Proposed Amendment CH 10.35.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the above, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment: Amend text in Section 10.23 of the plan as follows:

In addition, potential applicants are advised to consult with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, The Forestry Service, the Irish Aviation Authority, **Failte Ireland** and other appropriate statutory and non-statutory bodies in areas which may require special protection. In general, the Council will encourage wind energy, provided such developments would not have an adverse effect on residential amenities, **tourism amenities**, special landscape character, views or prospects, Natura 2000 sites, protected structures, aircraft flight paths or by reason of noise or visual impact. Applications for such developments will not be encouraged in Areas of High Amenity.

Chapter 10

Proposed Amendment CH 10.37

Proposed Amendment: Amend CPO 10.136 of the plan as follows.

Ensure that proposals for energy development demonstrate that human health has been considered, including those relating to the topics of:

- Noise ~~(including consistency with the World Health Organisation’s 2018 Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region);~~
- Shadow Flicker (for wind turbine developments, including detailed Shadow Flicker Study);
- Ground Conditions/Geology (including landslide and slope stability risk assessment);
- Air Quality; and Water Quality;

Assessment of impacts on collision risk species (bird and bats).
Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-34.
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Submission does not accept the justification for the deletion of the W.H.O Noise Guidelines in policy 10.136. Reliance on current Draft National Wind Energy Guidelines is not considered sufficient, as draft guidelines may be amended at any stage while the WHO Guidelines carry statutory weight.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The content of the submission is noted.</p> <p>It should be noted that wind energy developments must be assessed in line with national policy in the area.</p> <p>In this regard, the Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019 state the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That assessments of noise are based on best international practice on wind turbine noise control including the Institute of Acoustics Good Practice Guides, WHO Guidelines and a procedure for the assessment of low frequency noise complaints. • That a noise limit, referred to as a Relative Rated Noise Limit (RRNL) in the range of 35 – 43 dB(A), while not exceeding the background noise level by more than 5dB(A) with an upper limit of 43 dB(A). This is in line with the “preferred draft approach” announced by DHPCLG and DCCAE on 13th June 2017. The noise limits in the Draft Guidelines are more onerous than the 2006 Wind Energy Guidelines and afford a higher level of protection to people who live in the vicinity of any future wind farm developments. <p>The noise limits in the Draft Guidelines afford a higher level of protection to people who live in the vicinity of any future wind farm developments than that set out under the 2006 Wind Energy Guidelines.</p> <p>It is further noted that CPO 10.131 states the following:</p> <p>Have regard to the principles and planning guidance set out in Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government publications relating to ‘Wind Energy Development’ and the DCCAE Code of Practice for Wind Energy Development in Ireland and any other relevant guidance which may be issued in relation to sustainable energy provisions.</p> <p>It is considered that the proposed amendment to CPO 10.136 to reference WHO Noise guidelines would contravene national noise guidelines and as such is not appropriate for inclusion under the Plan.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Amend CPO 10.136 of the plan as follows.</p> <p>Ensure that proposals for energy development demonstrate that human health has been considered, including those relating to the topics of:</p>

- Noise (~~including consistency with the World Health Organisation’s 2018 Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region~~);
- Shadow Flicker (for wind turbine developments, including detailed Shadow Flicker Study);
- Ground Conditions/Geology (including landslide and slope stability risk assessment);
- Air Quality; and Water Quality;

Assessment of impacts on collision risk species (bird and bats).

CHAPTER 10

Proposed Amendment CH 10.38

Proposed Amendment:

Amend CPO 10.132 in the plan as follows;

Provide the following separation distances between wind turbines and residential dwellings:

500 metres, where the tip height of the wind turbine blade generator is greater than 25 metres but does not exceed 50 metres.

1000 metres, where the tip height of the wind turbine blade generator is greater than 50 metres but does not exceed 100 metres.

1500 metres, where /the tip height of the wind turbine blade generator is greater than 100 metres but does not exceed 150 metres.

More than 2000 metres, where the tip height of the wind turbine blade generator is greater than 150 metres.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-19, WM-C2-MA-21, WM-C2-MA-33, WM-C2-MA-35.

Summary of Issues:

Submission Nos WM-C2-MA-19, WM-C2-MA-21 and WM-C2-MA-33 recommend that the County Development Plan be consistent with Government Guidelines, in particular the “preferred approach” as outlined in the recently published Draft Wind Energy Guidelines. This approach provides for a setback distance of four times the tip height between a wind turbine and nearest point of a curtilage of any residential dwelling, subject to a minimum setback of 500m.

It is further stated that CPO 10.132 will limit the ability of the Council to positively contribute towards national obligations in relation to reducing emissions. Considers that the separation distances between wind turbines and residential dwellings prescribed in CPO 10.132 remain inconsistent with Government

policy, would undermine policies CPO 131 and 137 of the plan and would restrict the potential for wind energy development in the county.

It is noted that the Elected Members have chosen to not to accept the Chief Executive's recommendation in relation to CPO 10.132. It is respectfully submitted that the Chief Executive's responsibility is to give effect to the lawful directions of the Elected Members. In this regard, the PJ Farrell Anor Limerick County Council (2009, IEHC 274) case is cited.

A further submission suggests that clarity be given on whether the separation distances are measured from the turbine stanchion or from the tip of the blade.

Whilst WM-C2-MA-21 requests that CPO 10.132 is removed from the plan, WM-C2-MA-19 submits that this CPO is further amended to comply with current and Draft Wind Energy Guidelines regarding separation distances between residential dwellings and wind turbines.

Chief Executive's Response:

To ensure consistency of development plans with specific planning policy requirements specified in the "Wind Energy Guidelines 2006" and the "Draft Revised Wind Energy Guidelines 2019" it should be noted that Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines were issued, in December 2019, for public consultation. The purpose of the guidelines is to ensure a consistency of approach throughout the country for the treatment of planning applications for wind energy developments. The guidelines were also prepared within a wider national and EU energy policy context in line with binding EU and international obligations on Ireland to play its part in tackling both the causes and effects of climate change. As such, the Draft Plan also recognises the importance of wind energy, in addition to other renewable energy sources, in achieving national targets in relation to reducing fossil fuel dependency and greenhouse gas emissions.

The Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines provide for the following:

- A setback requirement for visual amenity purposes of 4 times the tip height to be applied between a wind turbine and the nearest point of the curtilage of any residential property in the vicinity of the proposed development, subject to a mandatory minimum setback of 500 metres.
- Include a policy of zero shadow flicker and recommend planning authorities or An Bord Pleanála to impose condition(s) to ensure that no existing dwelling or other affected property will experience shadow flicker as a result of the wind energy development.

Having regard to the above submissions, it is acknowledged that the separation distances as set out under the Draft Plan and (proposed amended policy objective CPO 10.132) are contrary to that set out under the Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines, December 2019 (and the 2006 Wind Energy Guidelines) and as such the inclusion of specific separation distances in the Plan is considered premature pending the adoption of said Guidelines. Notwithstanding, given the limited scope to introduce further modification of a minor nature, it is considered that the removal or significant amendment of the policy as presented in the Draft Plan, would constitute a Material Amendment that is not minor in nature and in relation to which, if made, the public would not be afforded the opportunity to make a submission or

comment, and as such it is recommended that the Plan be made without the proposed Material Amendment.

In the interests of clarity, within the Wind Energy industry “separation distance” or “setback distance” is taken to mean the minimum horizontal distance between the wind turbine generator (stanchion) and a measurable entity.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

See response to OPR Recommendation MA 2 (a).

It is recommended that the Plan be made without the proposed Material Amendment CH 10.38.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.38 - Amend CPO 10.132 in the plan as follows:

Provide the following separation distances between wind turbines and residential dwellings:

500 metres, where the tip height of the wind turbine blade generator is greater than 25 metres but does not exceed 50 metres.

1000 metres, where the tip height of the wind turbine blade generator is greater than 50 metres but does not exceed 100 metres.

1500 metres, where the tip height of the wind turbine blade generator is greater than 100 metres but does not exceed 150 metres.

More than 2000 metres, where the tip height of the wind turbine blade generator is greater than 150 metres).

CHAPTER 10

Proposed Amendment CH 10.39

Proposed Amendment:

Amend CPO 10.135 in the plan as follows;

To strictly direct Encourage large-scale energy production projects, in the form of Wind Farms, onto cutover cutaway peatlands in the County, subject to environmental, landscape, habitats and wildlife protection requirements being addressed.

In the context of this policy, industrial scale/large-scale energy production projects are defined as follows:

Projects that meet or exceed any of the following criteria:

- Height: over 100m to blade tip, or
- Scale: More than five turbines, or
- Output: Having a total output of greater than 5MW

Developments sited on peatlands have the potential to increase overall carbon losses. Proposals for such development should demonstrate that the following has been considered:

Peatland stability; and
Carbon emissions balance.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-17, WM-C2-MA-19, WM-C2-MA-20, WM-C2-MA-21, WM-C2-MA-22, WM-C2-MA-32.

Summary of Issues:

Submission Nos WM-C2-MA-19 and WM-C2-MA-21 advise that the proposed change to CPO 10.135 introduces further limitations on the potential for wind farm locations by “strictly directing” windfarms to cutaway peatlands in the county and is therefore not consistent with national guidance. It is stated that net effect of this amendment is identify suitable sites for wind energy developments based on planning policy only, rather than environmental suitability and to preclude the development of suitable sites located within other land use types.

Submission No. WM-C2-MA-21 requests that CPO 10.135 is removed from the Plan and that a more appropriate approach to identifying locations for wind farm development should involve the preparation of a weighted landscape sensitivity matrix as part of the Landscape Character Assessment. Reference is also made to the need to ensure consistency between County Development Plans and Wind Energy Strategies to facilitate wind energy developments across county boundaries.

Such an approach would be consistent with the identification of “Strategic Energy Zones” prescribed in the EMRA RSES.

With regard to Submission No. WM-C2-MA-20, it is stated that the promotion of wind energy developments on cutaway bogs would preclude the rewetting of bogs in the interests of reducing carbon emissions, improving water quality and biodiversity.

Accordingly, revised rewording of CPO 10.135 is suggested as follows:

“Consider the appropriate design and alignment of renewable energy projects on cutaway bogs in the light of trade offs between rewetting and rehabilitation to restore active peat forming conditions, restore water quality and the array of services these areas can supply”.

Concern is raised in Submission No. WM-C2-MA-22 that CPO 10.135 would give rise to wind energy developments being installed on habitat which can be restored to active peatland. It is further stated that the loss of peatland in the county has decimating effects on wildlife. Recommends that environmental assessment is required to ensure that any restorable former industrial peatland is protected as a Conservation site in the Plan.

Summary of Issues: The submission requests to amend CPO 10.135 as follows :

To direct large-scale energy production projects, in the form of Wind Farms, onto former industrial cutover cutaway peatlands in the County, where peat was extracted for horticultural and/or power station use, not personal household fuel use, subject to environmental, landscape, habitats and wildlife protection requirements being addressed.

In the context of this policy, industrial scale/large-scale energy production projects are defined as follows:

Projects that meet or exceed any of the following criteria:

Height: over 100m to blade tip, or

- Scale: More than five turbines, or
- Output: Having a total output of greater than 5MW

Developments sited on peatlands have the potential to increase overall carbon losses. Proposals for such development should demonstrate that the following has been considered:

Peatland stability; and

Carbon emissions balance.

A full ecological survey to be carried out on the entire cutaway (and remaining raised bog high bog habitat if any left at site) to establish if there is rehabilitation and/or restoration potential for the site.

A full environmental impact statement.

A drainage management plan for entire area, including adjacent farmland and all watercourses.

Submission Nos WM-C2-MA-19, WM-C2-MA-20, WM-C2-MA-22 WM-C2-MA-32 recommend that the material amendment to CPO 10.135 is not made.

Chief Executive's Response:

The contents of these submissions are noted.

It should be noted that it is the role of EMRA to identify Strategic Energy Zones, in conjunction with local authorities and the Council will actively engage with EMRA in this regard.

A Landscape Character Assessment has been undertaken for the county and this assessment has informed the Wind Energy Capacity Map contained in the Plan.

The Council acknowledge that peatlands act as a carbon sink and are a valuable ecological resource. Accordingly, any windfarm development will be assessed in line with associated environmental, landscape, habitats and wildlife protection requirements. With regard to requirements for wind energy development, Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitat Directive legislation are both defined in this regard.

CPO 10.138 supports 'the preparation of a Management Plan for the Industrial Peatlands in the County, in consultation with stakeholders and adjacent Local Authorities. The Plan should focus on recreational opportunities, renewable energy, hydrological and ecological considerations subject to environmental assessment and the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive'.

CPO 11.6 set out to 'Support collaboration between local authorities, the Bord na Móna Transition Team and relevant stakeholders and the development of partnership approaches to integrated peatland management for a just transition that incorporate any relevant policies and strategies such as the Bord na Móna Biodiversity Plan 2016-2021 and the national Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Plans. This shall include support for the rehabilitation and/or re-wetting of suitable peatland habitats'.

It is considered that the proposed amendment to strictly direct (as opposed to "Encourage") windfarms onto cutaway peatlands in the County is not consistent with national policy in the area and as such the Draft Plan should also be made without Proposed Amendment CH 10.39 (below) subject to minor modification to update terminology associated with 'Industrial Scale Wind Turbines' to 'taller commercial wind turbines'.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Reference CE Recommendation in response to OPR Recommendation MA 2 (c)

(It is recommended that the Plan be made without Proposed Amendment CH 10.39 subject to minor modification to update terminology associated with 'Industrial Scale Wind Turbines' to 'taller commercial wind turbines'.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.39

Amend CPO 10.135 in the plan as follows;

~~To strictly direct~~ Encourage large scale energy production projects, taller commercial wind turbines in the form of Wind Farms, onto cutover cutaway peatlands in the County, subject to environmental, landscape, habitats and wildlife protection requirements being addressed.

In the context of this policy, ~~industrial scale/large scale energy production~~ taller commercial wind turbines projects are defined as follows:

Projects that meet or exceed any of the following criteria:

Height: over 100m to blade tip, or

Scale: More than five turbines, or

Output: Having a total output of greater than 5MW

Developments sited on peatlands have the potential to increase overall carbon losses. Proposals for such development should demonstrate that the following has been considered:

Peatland stability; and

Carbon emissions balance.

CHAPTER 10

Proposed Amendment CH 10.41

Proposed Amendment:

Insert new CPO after Section 10.26 of the plan as follows

Support the development of an indigenous bioenergy sector, including the mobilisation of low value residual biomass for the production of renewable electricity

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-31.

Summary of Issues:

Acknowledges inclusion of this material amendment to the Draft Plan

Chief Executive's Response:

The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of the amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Insert new CPO after Section 10.26 of the plan as follows

Support the development of an indigenous bioenergy sector, including the mobilisation of low value residual biomass for the production of renewable electricity.

Chapter 10

Proposed Amendment CH 10.42

Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 10.36 of the plan as follows:

To support the upgrade of Mullingar rail line, to facilitate current increased use of rail travel and expected increase of Mullingar population.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-35.

Summary of Issues: The NWRA suggests that further locational information be given in relation to this proposal.

Chief Executive's Response:

The content of the submission is noted.

Mullingar railway station is located on the Dublin to Sligo rail line. In this regard policy locational context is clearly set out 'to support the upgrading of this rail line linking Mullingar to both Dublin and Sligo'. As such no further amendment is considered necessary.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Insert new CPO after CPO 10.36 of the plan as follows:

To support the upgrade of Mullingar rail line, to facilitate current increased use of rail travel and expected increase of Mullingar population.

Chapter 10

Proposed Amendment CH 10.43

Proposed Amendment: Amend text in Section 10.29.1 of the plan as follows:

Eirgrid the national body responsible for the management of the electricity transmission network, have planned key investments, upgrading of the transmission network and new circuit build and reinforcement, to cater for continued demand in the ~~Linked Gateway~~ towns of Athlone and Mullingar.

The upgrading of the transmission network will facilitate power flows from both renewable and conventional sources to maximise the use of existing power corridors.

The Government Policy Statement on the Strategic Importance of Transmission and Other Energy Infrastructure (July 2012) acknowledges the strategic and economic importance of investment in networks and energy infrastructure. The Government endorses the major investment underway in the high voltage electricity system under EirGrid's Grid 25 Programme. The Planning Authority recognises the need for development and renewal of energy networks, in order to meet both economic and social policy goals **and where appropriate, will consider the impact of proposed developments on the electricity grid network.**

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-7, WM-C2-MA-27, WM-C2-MA-34

Summary of Issues:

Submissions express concern regarding the potential impact of development under Eirgrid 25 National Plan upon Uisneach's High Amenity Area landscape and request the inclusion of an additional policy in Section 10.29 as follows: *"In all consultations, the planning authority will also seek to mitigate and minimise the landscape and visual impact of this Eirgrid network on the areas of High Amenity".*

Chief Executive's Response:

The merits of the submissions to protect Uisneach's High Amenity Area landscape are noted and robustly supported by Westmeath County Council. The Draft Plan contains extensive policy objectives which protect, not only High Amenity Area's in general, but more specifically Uisneach High Amenity Area.

Of particular note are:

CPO 13.7 Protect the landscapes and natural environments of the County by ensuring that any new developments do not detrimentally impact on the character, integrity, distinctiveness or scenic value of their area. Any development which could unduly impact upon such landscapes will not be permitted.

CPO 13.8 Ensure the preservation of the uniqueness of a landscape character type by having regard to the character, value and sensitivity of a landscape in new development proposals.

CPO 13.19 Protect High Amenity areas from inappropriate development and reinforce their character, distinctiveness and sense of place.

CPO 13.17 Protect and enhance the setting of the Hill of Uisneach and support increased public access to the site. Only sensitive development that does not undermine the archaeological and cultural significance of the site will be permitted.

CPO 13.18 a. Protect and sustain the established appearance and character of views associated with the High Amenity Area around the Hill of Uisneach. b. Require any development proposals within the High Amenity Area around the Hill of Uisneach to demonstrate that no adverse effects will occur on the established appearance or character of this feature as viewed from either the Protected Panoramic Views or from surrounding public roads.

Of considerable significance is Proposed Amendment CH 13.1 which specifically refers to infrastructural developments at Uisneach.

Proposed Amendment CH 13.1

Insert new CPO in section 13.15 of the plan as follows:

Any significant, industrial and or infrastructural developments (excluding residential; agricultural buildings; tourism; greenway; cultural; educational or community buildings), which would impact upon Uisneach and or its protected views will not be permitted due to the sensitivity of the site.

It is considered that the Draft Development Plan policies, in addition to Proposed Amendment CH 13.1 adequately address this issue and support the protection of Uisneach High Amenity Area.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the above, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Amend text in Section 10.29.1 of the plan as follows:

Eirgrid the national body responsible for the management of the electricity transmission network, have planned key investments, upgrading of the transmission network and new circuit build and reinforcement, to cater for continued demand in the **Linked Gateway** towns of Athlone and Mullingar.

The upgrading of the transmission network will facilitate power flows from both renewable and conventional sources to maximise the use of existing power corridors.

The Government Policy Statement on the Strategic Importance of Transmission and Other Energy Infrastructure (July 2012) acknowledges the strategic and economic importance of investment in networks and energy infrastructure. The Government endorses the major investment underway in the high voltage electricity system under EirGrid's Grid 25 Programme. The Planning Authority recognises the need for development and renewal of energy networks, in order to meet both economic and social policy goals **and where appropriate, will consider the impact of proposed developments on the electricity grid network.**

<p>Chapter 10</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 10.44</p>
<p>Proposed Amendment: Amend CPO 10.98 in the plan as follows:</p> <p>“Ensure that a flood risk assessment is carried out for any development proposal within 200m of a watercourse, in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management (DoEHLG/OPW 2009). This assessment shall be appropriate to the scale and nature of risk to the potential development”</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-35.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues: The NWRA supports the proposed amendment and suggests that clarification be given on which watercourses are included in terms of size, flow and location in order to better inform all stakeholders.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The support of the proposed Amendment is noted, as is the suggestion to provide clarification on the type of watercourses to be included.</p> <p>A watercourse is defined by the OSi Rivers and Lakes dataset, viewable/downloadable from the EPA website.</p> <p>The inclusion of the above Amendment is to ensure the protection of future development from the risk of flooding. Given the relatively flat topography of much of the County, clarification, by way of minor modification to the Amendment, should be provided to make it clear that the policy refers to development(s) being at potential risk of flooding.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>Having consideration to the above, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed subject to the following minor modification:</p> <p>Amend CPO 10.98 in the plan as follows:</p> <p>“Ensure that a flood risk assessment is carried out for any development proposal within 200m of a watercourse and at risk to flooding in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management (DoEHLG/OPW 2009). This assessment shall be appropriate to the scale and nature of risk to the potential development”</p>

Summary Table – Chapter 10

Proposed Amendment CH 10.2 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.3 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.5 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.6 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.7 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.8 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.10 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.12 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.14 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed, subject to minor modifications.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.20 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed, subject to minor modifications.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.23 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.24 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.31 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.32 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.33 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.34 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.35 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.37 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.38 be made without the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.39 be made without the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.41 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.42 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.43 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 10.44 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed, subject to minor modifications.

3.10 Chapter 11 Climate Action

<p>Chapter 11</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 11.1</p>
<p>Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 11.8 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>To review the outcomes of the Development Plan Guidelines, as adopted, and take any steps considered necessary to align with the approach to climate action recommended in the guidelines over the lifetime of the Plan</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-7, WM-C2-MA-34.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Submissions note that this policy replicates the recommendations of the O.P.R and that by adhering to this recommendation, the council is undermining both the local government and County Development Plan process. The submission considers that there are more than adequate energy policies currently within the existing plan, to satisfy national renewable energy targets.</p> <p>Submissions request that the Proposed Amendment CH 11.1 be omitted from the Plan.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The content of the submissions is acknowledged.</p> <p>Climate action is one of the cross-cutting themes of the plan and accordingly has also been afforded a standalone chapter in the Draft Plan. It is a stated aim of the plan to transition to a low carbon and climate resilient County, with an emphasis on reduction in energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions, through a combination of effective mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change. To this end, the Council is also committed to cooperation with agencies in the delivery and implementation of climate actions through engagement for example with the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office (CARO). In terms of carbon reduction, the Council is committed to engagement with and support for EPSON EU research project (QGasSP) to identify a robust methodology for quantifying the relative greenhouse gas impacts of alternative spatial planning policies.</p> <p>The absence of revised Development Plan Guidelines to support the preparation of the Draft Plan should be noted and, in this regard, it is considered appropriate that the outcomes of any future guidelines be reviewed by the Planning Authority over the lifetime of the plan and that any steps considered necessary to review the Plan be taken on foot of this.</p> <p>It is therefore recommended that the Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment which commits to taking steps considered necessary to align with the approach to climate action recommended in the guidelines.</p>

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 11.8 of the plan as follows:

To review the outcomes of the Development Plan Guidelines, as adopted, and take any steps considered necessary to align with the approach to climate action recommended in the guidelines over the lifetime of the Plan

Chapter 11

Proposed Amendment CH 11.2

Proposed Amendment:

Insert new CPO after CPO 11.8 of the plan as follows:

Work with the NTA to undertake analysis in relation to modal shift between settlements and derive a realistic modal change target for the county.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-9.

Summary of Issues:

Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.

Chief Executive's Response:

The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Insert new CPO after CPO 11.8 of the plan as follows:

Work with the NTA to undertake analysis in relation to modal shift between settlements and derive a realistic modal change target for the county.

<p>Chapter 11</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 11.3</p>
<p>Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 11.8 of the plan as follows;</p> <p>Work with key stakeholders to carry out an assessment of how the implementation of the Plan will contribute to realising overall national targets on renewable energy and climate change, and in particular wind energy production and the potential wind energy resource.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-7, WM-C2-MA-34.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Submissions note that this policy replicates the recommendations of the O.P.R and that by adhering to this recommendation, the council is undermining both the local government and County Development Plan process. It is stated that there are more than adequate energy policies currently within the existing plan, to satisfy national renewable energy targets. Committing to further review of the plan with wind energy developers, identified as key stakeholders, is contrary to the expressed intentions of the majority of elected members of Westmeath Co Co.</p> <p>Submissions requests that the Proposed Amendment CH 11.3 be deleted.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The content of the submissions is noted.</p> <p>It should be noted that the Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPR) within the Interim Guidelines on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate Change issued under Section 28 states that development plans must indicate how the implementation of the plan will contribute to realising the overall national targets on renewable energy and climate change mitigation and, in particular, wind energy production and the potential wind energy resource in megawatts.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the forthcoming Development Plan Guidelines, will provide further guidance in this area and the Plan should reflect a commitment to take any steps considered necessary to align with the approach to climate action recommended in the guidelines over the lifetime of the Plan.</p> <p>It is therefore recommended that the Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment which commits to working with key stakeholders to carry out an assessment of how the implementation of the Plan will contribute to realising overall national targets on renewable energy and climate change, and in particular wind energy production and the potential wind energy resource.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Insert new CPO after CPO 11.8 of the plan as follows;</p>

Work with key stakeholders to carry out an assessment of how the implementation of the Plan will contribute to realising overall national targets on renewable energy and climate change, and in particular wind energy production and the potential wind energy resource.

Chapter 11

Proposed Amendment CH 11.4

Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 11.8 of the plan as follows:

To engage with, as necessary, with the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly's EPSON EU research project (QGasSP) which seeks to identify a robust methodology for quantifying the relative GHG (Greenhouse Gas) impacts of alternative spatial planning policies.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-35.

Summary of Issues: The NWRA supports the proposed amendment and suggests that clarification and information be included in the CDP to identify the policies and alternatives that will be examined and the timeframes for these surveys.

Chief Executive's Response:

The support of the proposed Amendment is noted, as is the suggestion to provide clarification and additional information as to the policies and alternatives to be examined and the timeframe involved.

It should be noted that the Eastern Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) are the lead authority on the his project and as such the identification of specific terms of reference associated with the project are outside the remit of this Plan.

It is considered that Proposed Amendment CH 11.4 contains sufficient level of detail to support this initiative, as envisaged by the CPO.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Insert new CPO after CPO 11.8 of the plan as follows:

To engage with, as necessary, with the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly's EPSON EU research project (QGasSP) which seeks to identify a robust methodology for quantifying the relative GHG impacts of alternative spatial planning policies.

<p>Chapter 11</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 11.5</p>
<p>Proposed Amendment:</p> <p>Insert new CPO after CPO 11.8 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>To support the development of both climate mitigation and climate adaptation initiatives and seek funding for the implementation of these initiatives from available sources including the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment’s Climate Action Fund.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Insert new CPO after CPO 11.8 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>To support the development of both climate mitigation and climate adaptation initiatives and seek funding for the implementation of these initiatives from available sources including the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment’s Climate Action Fund.</p>

Summary Table – Chapter 11

<p>Proposed Amendment CH 11.1 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 11.2 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 11.3 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 11.4 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 11.5 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p>

3.11 Chapter 12 Natural Heritage & Green Infrastructure

Chapter 12 Proposed Amendment CH 12.1
<p>Proposed Amendment:</p> <p>Insert a footnote at the end of both CPO 12.5 and CPO 12.6 of the plan as follows;</p> <p>CPO 12.5: Ensure that no plans, programmes, etc. or projects giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on European Sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans, programmes, etc. or projects).</p> <p>“Footnote: Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be a) no alternative solution available, b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project to proceed; and c) Adequate compensatory measures in place”.</p> <p>CPO 12.6: Ensure that any plan or project that could have a significant adverse impact (either by themselves or in combination with other plans and projects) upon the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 Site or would result in the deterioration of any habitat or any species reliant on that habitat will not be permitted.</p> <p>“Footnote: Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be a) no alternative solution available, b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project to proceed; and c) Adequate compensatory measures in place”.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Insert a footnote at the end of both CPO 12.5 and CPO 12.6 of the plan as follows;</p> <p>CPO 12.5:</p>

Ensure that no plans, programmes, etc. or projects giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on European Sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans, programmes, etc. or projects).

“Footnote: Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be a) no alternative solution available, b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project to proceed; and c) Adequate compensatory measures in place”.

CPO 12.6:

Ensure that any plan or project that could have a significant adverse impact (either by themselves or in combination with other plans and projects) upon the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 Site or would result in the deterioration of any habitat or any species reliant on that habitat will not be permitted.

“Footnote: Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be a) no alternative solution available, b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project to proceed; and c) Adequate compensatory measures in place”.

Chapter 12

Proposed Amendment CH 12.2

Proposed Amendment:

Amend CPO 12.20 of the plan as follows:

Protect and conserve NHAs and pNHAs including NHAs that become designated and notified to the Local Authority during the lifetime of the Plan and seek to develop linkages between designated sites, where feasible and as resources permit.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.

Summary of Issues:

Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.

Chief Executive’s Response:

The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Amend CPO 12.20 of the plan as follows:

Protect and conserve NHAs and pNHAs including NHAs that become designated and notified to the Local Authority during the lifetime of the Plan and seek to develop linkages between designated sites, where feasible and as resources permit.

Chapter 12

Proposed Amendment CH 12.3

Proposed Amendment:

Amend CPO 12.21 of the plan as follows:

Lighting fixtures should provide only the amount of light necessary for personal safety and should be designed so as to avoid creating glare or emitting light above a horizontal plane. Lighting fixtures should have minimum environmental impact and Dark Sky lighting should be considered in the interest of reducing the impact of lighting on wildlife as part of any future planning application, thereby contributing towards the protection of amenity and the protection of light sensitive species such as bats. EUROBATS guidelines should be applied in informing proposed development(s), where relevant.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14, WM-C2-MA-32.

Summary of Issues:

Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.

Chief Executive's Response:

The contents of the submissions supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Amend CPO 12.21 of the plan as follows:

Lighting fixtures should provide only the amount of light necessary for personal safety and should be designed so as to avoid creating glare or emitting light above a horizontal plane. Lighting fixtures should have minimum environmental impact and Dark Sky lighting should be considered in the interest of reducing the impact of lighting on wildlife as part of any future planning application, thereby contributing towards the protection of amenity and the protection of light sensitive species such as bats. EUROBATS guidelines should be applied in informing proposed development(s), where relevant.

Chapter 12

Proposed Amendment CH 12.4

Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 12.21 of the plan as follows:

Require, in special circumstances, that an ‘*Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA)*’ prepared by a suitably qualified and indemnified person be undertaken for a proposed development which may potentially have a significant impact on rare and threatened species.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14, WM-C2-MA-32, WM-C2-MA-35.

Summary of Issues:

WM-C2-MA-14 and WM-C2-MA-35 support the proposed amendment. WM-C2-MA-35 suggests that clarity be given in the CDP on what are special circumstances and details of the indemnification and who is to be indemnified. The Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht recommend that this CPO is reworded in the interests of clarity as follows:

“Require, that an ‘*Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA)*’ prepared by a suitably qualified and indemnified person be undertaken for a proposed development which may potentially have a significant impact on rare and protected species and their habitats.”

Chief Executive’s Response:

The support for this Proposed Amendment is acknowledged and welcomed. The merits of the submission in terms of clarity regarding what ‘special circumstances’ relate to, are acknowledged as is the potential ambiguity this term presents. Accordingly, clarity should be provided that such circumstances relate to instances where protected species are identified in association with a proposal.

Professional Indemnity Insurance provides cover from legally liability to a member of the public following an error or omission in the professional advice or service you have provided your client and as a result have suffered a financial loss. Policy requires that the suitably qualified person preparing the Ecological Impact assessment (EclA) has in place, Professional Indemnity Insurance safeguarding against legal liability.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the above, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed subject to the following minor modification:

Insert new CPO after CPO 12.21 of the plan as follows:

Require, in special circumstances *where protected species/habitats are identified in association with a development proposal*, that an ‘*Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA)*’ prepared by a suitably qualified and

indemnified person be undertaken for a proposed development which may potentially have a significant impact on rare and threatened species.

CHAPTER 12

Proposed Amendment CH 12.5

Proposed Amendment:

Insert new CPO after CPO 12.24 of the plan as follows:

Investigate a protocol in relation to the application of an ecosystems services scoring approach to inform the assessment of planning applications.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14,WM-C2-MA-32.

Summary of Issues:

Submission WM-C2-MA-14 supports the proposed material amendment.

Submission WM-C2-MA-32 recommends that the text of the subject CPO is amended by replacing the word “investigate” with the word “develop”, to ensure that this CPO is correctly aligned with the Core Strategy.

Chief Executive’s Response:

The intent of the submissions are noted.

In this regard the Draft Plan has been prepared in line with the RSES policy objective to ‘promote an Ecosystem Services Approach in the preparation of statutory land use plans’. Details in this regard are set out under Section 2.2 of the Plan.

In terms of assessing planning applications,CE CH 12.2 recommends the following: “Investigate a protocol in relation to the application of an ecosystems services scoring approach to inform the assessment of planning applications”. It is considered that the existing wording sufficiently provides for development of a protocol in recognition of the wider biodiversity value of non-designated sites and as such it is considered that a modification is not necessary in this instance.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed

Insert new CPO after CPO 12.24 of the plan as follows:

Investigate a protocol in relation to the application of an ecosystems services scoring approach to inform the assessment of planning applications.

<p>Chapter 12</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 12.6</p>
<p>Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 12.38 of the plan as follows:</p> <p style="color: green;">Support increases in tree cover in all towns and villages across Westmeath due to air quality, shade, aesthetic and health benefits they provide.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-17.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues: The submission requests to amend CPO 12.38 of the plan to include native hedgerows and where possible, support removal of non-native invasive hedgerows and their replacement with native hedgerow.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The contents of the submission are noted, as is the suggestion to include native species hedgerows.</p> <p>It should be noted that current Plan policy seeks to control and manage the spread of non-native invasive species through the incorporation of appropriate native planning at appropriate locations.</p> <p>The submitted motion is of merit and accordingly it is considered that a policy which supports an increase in native hedgerow species in all towns and villages (the delivery of which should be considered under operational programs) should be included in the plan. The control of invasive species is best considered under policy CPO 12.27.</p> <p>It is recommended that Proposed Amendment CH 10.39 be modified to provide for native hedgerows.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>Having consideration to the above, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment subject to the following modification;</p> <p>Insert new CPO after CPO 12.38 of the plan as follows:</p> <p style="color: green;">Support increases in tree cover <i>and native species hedgerows</i> in all towns and villages across Westmeath due to air quality, shade, aesthetic and health benefits they provide.</p>

<p>Chapter 12</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 12.7</p>
<p>Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 12.40 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Support the development of a plan for the protection and maintenance of public trees in urban areas.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14, WM-C2-MA-17.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues: WM-C2-MA-14 supports the proposed amendment, Submission WM-C2-MA-17 requests to amend new CPO to include native hedgerows.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The support of submission WM-C2-MA-14 is noted and welcomed. Submission WM-C2-MA-17 which requests the inclusion of native hedgerows in Proposed Amendment CH 12.7 is welcomed and supported.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>Having consideration to the above, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment subject to the following modification;</p> <p>Insert new CPO after CPO 12.40 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Support the development of a plan for the protection and maintenance of public trees <i>and public native hedgerows</i> in urban areas.</p>

<p>Chapter 12</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 12.8</p>
<p>Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 12.40 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Require, where necessary, a Tree Management Plan to be submitted as part of new development proposals. Ensure that, where possible, established trees are incorporated into the overall design of new developments and are fully protected during development works in accordance with BS standards.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14, WM-C2-MA-17.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues: WM-C2-MA-14 supports the proposed amendment, Submission WM-C2-MA-17 requests to amend new CPO to also ensure that any trees or native hedging removed to accommodate developments works, be replaced at new locations in the development, and hedging to be strictly native hedging.</p>

Chief Executive’s Response:

The support of submission WM-C2-MA-14 is noted and welcomed. The merits of submission WM-C2-MA-17 are noted. It is considered that policy CPO 12.38 (Protect and preserve existing hedgerows in new developments, particularly species rich roadside and townland boundary hedgerows, and where their removal is necessary during the course of road works or other works seek their replacement with new hedgerows of native species indigenous to the area) already provides for this provision.

In this regard, it is considered that the existing objectives of the Draft Plan are sufficiently robust in terms of protection, preservation and if required replacement of existing hedgerows. Any further objectives in this regard would serve to duplicate existing objectives of the Draft Plan and accordingly, it is recommended that no change is necessary in this instance.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the above, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment:

Insert new CPO after CPO 12.40 of the plan as follows:

Require, where necessary, a Tree Management Plan to be submitted as part of new development proposals. Ensure that, where possible, established trees are incorporated into the overall design of new developments and are fully protected during development works in accordance with BS standards.

Chapter 12

Proposed Amendment CH 12.9

Proposed Amendment:

Insert new CPO after CPO 12.40 of the plan as follows:

Support the preparation of a Tree Planting Policy for the County which promotes biodiversity and indigenous tree planting.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.

Summary of Issues:

Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.

Chief Executive’s Response:

The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment.

Insert new CPO after CPO 12.40 of the plan as follows:

Support the preparation of a Tree Planting Policy for the County which promotes biodiversity and indigenous tree planting.

Chapter 12

Proposed Amendment CH 12.10

Proposed Amendment: Amend Section 12.17 of the plan as follows:

The Council recognises the importance of peatlands as a major natural, archaeological and non-renewable resource **in addition to recognising the important historical traditions and peat management skills associated with cutting turf for domestic use.** In their natural state peatlands act as long-term sinks for atmospheric carbon dioxide. Peatlands are the most important long-term carbon store in the terrestrial biosphere. They sequester and store atmospheric carbon for thousands of years. Given the extent of intact raised bogs in Westmeath, considerable potential exists to use this valuable resource to mitigate against the impacts of climate change.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14, WM-C2-MA-17, WM-C2-MA-28.

Summary of Issues:

WM-C2-MA-14 supports the proposed amendment. Submission WM-C2-MA-17 requests to amend text in Section 12.17 to provide for relatively intact raised bogs. It is noted that Submission WM-C2-MA-28 raises concern regarding the amendment which implies that modern and present peat extraction is equally important as peatlands protection. It is considered that cutting turf cannot be recognised as a valuable activity in the reality of 21st century.

Chief Executive's Response:

The support of submission WM-C2-MA-14 is noted and welcomed. The merits of submission WM-C2-MA-17 to amend text in Proposed Amendment CH 12.10 is also welcomed and supported. It is considered that the intent of the submission statement is to acknowledge turf cutting tradition and not to equate it with protection of the peatlands.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the above, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment subject to the following minor modification:

Amend Section 12.17 of the plan as follows:

The Council recognises the importance of peatlands as a major natural, archaeological and non-renewable resource **in addition to recognising the important historical traditions and peat management skills associated with cutting turf for domestic use.** In their natural state peatlands act as long-term sinks for atmospheric carbon dioxide. Peatlands are the most important long-term carbon store in the terrestrial biosphere. They sequester and store atmospheric carbon for thousands of years.

Given the extent of intact *and relatively intact* raised bogs in Westmeath, considerable potential exists to use this valuable resource to mitigate against the impacts of climate change.

Chapter 12

Proposed Amendment CH 12.11

Proposed Amendment: Amend CPO 12.58 of the plan as follows:

Exercise control of peat extraction, both individually and cumulatively, which would have significant impacts on the environment, *in accordance with legislative provisions, in the interest of protecting and enhancing biodiversity and addressing climate change.*

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14, WM-C2-MA-17.

Summary of Issues: WM-C2-MA-14 supports the proposed amendment, Submission WM-C2-MA-17 requests to amend CPO 12.58 as follows:

Strictly exercise control of peat extraction, both individually and cumulatively, which would have significant impacts on the environment, *in accordance with legislative provisions, in the interest of protecting and enhancing biodiversity and addressing climate change. Seek environmental impact statements from all peat extraction sites, currently open and recently closed and demand restoration/rehabilitation.*

Chief Executive's Response:

The support of submission WM-C2-MA-14 is noted and welcomed. The merits of submission WM-C2-MA-17 are also noted.

The role of the Council in relation to peatlands is to exercise control over peatlands by means of the planning application process. Notwithstanding the material nature of the proposed modification, it is considered that the modification which seeks environmental impact statements from all peat extraction sites, currently open and recently closed and demand restoration/rehabilitation, does not accord with legislative provisions and is outside the remit of the Council.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the above, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed:

Amend CPO 12.58 of the plan as follows:

Exercise control of peat extraction, both individually and cumulatively, which would have significant impacts on the environment, *in accordance with legislative provisions, in the interest of protecting and enhancing biodiversity and addressing climate change.*

Chapter 12
Proposed Amendment CH 12.12
<p>Proposed Amendment:</p> <p>Insert new CPO after CPO 12.65 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Support the implementation of the <i>'National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022'</i> within the County.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.</p>
<p>Chief Executive's Response:</p> <p>The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Insert new CPO after CPO 12.65 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Support the implementation of the <i>'National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022'</i> within the County.</p>

Chapter 12
Proposed Amendment CH 12.13
<p>Proposed Amendment:</p> <p>Amend text in section 12.20 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>A Green Infrastructure Strategy will include provisions for improved access across Westmeath through improved walking and cycling routes, <i>that would include looped walks and cycles both through towns and rural area</i>, whilst also ensuring adequate protection to the existing environment and ecology of the landscape.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.</p>
<p>Chief Executive's Response:</p> <p>The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.</p>

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Amend text in section 12.20 of the plan as follows:

A Green Infrastructure Strategy will include provisions for improved access across Westmeath through improved walking and cycling routes, **that would include looped walks and cycles both through towns and rural area**, whilst also ensuring adequate protection to the existing environment and ecology of the landscape.

Chapter 12

Proposed Amendment CH 12.14

Proposed Amendment:

Amend text in section 12.76 of the plan as follows:

Support the development of implementation plans for greenways throughout the county together with supporting environmental assessments.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.

Summary of Issues:

Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.

Chief Executive's Response:

The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Amend text in section 12.76 of the plan as follows:

Support the development of implementation plans for greenways throughout the county together with supporting environmental assessments.

Chapter 12

Proposed Amendment CH 12.15

Proposed Amendment:

Amend CPO 12.81 of the plan as follows:

Review and protect existing public rights of way for the common good and bring forward proposals for the creation of public rights of way (including access to historical sites and graveyards). Where appropriate, links to established public rights of way in adjoining counties will be identified.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.

Summary of Issues:

Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.

Chief Executive's Response:

The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Amend CPO 12.81 of the plan as follows:

Review and protect existing public rights of way for the common good and bring forward proposals for the creation of public rights of way (including access to historical sites and graveyards). Where appropriate, links to established public rights of way in adjoining counties will be identified.

Summary Table – Chapter 12

Proposed Amendment CH 12.1 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 12.2 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 12.3 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 12.4 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed, subject to minor modifications.

Proposed Amendment CH 12.5 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed..

Proposed Amendment CH 12.6 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed, subject to minor modifications.

Proposed Amendment CH 12.7 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed, subject to minor modifications.

Proposed Amendment CH 12.8 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 12.9 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 12.10 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed, subject to minor modifications.

Proposed Amendment CH 12.11 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 12.12 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 12.13 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 12.14 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 12.15 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

3.12 Chapter 13 Landscape & Lake Amenities

<p>Chapter 13</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 13.1</p>
<p>Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO in section 13.15 of the plan as follows:</p> <p style="color: green;">Any significant, industrial and or infrastructural developments (excluding residential; agricultural buildings; tourism; greenway; cultural; educational or community buildings), which would impact upon Uisneach and or its protected views will not be permitted due to the sensitivity of the site.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14, WM-C2-MA-27, WM-C2-MA-34.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Submission WM-C2-MA-14 supports the propose amendment. The remaining submissions support the inclusion of “Greenway” as an exemption which would impact upon Uisneach and or its protected views, and requests clarity if its definition refers to recreational/tourism track way which provides pedestrian and cycling facilities.</p> <p>In addition, clarity is also sought that the stated exemption namely the reference to residential, agricultural and community buildings, refers to buildings which will be used for either human habitation, animal use or for recreational purposes, respectively</p> <p>Submission WM-C2-MA-34 requests the replacement of the wording “Policy Objective” in association with Proposed Amendment CH 13.1 (new CPO in section 13.15 of the plan), with the wording “strict policy”.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>Submission WM-C2-MA-14 which supports the propose amendment is noted and welcomed as are the merits of the remaining submissions.</p> <p>Section 12.22 of the Draft Plan identifies Greenways as <i>“essentially shared off-road routes designed for cyclists and pedestrians for leisure, recreation, tourism and daily journeys and are reserved exclusively for non-motorised journeys, developed in an integrated manner which enhances both the environment and quality of life of the surrounding area. They provide recreational opportunities for walking, jogging and cycling and can often coincide with river/stream corridors and can promote free passage for wildlife”</i>, which accords with the “Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways, 2018”, prepared by the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport.</p> <p>In terms of clarity, Proposed Amendment CH 13.1 does not provide for any additional exemptions from planning permission which are not otherwise available under the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. Rather this policy objective seeks to safeguard the protected view of Uisneach from any significant, industrial or infrastructural developments.</p>

Regarding the replacement of the wording “Policy Objective”, with the wording “strict policy” in association with Proposed Amendment CH 13.1 it should be noted that Proposed Amendment CH 1.1 states that *“The Draft Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out the Council’s proposed policies and objectives for the development of the County over the Plan period. In this regard the CPO’s listed in the Plan constitute the policies and objectives of the Plan. The Development Plan seeks to develop and improve, in a sustainable manner, the social, economic, environmental and cultural assets of the County”*. As such, no further amendment is considered necessary in this instance save for the inclusion of a footnote clarifying that the CPO in question is a ‘policy’ of the Plan as envisaged under Section 1.1.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the above, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed save for the inclusion of a minor clarification by way of footnote clarifying that the CPO in question is a ‘policy’ of the Plan as envisaged under Section 1.1.

Insert new CPO in section 13.15 of the plan as follows:

Any significant, industrial and or infrastructural developments (excluding residential; agricultural buildings; tourism; greenway; cultural; educational or community buildings), which would impact upon Uisneach and or its protected views will not be permitted due to the sensitivity of the site.

Footnote: CPO constitutes a ‘policy’ of the Plan as envisaged under Section 1.1

Chapter 13

Proposed Amendment CH 13.2

Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 13.33 of the plan as follows:

Promote and enhance the lakes within Westmeath and to develop their natural occurring resources.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14, WM-C2-MA-17.

Summary of Issues: WM-C2-MA-14 supports the proposed amendment, Submission WM-C2-MA-17 requests to amend CPO 13.33 to *“Fund a study into the addition of amenities and leisure use of lakes in Westmeath, with a view to encouraging the use of certain lakes for sporting pursuits such as fishing, and others for leisure, such as watersports, swimming etc”*.

Chief Executive’s Response:

The support of submission WM-C2-MA-14 is noted and welcomed. The contents of submission WM-C2-MA-17 are also noted. It is considered that the Proposed Amendment CH 13.2 adequately address this issue, the implementation of which, is considered to be an operational matter.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the above, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed;

Insert new CPO after CPO 13.33 of the plan as follows:

Promote and enhance the lakes within Westmeath and to develop their natural occurring resources.

Chapter 13

Proposed Amendment CH 13.3

Proposed Amendment:

Amend CPO13.40 of the plan as follows:

Explore options for a lakeside walkway from Meehan Point to Coosan Point, incorporating local features such as Bog Lough *in consultation with the local community*.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.

Summary of Issues:

Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.

Chief Executive’s Response:

The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Amend CPO13.40 of the plan as follows:

Explore options for a lakeside walkway from Meehan Point to Coosan Point, incorporating local features such as Bog Lough *in consultation with the local community*.

Chapter 13
Proposed Amendment CH 13.4
<p>Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 13.53 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Support the use of suitable marginal lands in Council ownership for community projects such as neighbourwood schemes and biodiversity projects.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14, WM-C2-MA-35.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues: Both submissions support the amendment. In addition, the NWRA suggest that a schedule showing the marginal lands be included with the CDP and it may be of benefit to confirm that support for community projects will not be withheld should they not be located on marginal lands.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The support of the submission for the amendment are acknowledged and welcomed. The policy specifically refers to development of community projects and the making available of marginal lands within the councils’ ownership, for such projects. It does not in any way diminish support for such projects in other circumstances. Given the strategic scope of the Development Plan covering a 6 year period, and the changing nature of landownership associated with Council lands, it is not considered appropriate to include a maps of such lands as part of the Plan.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>Having consideration to the above, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed:</p> <p>Insert new CPO after CPO 13.53 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Support the use of suitable marginal lands in Council ownership for community projects such as neighbourwood schemes and biodiversity projects.</p>

Chapter 13
Proposed Amendment CH 13.5
<p>Proposed Amendment:</p> <p>Amend CPO 13.76 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Consider the establishment of walking routes along the northern shore of the lake, to link with Collinstown Village, Harte’s Rock, Fore and Coillte lands, consistent with Habitat Management Plan objectives for the area.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.</p>

<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Amend CPO 13.76 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Consider the establishment of walking routes along the northern shore of the lake, to link with Collinstown Village, Harte’s Rock, Fore and Coillte lands, consistent with Habitat Management Plan objectives for the area.</p>

<p>Chapter 13</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 13.6</p>
<p>Proposed Amendment:</p> <p>Amend text under section 13.26 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Pre-planning discussions with the Planning Authority are essential to agree suitable assessment points for views of strategic and local significance in order to enable the proper visual assessment of a development proposal, <i>in accordance with “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment (Third Edition) (GLVIA3)”</i>.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-7, WM-C2-MA-14, WM-C2-MA-34.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Support for the proposed amendment is expressed in the submissions received. Request to clarify that both landscape and visual assessment is a requirement of CPO 13.11.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The contents of the submissions welcoming the inclusion of amendment are noted. The CE has already committed to both landscape and visual assessment with regard to CPO 13.11, in the interest of clarity it is recommended to amend CPO 13.11 accordingly.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>It is recommended that the Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment subject to the following minor modifications.</p>

Amend text under section 13.26 of the plan as follows:

Pre-planning discussions with the Planning Authority are essential to agree suitable assessment points for views of strategic and local significance in order to enable the proper visual assessment of a development proposal, *in accordance with “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment (Third Edition) (GLVIA3)”*.

Amend CPO 13.11 of the plan as follows:

Require a *Landscape and* Visual Impact Assessment for proposed developments with the potential to impact on significant landscape features within the County.

Summary Table – Chapter 13

Proposed Amendment CH 13.1 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed, subject to minor modifications.

Proposed Amendment CH 13.2 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 13.3 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 13.4 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 13.5 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 13.6 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed, subject to minor modifications.

3.13 Chapter 14 Cultural Heritage

<p>Chapter 14</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 14.1</p>
<p>Proposed Amendment:</p> <p>Insert new CPO after CPO 14.9 of the plan as follows;</p> <p>Extensions to archaeologically significant burial grounds will only be permitted, in the event the extension would not constitute a proven risk to archaeological heritage, by means of a direct impact on archaeological features.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.</p>
<p>Chief Executive's Response:</p> <p>The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Insert new CPO after CPO 14.9 of the plan as follows;</p> <p>Extensions to archaeologically significant burial grounds will only be permitted, in the event the extension would not constitute a proven risk to archaeological heritage, by means of a direct impact on archaeological features.</p>

<p>Chapter 14</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 14.2</p>
<p>Proposed Amendment:</p> <p>Insert new CPO after CPO 14.13 of the plan as follows;</p> <p>Ensure that all proposed development affecting disturbance to peatlands is subject to archaeological monitoring, in consultation with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.</p>

<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Insert new CPO after CPO 14.13 of the plan as follows;</p> <p>Ensure that all proposed development affecting disturbance to peatlands is subject to archaeological monitoring, in consultation with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority.</p>

<p>Chapter 14</p> <p>Proposed Amendment CH 14.3</p>
<p>Proposed Amendment:</p> <p>Insert new CPO under Section 14.6 of the plan as follows;</p> <p>To support initiatives to identify architectural heritage that may be under threat due to climate change or neglect and progress measures and, where possible, support the protection of at risk architectural heritage.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Insert new CPO under Section 14.6 of the plan as follows;</p> <p>To support initiatives to identify architectural heritage that may be under threat due to climate change or neglect and progress measures and, where possible, support the protection of at risk architectural heritage.</p>

Chapter 14
Proposed Amendment CH 14.4
<p>Proposed Amendment:</p> <p>Amend heading under Section 14.7 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Architectural Heritage and Protected Structures Policy Objectives.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.</p> <p>Amend heading under Section 14.7 of the plan as follows:</p> <p>Architectural Heritage and Protected Structures Policy Objectives.</p>

Chapter 14
Proposed Amendment CH 14.5
<p>Proposed Amendment:</p> <p>Insert new CPO after CPO 14.49 of the plan as follows;</p> <p>Undertake a review of historic designed landscapes, demesnes and gardens within the County.</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p>

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Insert new CPO after CPO 14.49 of the plan as follows;

Undertake a review of historic designed landscapes, demesnes and gardens within the County.

Chapter 14

Proposed Amendment CH 14.6

Proposed Amendment: Insert new CPO after CPO 14.52 of the plan as follows;

Encourage the conservation of industrial heritage, in particular the equipment, machinery and techniques developed by Bord na Móna and support the development of an industrial heritage museum, interpretative centre or education centre at a suitable location in the County.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-14, WM-C2-MA-17.

Summary of Issues: WM-C2-MA-14 supports the proposed amendment, Submission WM-C2-MA-17 requests to amend CPO 14.52 to add the following *“Re-open the possibility of locating a National Transport Museum to Mullingar, to include industrial heritage associated with peatlands (trains etc) to it. Lands are still available at Mullingar Railway Station”*.

Chief Executive’s Response:

The above submissions are noted.

It is a stated objective of the Plan as set out at CPO 2.5, to Prepare a Local Area Plan (LAP) for Mullingar, following the completion of the County Development Plan process. Specific matters relating to Mullingar can be considered as part of the LAP review process.

Accordingly, it is considered that the the provision of a transport Museum in Mullingar can be considered as part of the LAP review process and is considered outside of the remit of the Plan.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the above, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed;

Insert new CPO after CPO 14.52 of the plan as follows;

Encourage the conservation of industrial heritage, in particular the equipment, machinery and techniques developed by Bord na Móna and support the development of an industrial heritage museum, interpretative centre or education centre at a suitable location in the County.

Summary Table – Chapter 14

Proposed Amendment CH 14.1 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 14.2 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 14.3 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 14.4 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 14.5 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 14.6 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

3.14 Chapter 15 Land Use Zoning

Chapter 15 does not contain any material amendments to the Draft Plan.

3.15 Chapter 16 Development Management Standards

Chapter 16					
Proposed Amendment CH 16.2					
Proposed Amendment:					
Amend Table 16.2 of the Plan as follows.					
Land Use	Unit	Countywide		Designated Town Centre Area	
		Min.	Max. Space /Unit	Min.	Max. Space/Unit
Residential	Dwelling	1.00		1.00	1.00
Visitor Parking for Residential	1 visitor space for every three dwellings	1.00		1.00	1.00
Shopping	100m ² gross floor area	6.00		3.00	3.00
Retail Warehousing	100m ² gross floor area	3.00		3.00	3.00
Cash & Carry	100m ² gross floor area	2.00		2.00	2.00
Manufacturing	100m ² gross floor area	2.00		1.00	1.00
Warehousing	100m ² gross floor area	1.50		1.50	1.50
Office	100m ² gross floor area	3.00		1.50	1.50
Bank/Financial Institutions	100m ² gross floor area	5.00		1.00	1.00
Bar, function room	100m ² gross floor area	6.00		1.00	1.00
Restaurant	100m ² gross floor area	6.00		1.00	1.00
Take-away	Unit	5.00		1.00	1.00
Hotel/ Guest House	Bedroom	1.00		0.50	0.50
Hospital	Bed	0.33		0.10	0.10
Nursing Home	Bed	0.33		0.10	0.10

Clinics and Group Medical Practices	Consulting room	3.00	1.50
Sports Hall/Club	100m ² gross floor area/ plus each court	2.00	⊖ 1.00
Cinema, theatre, Stadium auditorium	Per 4 seats	1.00	1.00

Table 16.2 Car Parking Standards.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-9.

Summary of Issues:

Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.

Chief Executive's Response:

The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Amend Table 16.2 of the Plan as follows.

Land Use	Unit	Countywide		Designated Town Centre Area	
		Min.	Max. Space /Unit	Min.	Max. Space/Unit
Residential	Dwelling		1.00		⊖ 1.00
Visitor Parking for Residential	1 visitor space for every three dwellings		1.00		⊖ 1.00
Shopping	100m ² gross floor area		6.00		3.00
Retail Warehousing	100m ² gross floor area		3.00		3.00
Cash & Carry	100m ² gross floor area		2.00		2.00
Manufacturing	100m ² gross floor area		2.00		1.00
Warehousing	100m ² gross floor area		1.50		1.50
Office	100m ² gross floor area		3.00		1.50
Bank/Financial Institutions	100m ² gross floor area		5.00		⊖ 1.00

Bar, function room	100m ² gross floor area	6.00	⊖ 1.00
Restaurant	100m ² gross floor area	6.00	⊖ 1.00
Take-away	Unit	5.00	⊖ 1.00
Hotel/ Guest House	Bedroom	1.00	0.50
Hospital	Bed	0.33	0.10
Nursing Home	Bed	0.33	0.10
Clinics and Group Medical Practices	Consulting room	3.00	1.50
Sports Hall/Club	100m ² gross floor area/ plus each court	2.00	⊖ 1.00
Cinema, theatre, Stadium auditorium	Per 4 seats	1.00	1.00

Table 16.2 Car Parking Standards.

Chapter 16

Proposed Amendment CH 16.3

Proposed Amendment:

Insert new CPO'S after CPO 16.24 of the plan as follows:

New development proposals should be fully permeable for walking and cycling and the retrospective implementation of walking and cycling facilities should be undertaken where practicable in existing neighbourhoods, in order to a give competitive advantage to these modes for local trip making.

Where possible, new residential developments should provide for filtered permeability, i.e. provide for walking, cycling, public transport and private vehicle access while restricting or discouraging private car through trips.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-9.

Summary of Issues:

Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.

Chief Executive's Response:

The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Insert new CPO'S after CPO 16.24 of the plan as follows:

New development proposals should be fully permeable for walking and cycling and the retrospective implementation of walking and cycling facilities should be undertaken where practicable in existing neighbourhoods, in order to a give competitive advantage to these modes for local trip making.

Where possible, new residential developments should provide for filtered permeability, i.e. provide for walking, cycling, public transport and private vehicle access while restricting or discouraging private car through trips.

Chapter 16

Proposed Amendment CH 16.5

Proposed Amendment:

Amend CPO 16.36 of the plan as follows:

Assess all planning applications for development having regard to the cycling storage requirements set out under Table 16.3 below, **which are considered to be a minimum requirement.**

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-9.

Summary of Issues:

Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.

Chief Executive's Response:

The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Amend CPO 16.36 of the plan as follows:

Assess all planning applications for development having regard to the cycling storage requirements set out under Table 16.3 below, **which are considered to be a minimum requirement.**

Chapter 16

Proposed Amendment CH 16.7

Proposed Amendment:

Amend CPO 16.43 of the plan as follows:

Education Facilities

The location and provision of schools and other educational facilities are an integral part of the evolution of compact sustainable urban development and the development of sustainable communities, both in an urban and rural context. In this regard, the Council seeks to undertake planned approach to education provision and the location of new school facilities within settlements and with access to public transport and active travel modes, where feasible.

In assessing planning applications for educational facilities, the following considerations will be taken into account:

Compliance with the *'Guidelines on The Provision of Schools and the Planning System – A Code of Practice'* (2008).

The need for school accommodation.

Justification for proposed site location

Details on accessibility, including pedestrian, cycle and public transport provisions and linkages to the proposed development. *In this regard, schools should be located in such a manner as to maximise the number of pupils who will live within walking and cycling distance, connected by a safe and continuous network serving these modes. The design of school facilities should prioritise accessibility by non-car modes and encourage reduced use of the private car.*

Adequate and safe set-down and collection areas to facilitate peak traffic movements and adequate car parking for staff.

Mobility Management Plan for the proposal having regard to the National Transport Authority publication *'Workplace Travel Plans: A Guide for Implementers and the Toolkit for School Travel'*.

Adequate play area(s) for pupils

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-9.

Summary of Issues:

Submission expresses support for the proposed amendment.

Chief Executive's Response:

The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of amendment are noted and welcomed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Amend CPO 16.43 of the plan as follows:

Education Facilities

The location and provision of schools and other educational facilities are an integral part of the evolution of compact sustainable urban development and the development of sustainable communities, both in an urban and rural context. In this regard, the Council seeks to undertake planned approach to education provision and the location of new school facilities within settlements and with access to public transport and active travel modes, where feasible.

In assessing planning applications for educational facilities, the following considerations will be taken into account:

Compliance with the *'Guidelines on The Provision of Schools and the Planning System – A Code of Practice'* (2008).

The need for school accommodation.

Justification for proposed site location

Details on accessibility, including pedestrian, cycle and public transport provisions and linkages to the proposed development. **In this regard, schools should be located in such a manner as to maximise the number of pupils who will live within walking and cycling distance, connected by a safe and continuous network serving these modes. The design of school facilities should prioritise accessibility by non-car modes and encourage reduced use of the private car.**

Adequate and safe set-down and collection areas to facilitate peak traffic movements and adequate car parking for staff.

Mobility Management Plan for the proposal having regard to the National Transport Authority publication *'Workplace Travel Plans: A Guide for Implementers and the Toolkit for School Travel'*.

Adequate play area(s) for pupils

Summary Table – Chapter 16

Proposed Amendment CH 16.2 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 16.3 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 16.5 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment CH 16.7 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.



Appendix 5

Proposed Amendment APDX 5.1

Proposed Amendment:

Insert new view after Viewpoint Number 35 of the plan as follows:

Hill of Uisneach Panoramic View

Picture of View	Viewpoint Name	Location & Description	Significance
	Views of surrounding countryside from atop the Hill of Uisneach (St. Patrick's Bed)	This is a panoramic view of the surrounding countryside from the summit (St. Patrick's Bed) of the Hill of Uisneach. The surrounding areas of woodlands and forestry are important features of this view.	Regional
	Views of surrounding countryside from atop the Hill of Uisneach (St. Patrick's Bed)	This is a panoramic view of the surrounding countryside from the summit (St. Patrick's Bed) of the Hill of Uisneach. The surrounding areas of woodlands and forestry are important features of this view.	Regional

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-7, WM-C2-MA-27, WM-C2-MA-34.

Summary of Issues:

Submissions acknowledge that Uisneach is now designated as a High Amenity area and seeks confirmation that the panoramic views from the summit of Uisneach is contained within the Schedule of Protected Views in Appendix 5 of the Development Plan.

Chief Executive's Response:

The contents of the submissions querying the inclusion of the "Hill of Uisneach Panoramic View" are noted. Hill of Uisneach panoramic view has been included within the Schedule of Protected Views in Appendix 5 of the Development Plan in accordance with Proposed Amendment APDX 5.1.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the above, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Insert new view after Viewpoint Number 35 of the plan as follows:

Hill of Uisneach Panoramic View

Summary Table –Appendix 5

Proposed Amendment APDX 5.1 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

3.16 Volume 2 Book of Maps

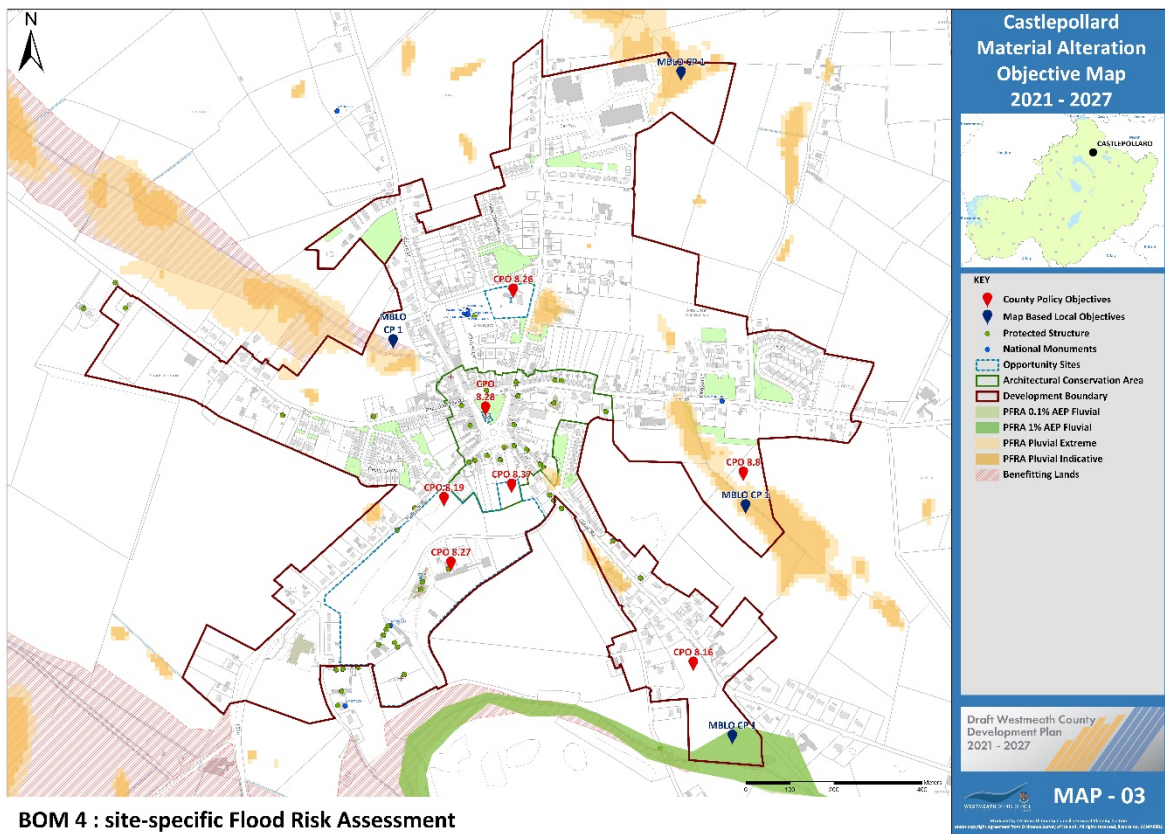
Proposed Amendment BOM 4

Castlepollard Objective 3

Proposed Amendment:

Insert new CPO for Castlepollard under section 8.3.1.6 of the plan as follows:

Development proposals on identified lands shall be accompanied by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) carried out in accordance with the methodology set out in *'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2009'* (See Map 3 MBLO CP 1-4).



Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-6.

Summary of Issues:

It is submitted that the SFRA, Proposed Amendment FR 3, recommends that the Consolidation Site, to the west of Castlepollard, be subject to a Stage 3 detailed flood risk assessment. However, in Proposed Amendment BOM 4 this site is not marked with a Map Based Objective on Map-03, which identifies developments requiring a FRA.

Chief Executive's Response:

The submission is noted and welcomed. It is considered that Map 03 should be updated by way of clarification to show a map based local objective for a site specific flood risk assessment on the Consolidation site, which is the subject of BOM 2.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed subject to minor map amendment as above.

Proposed Amendment BOM 10

Kinnegad Objective 7

Proposed Amendment:

Insert new CPO for Kinnegad under section 8.3.3.7 of the plan as follows:

Development proposals on identified lands shall be accompanied by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) carried out in accordance with the methodology set out in 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2009' (See Map 7 MBLO KG 3).

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-6.

Summary of Issues:

In accordance with the recommendations of the Justification Test undertaken for a commercial zoned site to the south of Kinnegad, it is noted that Proposed Amendment BOM 10 is not marked with a Map Based Objective on Map-03, which identifies developments requiring a FRA.

Chief Executive's Response:

The submission is noted and welcomed. It is considered that Map 07 should be updated by way of clarification to show a map based local objective in relation to the requirement for a site specific flood risk assessment on the subject lands.

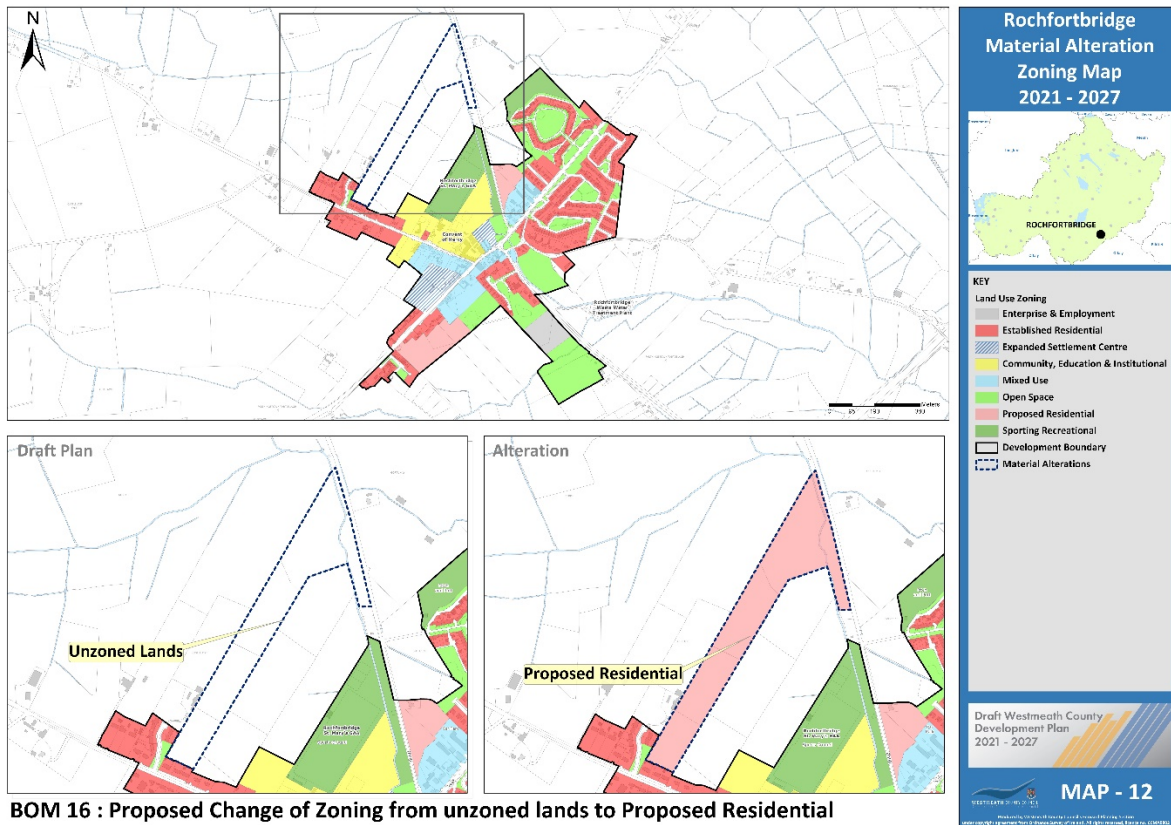
Chief Executive Recommendation:

Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed subject to minor map amendment as above.

Proposed Amendment BOM 16

Rochfordbridge

Proposed Amendment: Change zoning from unzoned to "Proposed residential"

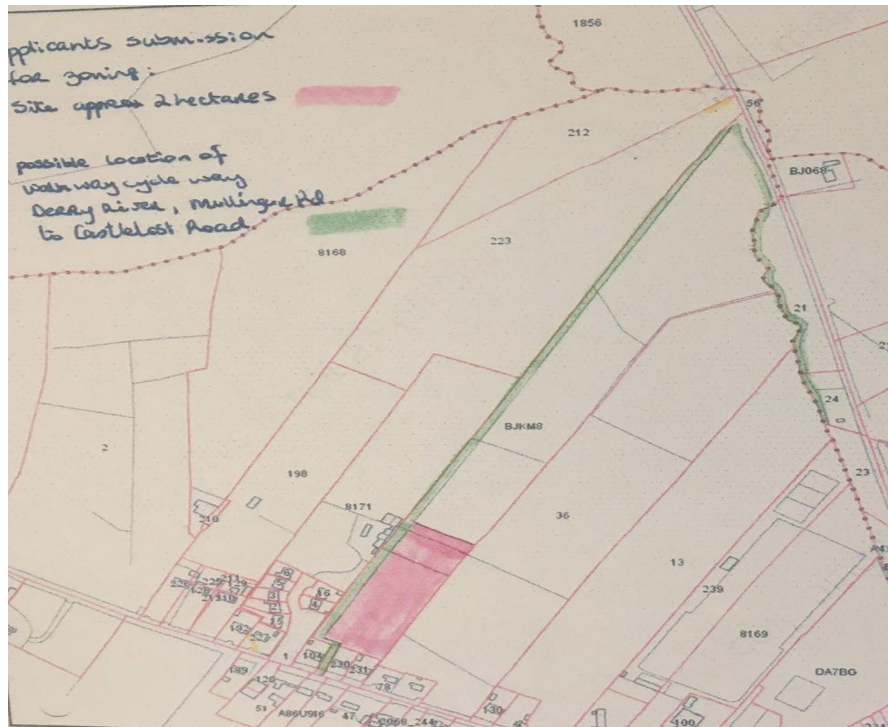


Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-24, WM-C2-MA-26.

Summary of Issues:

Submissions support proposed amendment Ref No. BOM 16. Submission WM-C2-MA-24 informs that lands are not affected by the arterial drainage scheme and are not "benefitting lands" and are not prone to flooding.

Submission WM-C2-MA-26 highlights a digital mapping error which zoned all lands within the landholding as opposed to a 2-hectare plot, identified within the original submission and located on the southern portion of the said lands as illustrated on Map 1.



Map 1

Chief Executive's Response:

The support for this Proposed Amendment is noted.

In response to Proposed Material Amendment BOM 16, it is noted that the Draft Plan provides an evidence-based rationale for the extent of lands zoned for residential purposes in Rochfortbridge. Rochfortbridge is defined as a 'Self Sustaining Town' in the Core Strategy. Such towns are considered 'towns with a low level of jobs and services and are characteristically commuter towns with good transport links and capacity for continued commensurate growth to become more self-sustaining'. It is considered that there are sufficient lands zoned in this settlement, to cater for the population and housing provision during this Plan period.

Furthermore, the amount and location of zoned lands required was also guided by the NPF and RSES requirements to promote consolidation of existing settlements and more compact forms of growth. As such, it is an objective of the Draft Plan, in line with national and regional policy, to facilitate infill and brownfield development within the existing built footprint of urban settlements. This greenfield land removed from the established settlement boundary does not provide for brownfield or the sequential development of the town and in this regard, it is not considered that the lands, in this instance, fulfil this objective.

The SEA report considers that zoning the subject lands would be premature and would not wholly align with objectives relating to sustainable development.

Having regard to the above, it is considered that there is no evidence-based need or planning rationale for the proposed additional residential zoning to be included as part of the Plan at this time.

The addition of these lands would result in a housing and population growth that would be considered unsustainable over the lifetime of this plan and it is therefore recommended that the lands not be zoned for residential purposes as part of the Plan.

Notwithstanding the above, it is considered that an Amendment to the extent of the zoning associated with the Proposed Amendment, would, at this stage, constitute a modification which is not minor in nature and accordingly, it is recommended that the Plan be made without the proposed Amendment as displayed.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

See CE Recommendation in response to OPR Material Amendment BOM 16.

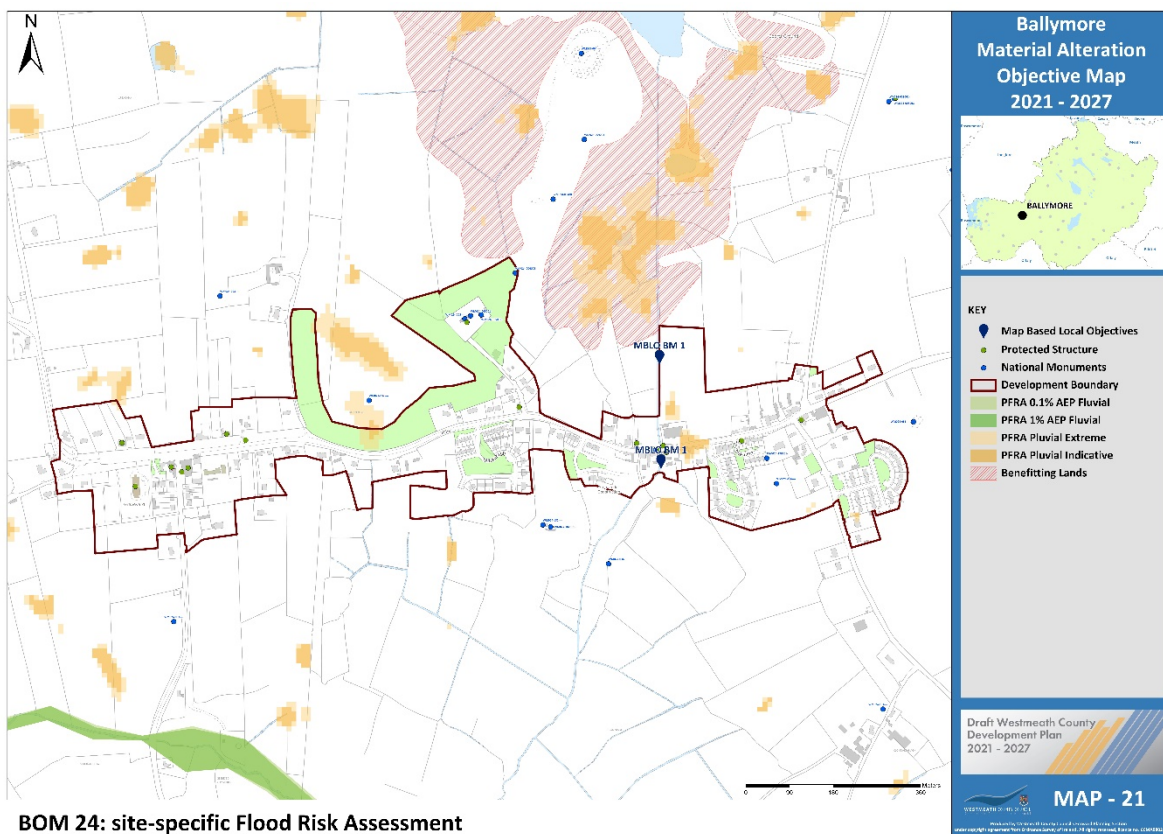
It is recommended that the Plan be made without Material Amendment BOM 16.

Proposed Amendment BOM 24

Ballymore

Insert new policy objective for Ballymore under section 8.6.2 of the plan as follows:

Development proposals on identified lands shall be accompanied by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) carried out in accordance with the methodology set out in *'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2009'* (See Map 21 MBLO BM 1).



Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-6.

Summary of Issues:

It is stated that Map based local objective MBLO BM 1 shown on Map 21 should be located on the community, education and institutional site in Ballymore and that the site should be subject to a Stage 3 detailed flood risk assessment.

Chief Executive's Response:

The submission is noted and welcomed. It is noted that map based objective MBLO BM1 is indicated on the map along the site boundary of Ballymore and the position of same should be moved to within the site boundary on lands zoned for community, education and institutional use. Map based objective MBLO BM1 is subject to a site specific flood risk assessment.

Recommendation:

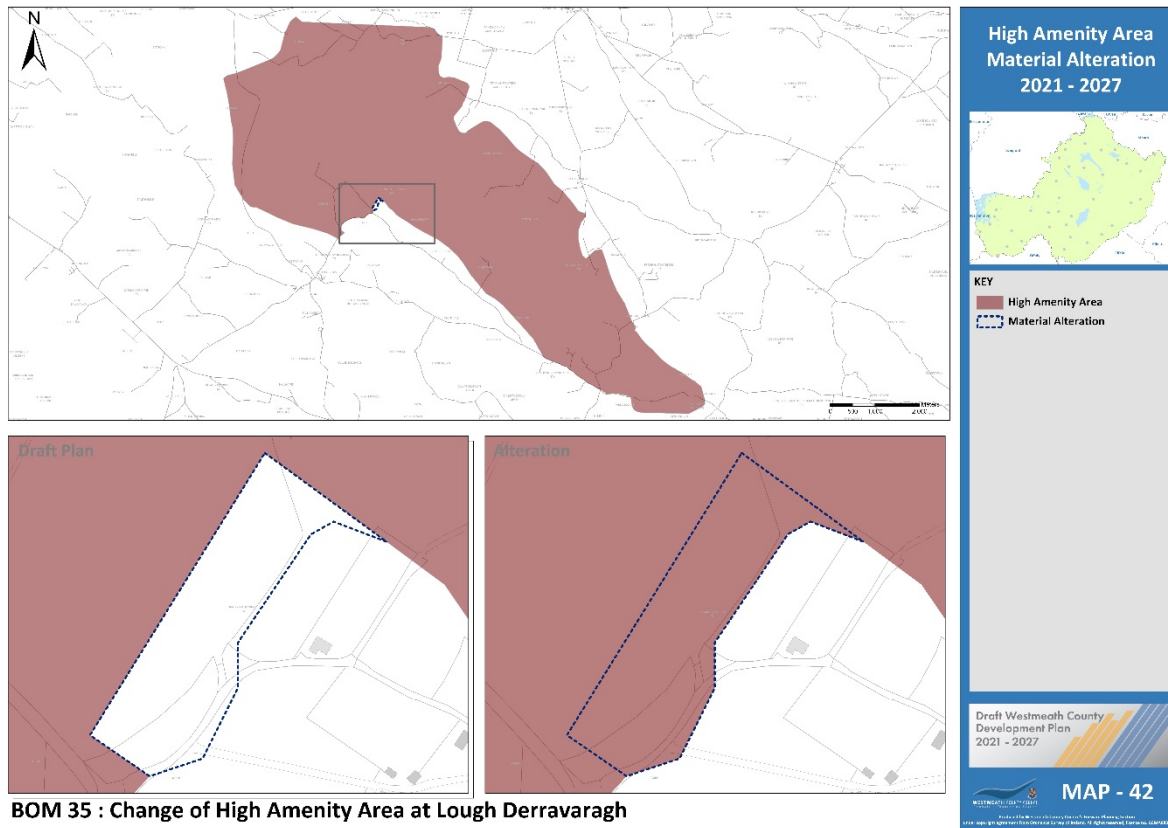
Having consideration to the foregoing, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed subject to minor map modification.

Proposed Amendment BOM 35

High Amenity Area

Proposed Amendment:

Include previously omitted lands as part of Lough Derravaragh High Amenity Area.



Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-33.

Summary of Issues:

The submission notes that the Planning Authority resolved not to comply with the Chief Executive's recommendation in relation to designated high amenity areas. It is requested that the content of EMRA's submission on the Draft Plan in relation to High Amenity Areas is taken into consideration by the Planning Authority in advance of finalizing the plan.

Chief Executive's Response:

The Planning Authority acknowledge the value of Lough Derravaragh as a highly significant asset, both environmentally and culturally as well as being an important sustainable tourism resource. The high scenic quality and recreational and amenity value of the lake is also recognised as an important asset

for the County. In this regard it is a policy to promote, in association with Fáilte Ireland, the sustainable tourism potential of Areas of High Amenity centered around the Lakelands and to provide for the continued expansion of the tourism sector, capitalising on our natural and cultural heritage assets, whilst safeguarding these resources for future generations. The areas immediately adjacent to the High Amenity area are, likewise, also sensitive landscapes as development in these areas proximate may affect directly or indirectly the quality and integrity of the High Amenity areas.

It is considered that the proposed deletions to the north and east of Lough Derravaragh HAA as provided for in the Draft Plan, would dilute the level of protection afforded to the lake, with the potential to result in adverse effects upon the factors for which this landscape area has been designated. Furthermore, the piecemeal erosion of this important High Amenity designation will reduce the protection of the overall landscape and undermine the long-term integrity of this important asset, which is designated as a High Amenity Area, Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area reflecting its significant environmental status.

Notwithstanding this, given the limited scope to introduce further modifications of a minor nature, it is considered that the reinstatement of the High Amenity designations affecting the Lough Derravaragh High Amenity Area, would constitute a Material Amendment that is not minor in nature and in relation to which, if made, the public would not be afforded the opportunity to make a submission or comment, and as such it is recommended that the Plan be made with Proposed Amendment BOM 34 and Proposed Amendment BOM 35 and that no further material amendments be made at this time.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Reference CE Recommendation in response to OPR High Amenity Areas

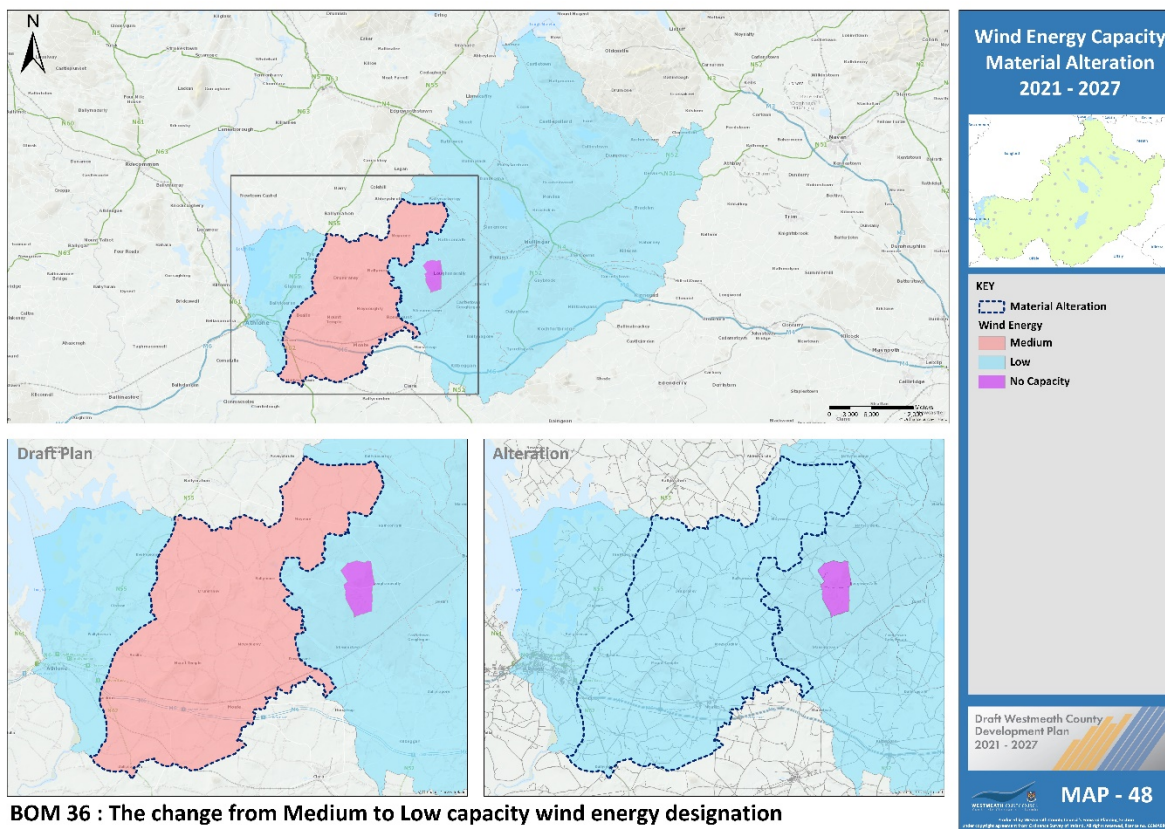
It is recommended that the Plan be made with Material Amendment BOM 34.

It is recommended that the Plan be made with Material Amendment BOM 35).

Proposed Amendment BOM 36

Proposed Amendment:

Designate Area 7 as Low wind energy capacity.



Area 7 identified in orange and classified as medium capacity.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-7, WM-C2-MA-27.

Summary of Issues:

Support for the proposed amendment is expressed in these submissions.

Chief Executive’s Response:

The contents of the submissions welcoming the inclusion of Proposed Amendment BOM 36 are noted.

The Wind Energy Capacity Map was generated using the landscape character assessment together with wind speed data provided by SEAI. In terms of the request for a change of the classification of Area 7 from “medium capacity” to “low capacity” for wind energy development, it is considered that such an amendment is not justified given the landscape character of the area in question.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

See CE Recommendation in response to OPR BOM 36

It is recommended that the Plan be made without the proposed Material Amendment BOM 36.

Summary Table – Volume 2 Book of Maps

Proposed Amendment BOM 4 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed, subject to a minor map modification.

Proposed Amendment BOM 10 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed, subject to a minor map modification.

Proposed Amendment BOM 16 be made without the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment BOM 24 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed, subject to minor map modification.

Proposed Amendment BOM 35 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed (See OPR Recommendation).

Proposed Amendment BOM 36 be made without the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

3.16 Volumes 3-5 SEA, AA & SFRA

<p>Volume 4</p> <p>Proposed Amendment NIR 1</p> <p>Changes of Indicators of Conservation Value</p>
<p>Proposed Amendment:</p> <p>Replace Existing Text at Footnote 19 as follows:</p> <p>Seek to manage any increase in visitor numbers in order to avoid significant effects including loss of habitat and disturbance, including ensuring that new any projects, such as greenways, are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities, such as riparian zones.</p> <p>Seek to avoid significant effects on European Sites that might occur as a result of increases in visitor numbers. This will be done by, for example, ensuring that any new projects, such as greenways, are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities, such as riparian zones</p>
<p>Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-32.</p>
<p>Summary of Issues:</p> <p>Acknowledgement of inclusion of amended Footnote 19 in Volume 4 of the Plan.</p> <p>Seek to avoid significant effects on European Sites that might occur as a result of increases in visitor numbers. This will be done by, for example, ensuring that any new projects, such as greenways, are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities, such as riparian zones.</p>
<p>Chief Executive’s Response:</p> <p>The contents of the submission supporting the inclusion of the amendment are noted and welcomed.</p>
<p>Chief Executive Recommendation:</p> <p>It is recommended that the Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed (It is recommended that the Plan be made with Material Amendment BOM 35).</p> <p>Replace Existing Text at Footnote 19 in Volume 4 of the Plan as follows:</p> <p>Seek to avoid significant effects on European Sites that might occur as a result of increases in visitor numbers. This will be done by, for example, ensuring that any new projects, such as greenways, are a suitable distance from ecological sensitivities, such as riparian zones.</p>

Insert additional detail in relation to available flood risk datasets in Table 4.1 of the SFRA as follows:

Description	Coverage	Robustness	Comments on usefulness
Eastern CFRAM Study	<p>Areas for further assessment (AFAs), or settlements falling along modelled lengths, in County Westmeath are:</p> <p>Kilbeggan;</p> <p>(Athlone & Mullingar are not being considered under the WMCDP)</p> <p>Other settlements that are not AFAs but have CFRAM output (Medium Priority Watercourse) are:</p> <p>Ballinagore (no zoning), Glasson,</p>	<p>Flood Zones and flood extents for current and future scenarios provided by OPW.</p> <p>Modelling is 'best available' and outputs will allow informed decisions on zoning objectives. Design water levels will inform decisions relating to raising land and setting finished floor levels.</p>	<p>Very useful but undertaken at a catchment level. In general, CFRAM provides all information needed to apply the Justification Test (JT) for Plan Making under the SFRA.</p> <p>Site specific FRAs will still be required for planning applications, but information on water levels can form the basis of decision in relation to finished floor levels. However, it is important to note that CFRAM outputs should not be relied upon without review and consideration of appropriateness to the site in question, particularly for Medium Priority Watercourses (MPW).</p>
<p>OPW Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) flood maps – Fluvial</p> <p>Used as County Development Plan Flood Map (2015-2021)</p>	<p>The PFRA was a national screening exercise that was undertaken by OPW to identify areas at potential risk of flooding. Fluvial, coastal, pluvial and groundwater risks were identified at an indicative scale.</p> <p>Based on the on the PFRA, no verification or adjustment of this data.</p>	Moderate/Low	<p>Covers nearly all rivers (including non-CFRAM) previously used for development of base Flood Zones for SFRA.</p> <p>For purposes of SFRA and at Development Management level these cannot be used to make zoning decisions without validation through site visits. Further site investigation may be needed has been undertaken to provide greater confidence in the outlines and inform the land use zoning decisions.</p>
Historical event outlines and point observations	Various, taken from www.floodmaps.ie	Indicative	<p>Used indirectly to validate flood zones and identify non-fluvial flooding in the SFRA.</p> <p>Useful background</p>

Description	Coverage	Robustness	Comments on usefulness
and reports			information for site specific FRAs, but note the database is not exhaustive, absence of a record does not necessarily mean absence of flood risk.
Arterial Drainage Benefitting land maps	Show land which would (or have) benefitted from a drainage scheme. This is not based on a 'design flood' (i.e. the events do not have a return period), but indicate low-lying, poorly drained land. It is not the same as lands which are protected by a flood relief scheme and these are not representative of fluvial Flood Zones.	Low	Superseded by the data sources listed above, although may be used to cross-check Flood Zones but Benefitting Lands maps are used in a tiered approach where it is the best available dataset and it is then verified on site. Limited benefit to site specific FRAs. Given that many of the rivers in Westmeath have been subject to Arterial Drainage by OPW the benefitting lands maps are most likely to be an overestimation of risk.
Flood relief schemes	There are no completed OPW Flood Relief Schemes that are in place within County Westmeath. Athlone Flood Relief Scheme is in construction. Kilbeggan has some OPW embankments but these are part of an arterial drainage scheme and as such provide an agricultural standard of protection.	n/a	n/a
Site Specific FRAs	Settlement or sub-settlement – used in Kilbeggan, Kinnegad, Milltownpass.	Moderate	Helpful for additional verification of PFRA and/or Benefitting Lands mapping.
Site Visits	Castlepollard, Collinstown, Kilbeggan, Kinnegad, Milltownpass, Moate & Rochfortbridge,	Moderate	Site visits used to verify flood extents where there were potential conflicts with predicted flood extent and undeveloped land uses with highly or less vulnerable land use zoning objectives.

Insert clarification regarding use of flood map data:

4.1 Flood Zone Development

~~As set out in the RSES Regional Flood Risk Appraisal Report, and under the Planning Guidelines, the Flood Zone mapping for the County is principally derived from the CFRAM where possible. However, most settlements in the WMCDP are not covered by the CFRAM and in this case a range of other datasets, as shown in Table 4.2 were used as supplementary information to inform this SFRA.~~

~~Due to recent guidance from OPW regarding the use of the first generation PFRA mapping and the indicative nature of the flood extents, the approach used under the Westmeath SFRA has been precautionary. All sources of available flood mapping were reviewed in cases where proposed undeveloped lands are zoned for highly or less vulnerable use (where CFRAM was not available). As such, a single dataset of County Flood Zones has not been prepared, but in each settlement specific guidance is provided based on the data review and a JBA site visit.~~

~~When the second generation PFRA mapping is issued to Local Authorities the data will be used in conjunction with the other available datasets and site visits to provide a countywide Flood Zone dataset, subject to further verification.~~

~~The review of the suite of flood risk data has been developed as a spatial planning tool to guide WMCC in making land use zoning and development management decisions and it is recognised that site specific information may contradict the Flood Zones, either to demonstrate a greater or lesser level of flood risk. However, the data has been deemed appropriate for the planning decisions being made at this stage of the plan making process.~~

~~In general, where CFRAM modelling has been carried out, flood levels are available at selected node points along the watercourse. Once an appropriate level of validation has been undertaken as part of the site specific FRA, these flood levels may be used to form the basis of the development design.~~

As set out in the RSES Regional Flood Risk Appraisal Report, and under the Planning Guidelines, the Flood Zone mapping for the County is principally derived from the CFRAM where possible. However, most settlements in the WMCDP are not covered by the CFRAM and in this case a range of other datasets, as shown in Table 0 2, were used as supplementary information to inform this SFRA.

Due to recent guidance from OPW regarding the use of the first generation PFRA mapping and the indicative nature of the flood extents, the approach used under the Westmeath SFRA has been precautionary. All sources of available flood mapping were reviewed in cases where proposed undeveloped lands are zoned for highly or less vulnerable use (where CFRAM was not available). As such, a single dataset of County Flood Zones has not been prepared, but in each settlement specific guidance is provided based on the data review and a JBA site visit. During the site visit the flood mapping was appraised on site by an experienced flood risk manager and professional opinion and judgement has been used to develop the recommendations within the Settlement Review of Section 8.

The review of the suite of flood risk data has been developed as a spatial planning tool to guide WMCC in making land-use zoning and development management decisions. The data sets have been deemed appropriate for the planning decisions being made at this stage of the plan making process and where flood risk is identified the following approach has been undertaken;

- Application of the Justification Test and/or;
- Further detailed analysis, or;

- Rezoning to a less vulnerable use, or;
- Further assessment at Development Management stage in limited circumstances where it has been determined that development should be possible in principle, taking into account a site specific opinion.

When the National Indicative Flood Mapping (NIFM) is issued to Local Authorities the data will be used in conjunction with the other available datasets and site visits to provide a countywide Flood Zone dataset, subject to further verification.

In general, where CFRAM modelling has been carried out, flood levels are available at selected node points along the watercourse. Once an appropriate level of validation has been undertaken as part of the site-specific FRA, these flood levels may be used to form the basis of the development design.

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-6.			
Summary of Issues:			
The submission notes the use of indicative PFRA mapping as recent guidance from the OPW. It is advised that cautions and limitations around the use of indicative PFRA mapping have been set out in DECLG Circular PL 2/2014.			
Chief Executive's Response:			
The content of the submission is noted and the limitations of this dataset are acknowledged and set out under Section 4.1 of the SFRA.			
Recommendation:			
Having consideration to the foregoing, It is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.			
Insert additional detail in relation to available flood risk datasets in Table 4.1 of the SFRA as follows:			
Description	Coverage	Robustness	Comments on usefulness
Eastern CFRAM Study	Areas for further assessment (AFAs), or settlements falling along modelled lengths, in County Westmeath are: Kilbeggan; (Athlone & Mullingar are not being considered under the WMCDP) Other settlements that are not AFAs but have CFRAM output (Medium Priority Watercourse) are:	Flood Zones and flood extents for current and future scenarios provided by OPW. Modelling is 'best available' and outputs will allow informed decisions on zoning objectives. Design water levels will inform decisions relating to raising land and setting finished	Very useful but undertaken at a catchment level. In general, CFRAM provides all information needed to apply the Justification Test (JT) for Plan Making under the SFRA. Site specific FRAs will still be required for planning applications, but information on water levels can form the basis of decision in relation to

	Ballinagore (no zoning), Glasson,	floor levels.	finished floor levels. However, it is important to note that CFRAM outputs should not be relied upon without review and consideration of appropriateness to the site in question, particularly for Medium Priority Watercourses (MPW).
OPW Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) flood maps – Fluvial Used as County Development Plan Flood Map (2015-2021)	The PFRA was a national screening exercise that was undertaken by OPW to identify areas at potential risk of flooding. Fluvial, coastal, pluvial and groundwater risks were identified at an indicative scale. Based on the on the PFRA, no verification or adjustment of this data.	Moderate/Low	Covers nearly all rivers (including non-CFRAM) previously used for development of base Flood Zones for SFRA. For purposes of SFRA and at Development Management level these cannot be used to make zoning decisions without validation through site visits. Further site investigation may be needed has been undertaken to provide greater confidence in the outlines and inform the land use zoning decisions.
Historical event outlines and point observations and reports	Various, taken from www.floodmaps.ie	Indicative	Used indirectly to validate flood zones and identify non-fluvial flooding in the SFRA. Useful background information for site specific FRAs, but note the database is not exhaustive, absence of a record does not necessarily mean absence of flood risk.
Arterial Drainage Benefitting land maps	Show land which would (or have) benefitted from a drainage scheme. This is not based on a 'design flood' (i.e. the events do not have a return period), but indicate low-lying, poorly drained land. It is not the same as lands which are protected by a flood relief scheme and these are not representative of fluvial Flood Zones.	Low	Superseded by the data sources listed above, although may be used to cross check Flood Zones but Benefitting Lands maps are used in a tiered approach where it is the best available dataset and it is then verified on site. Limited benefit to site specific FRAs. Given that many of the rivers in Westmeath have been

			subject to Arterial Drainage by OPW the benefitting lands maps are most likely to be an overestimation of risk.
Flood relief schemes	There are no completed OPW Flood Relief Schemes that are in place within County Westmeath. Athlone Flood Relief Scheme is in construction. Kilbeggan has some OPW embankments but these are part of an arterial drainage scheme and as such provide an agricultural standard of protection.	n/a	n/a
Site Specific FRAs	Settlement or sub-settlement – used in Kilbeggan, Kinnegad, Milltownpass.	Moderate	Helpful for additional verification of PFRA and/or Benefitting Lands mapping.
Site Visits	Castlepollard, Collinstown, Kilbeggan, Kinnegad, Milltownpass, Moate & Rochfortbridge,	Moderate	Site visits used to verify flood extents where there were potential conflicts with predicted flood extent and undeveloped land uses with highly or less vulnerable land use zoning objectives.

Insert clarification regarding use of flood map data:

4.1 Flood Zone Development

~~As set out in the RSES Regional Flood Risk Appraisal Report, and under the Planning Guidelines, the Flood Zone mapping for the County is principally derived from the CFRAM where possible. However, most settlements in the WMCDP are not covered by the CFRAM and in this case a range of other datasets, as shown in Table 4.2 were used as supplementary information to inform this SFRA.~~

~~Due to recent guidance from OPW regarding the use of the first generation PFRA mapping and the indicative nature of the flood extents, the approach used under the Westmeath SFRA has been precautionary. All sources of available flood mapping were reviewed in cases where proposed undeveloped lands are zoned for highly or less vulnerable use (where CFRAM was not available). As such, a single dataset of County Flood Zones has not been prepared, but in each settlement specific guidance is provided based on the data review and a JBA site visit.~~

~~When the second generation PFRA mapping is issued to Local Authorities the data will be used in conjunction with the other available datasets and site visits to provide a countywide Flood Zone dataset, subject to further verification.~~

~~The review of the suite of flood risk data has been developed as a spatial planning tool to guide WMCC in making land-use zoning and development management decisions and it is recognised that site specific information may contradict the Flood Zones, either to demonstrate a greater or lesser level of flood risk. However, the data has been deemed appropriate for the planning decisions being made at this stage of the plan making process.~~

~~In general, where CFRAM modelling has been carried out, flood levels are available at selected node points along the watercourse. Once an appropriate level of validation has been undertaken as part of the site specific FRA, these flood levels may be used to form the basis of the development design.~~

As set out in the RSES Regional Flood Risk Appraisal Report, and under the Planning Guidelines, the Flood Zone mapping for the County is principally derived from the CFRAM where possible. However, most settlements in the WMCDP are not covered by the CFRAM and in this case a range of other datasets, as shown in Table 0 2, were used as supplementary information to inform this SFRA.

Due to recent guidance from OPW regarding the use of the first generation PFRA mapping and the indicative nature of the flood extents, the approach used under the Westmeath SFRA has been precautionary. All sources of available flood mapping were reviewed in cases where proposed undeveloped lands are zoned for highly or less vulnerable use (where CFRAM was not available). As such, a single dataset of County Flood Zones has not been prepared, but in each settlement specific guidance is provided based on the data review and a JBA site visit. During the site visit the flood mapping was appraised on site by an experienced flood risk manager and professional opinion and judgement has been used to develop the recommendations within the Settlement Review of Section 8.

The review of the suite of flood risk data has been developed as a spatial planning tool to guide WMCC in making land-use zoning and development management decisions. The data sets have been deemed appropriate for the planning decisions being made at this stage of the plan making process and where flood risk is identified the following approach has been undertaken;

Application of the Justification Test and/or;

Further detailed analysis, or;

Rezoning to a less vulnerable use, or;

Further assessment at Development Management stage in limited circumstances where it has been determined that development should be possible in principle, taking into account a site specific opinion.

When the National Indicative Flood Mapping (NIFM) is issued to Local Authorities the data will be used in conjunction with the other available datasets and site visits to provide a countywide Flood Zone dataset, subject to further verification.

In general, where CFRAM modelling has been carried out, flood levels are available at selected node points along the watercourse. Once an appropriate level of validation has been undertaken as part of the site-specific FRA, these flood levels may be used to form the basis of the development design.

Summary Table – Volume 3-5 SEA, AA & SFRA

Proposed Amendment NIR 1 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment FR 2 be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed.

Proposed Amendment FR 3 Addendum be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed, subject to minor map modifications.

**Volume 5 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
Proposed Amendment FR 3 Addendum
Ballymore, Castlepollard, Rochfortbridge**

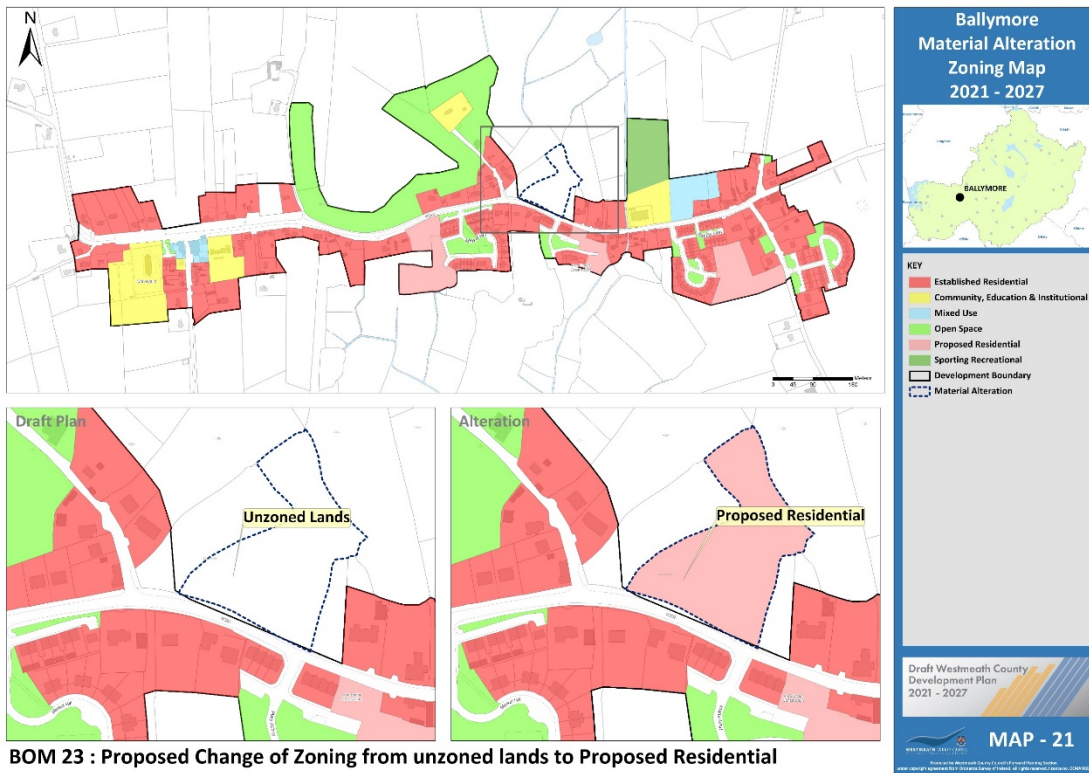
Proposed Amendment: Proposed Amendment FR 3 Addendum
Ballymore, Castlepollard, Rochfortbridge

Submissions Received: WM-C2-MA-6.

Summary of Issues:

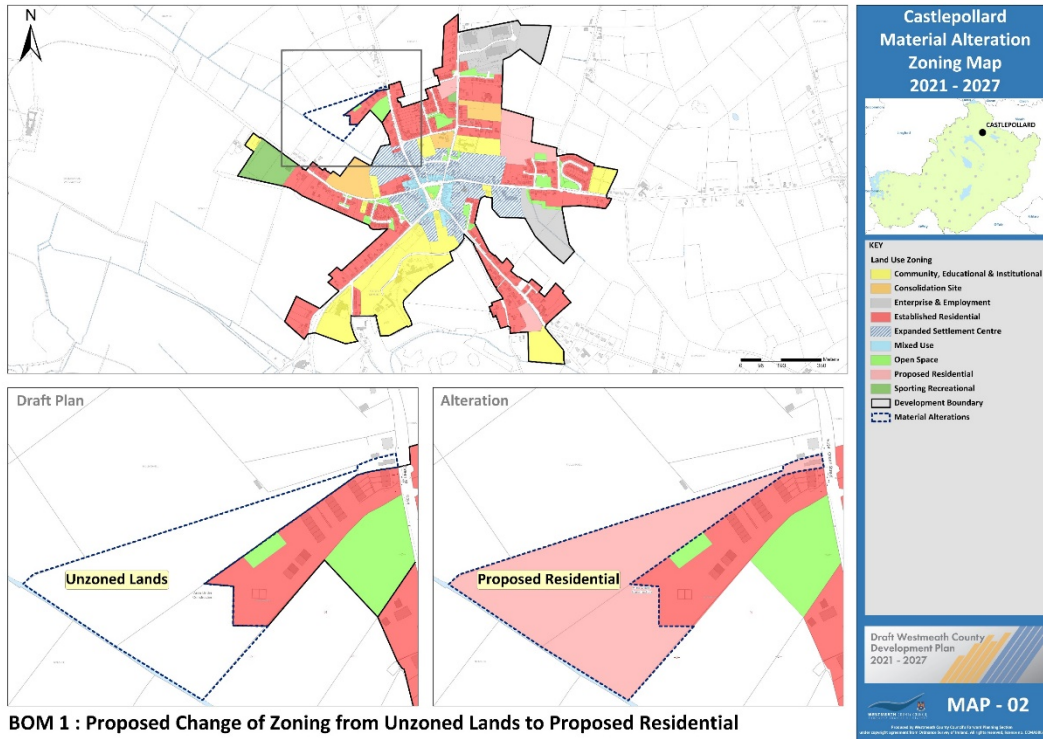
Ballymore

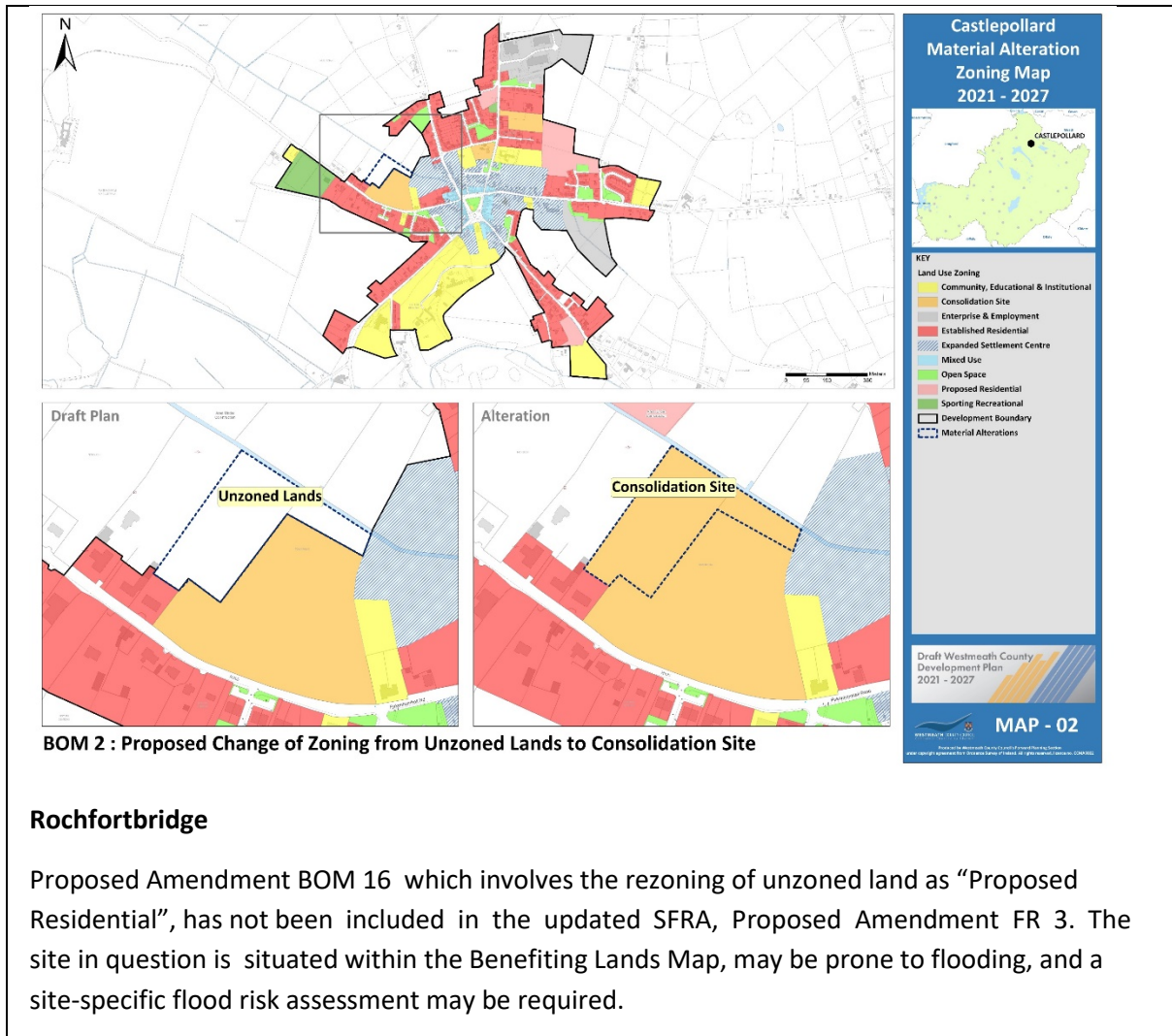
With regard to Proposed Amendment BOM 23, it is stated that the rezoning of unzoned land as “Proposed Residential” in Ballymore has not been included in the updated SFRA in Proposed Material FR 3.



Castlepollard

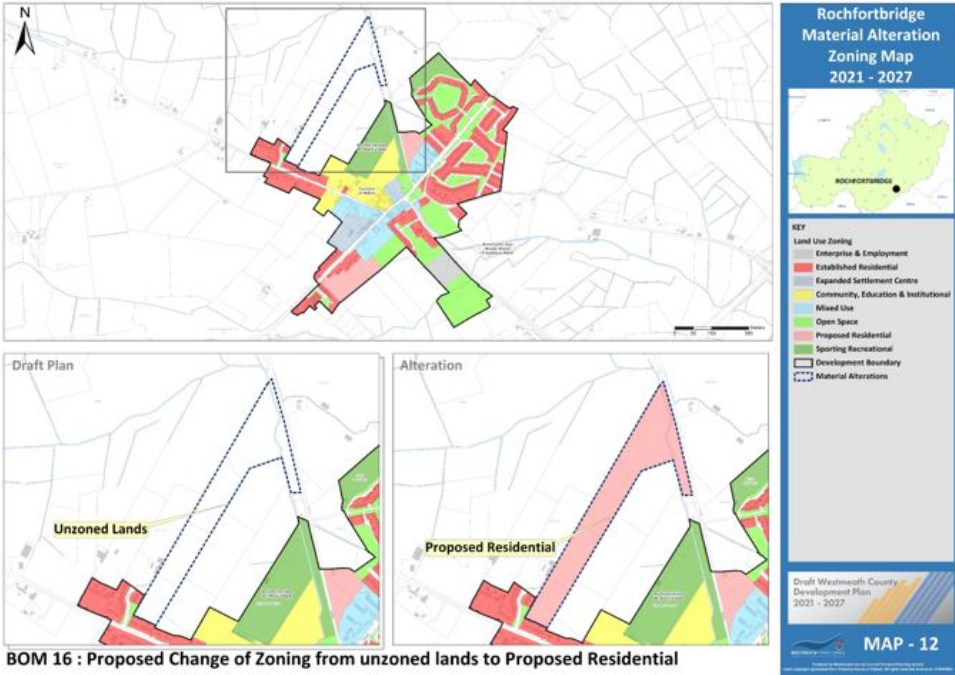
With regard to Proposed Amendments BOM 1 and 2, the rezoning of lands to “Proposed Residential” and “Consolidation Site” have not been included in Proposed Amendment FR 3.





Rochfortbridge

Proposed Amendment BOM 16 which involves the rezoning of unzoned land as “Proposed Residential”, has not been included in the updated SFRA, Proposed Amendment FR 3. The site in question is situated within the Benefiting Lands Map, may be prone to flooding, and a site-specific flood risk assessment may be required.



Rochfortbridge Material Alteration Zoning Map 2021 - 2027

KEY

- Land Use Zoning
- Enterprise & Employment
- Established Residential
- Expanded Settlement Centre
- Community, Education & Institutional
- Mixed Use
- Open Space
- Proposed Residential
- Spurring Recreational
- Development Boundary
- Material Alterations

BOM 16 : Proposed Change of Zoning from unzoned lands to Proposed Residential

MAP - 12

Draft Westmeath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027

Chief Executive's Response:

Ballymore

The submission is noted and welcomed. The subject site was assessed in relation to flood risk and it was concluded that the site is outside PFRA 0.1% AEP flood extents. Notwithstanding, in the interests of completeness, FR 3 should be updated to include the subject site and reflect its flooding status.

Castlepollard

The submission is noted and welcomed. The subject lands were assessed in relation to flood risk and it was concluded that with regard to BOM 1, the southern fringe of the lands is at potential flood risk and Part 3 of the Justification Test is likely to reveal that a significant proportion of the land is within Flood Zone C. BOM 2 is lower lying and contains flood extents from both the PFRA and Benefitting Lands mapping which indicates potentially high probability of flooding. As such, the chances of a positive result under Part 3 of the Justification Test is unlikely.

Rochfortbridge

The submission is noted and welcomed. The subject site was assessed in relation to flood risk and it was concluded that a significant part of the site extends within Benefitting Lands and/or PFRA flood and as such would require detailed assessment of flood risk.

Chief Executive Recommendation:

Ballymore

Having consideration to the foregoing and in the interests of clarity, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed (i.e. the accompanying Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) mapping to be updated to include the flooding status associated with site which is the subject of BOM 23).

See CE Recommendation in response to OPR Material Amendment BOM 23.

It is recommended that the Plan be made without Material Amendment BOM 23.

Castlepollard

BOM 1

Having consideration to the foregoing and in the interests of clarity, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed (i.e. the accompanying Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) mapping to be updated to include the flooding status associated with the site which is the subject of BOM 1).

See CE Recommendation in response to OPR Material Amendment BOM 1.

It is recommended that the Plan be made without Material Amendment BOM 1.

BOM 2

Having consideration to the foregoing and in the interests of clarity, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed (i.e. update the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to reference 'Having regard to available flood data which indicates potentially high probability of flooding at site BOM 2, it has been determined that the subject site would not meet the requirements of the Justification Test as prescribed in the "Planning System & Flood Risk Management Guidelines", would contravene said guidelines and accordingly should not be zoned.

It is recommended that the Plan be made without Material Amendment BOM 2.

Rochfortbridge

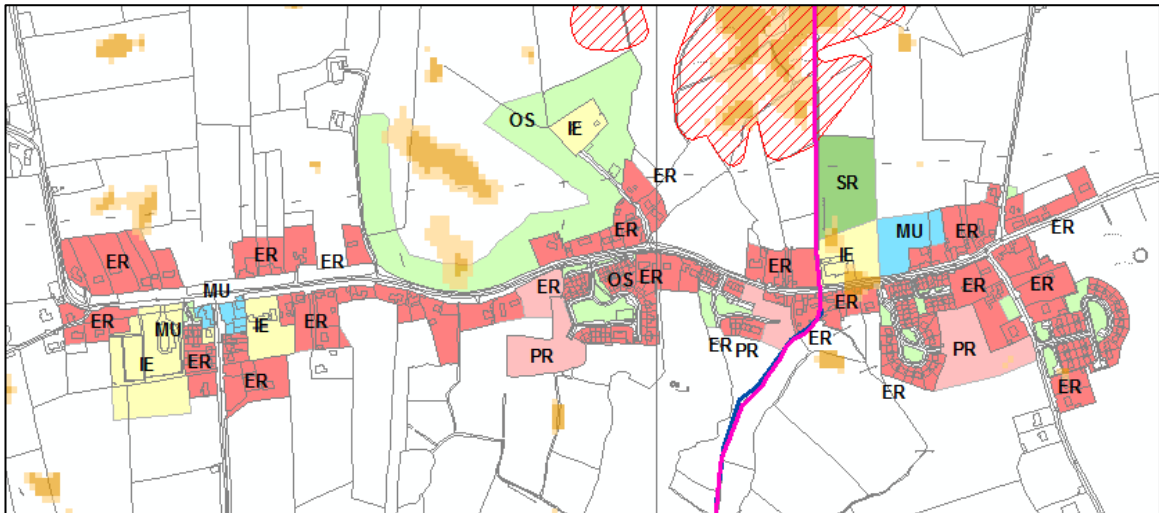
Having consideration to the foregoing and in the interests of clarity, it is recommended that the Development Plan be made with the proposed Material Amendment as displayed (i.e. the accompanying Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) mapping be updated to include the site which is the subject of BOM 16 and its flooding status).

See CE Recommendation in response to OPR Material Amendment BOM 16.

It is recommended that the Plan be made without Material Amendment BOM 16.

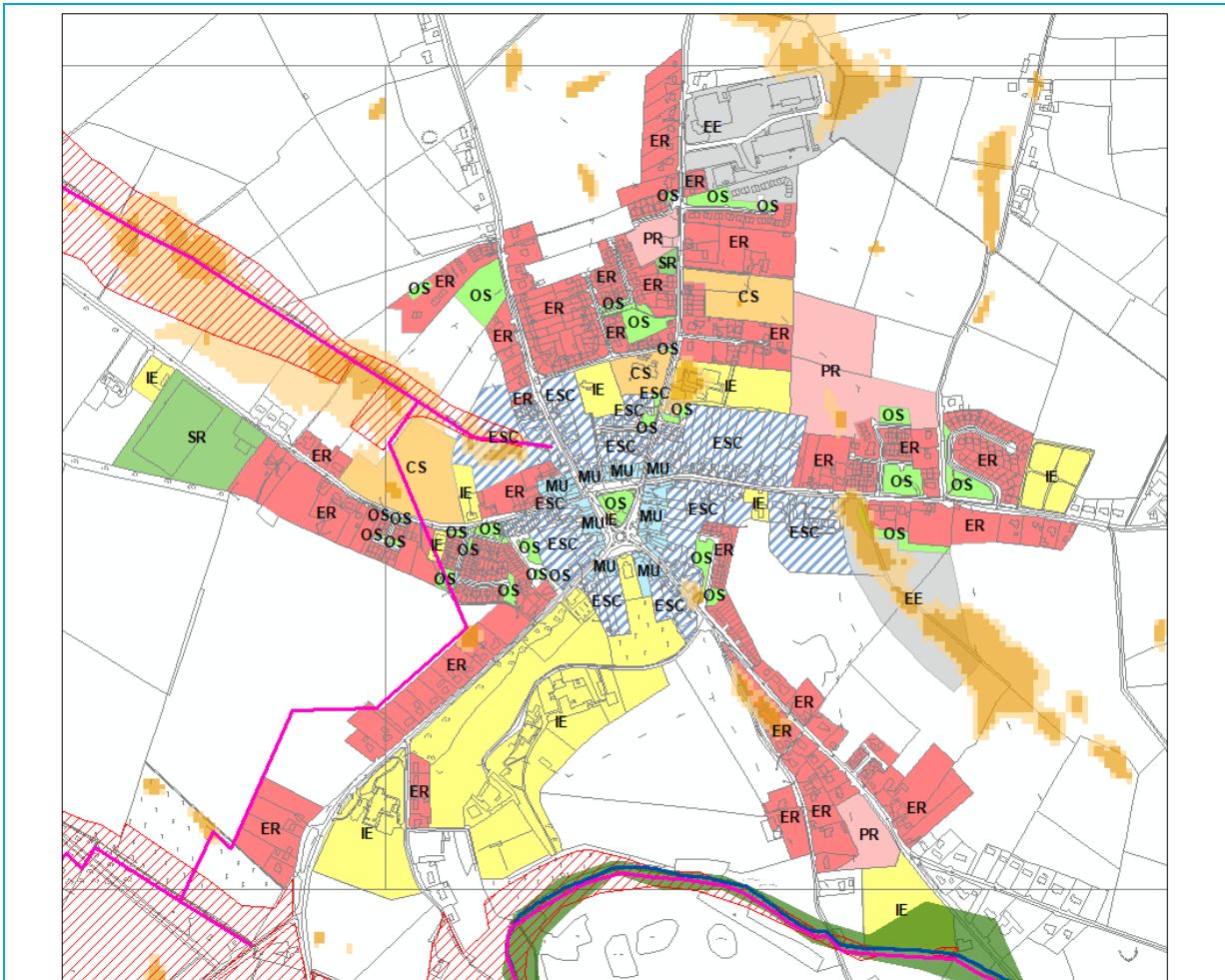
The following zoning changes as provided for under the Material alterations to the Draft Plan relating to Ballymore, Castlepollard and Rochfortbridge and their implications regarding the SFRA are discussed below.

Section 8.4 Ballymore

Hierarchy/Tier	Rural (Served) Tier 6
Area for Further Assessment under CFRAM programme?	No
	
<p>© Reproduced under copyright agreement from Ordnance Survey of Ireland. All rights reserved, licence no. CCMA9802</p> <p>The flood mapping has been produced in accordance with the Planning Guidelines and therefore ignores the impact of flood protection structures. Areas protected by flood defences still carry a residual risk of flooding due to overtopping or breach, there may also be no guarantee of maintenance in perpetuity. Areas that benefit from defences are annotated separately.</p>	
Flood Zone Data	OPW PFRA PLUVIAL BENEFITTING LANDS (taken to represent Flood Zone A/B best available dataset)
Historic Flooding	None found
Comment	Predicted flood risk from the Benefitting Lands mapping is low and there are no significant undeveloped zoned lands close to the watercourse. Some small areas of pluvial flooding are noted, but there is no recorded flood history.
Climate Change	No fluvial impacts. Potential fluvial impacts from the OPW drainage channel, potential increase in runoff would increase surface water risk.
Conclusion	The PR & IE lands with a boundary adjacent to the OPW channel should be subject to a Stage 3 detailed FRA at Development Management stage and in accordance with CPO 10.101 the OPW should be consulted regarding the development free riparian strip. The FRA must be in accordance with the guidance provided within the SFRA section on Development Management & Flood Risk. Risk is not significant. Any extensions/redevelopment should be managed in line with approved WMCDP Policy and the guidance provided within the SFRA section on Development Management & Flood Risk.

Section 8.5 Castlepollard

Hierarchy/Tier	Self-Sustaining Growth Town Tier 3
Area for Further Assessment under CFRAM programme?	No



© Reproduced under copyright agreement from Ordnance Survey of Ireland. All rights reserved, licence no. CCMA9802.

The flood mapping has been produced in accordance with the Planning Guidelines and therefore ignores the impact of flood protection structures. Areas protected by flood defences still carry a residual risk of flooding due to overtopping or breach, there may also be no guarantee of maintenance in perpetuity. Areas that benefit from defences are annotated separately.

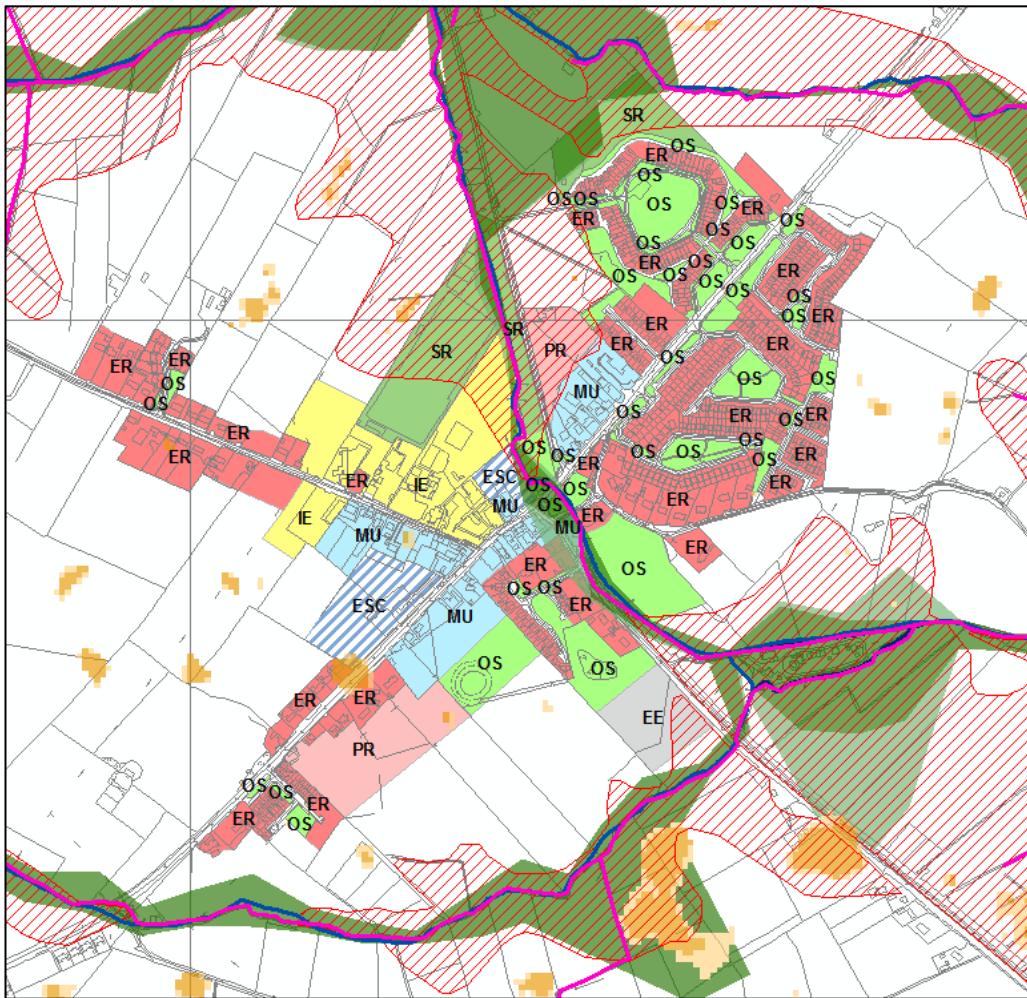
Flood Zone Data	OPW PFRA PLUVIAL + FLUVIAL (southern watercourse only) BENEFITTING LANDS (taken to represent Flood Zone A/B best available dataset)
Historic Flooding	None found
Comment	The principal risk to the settlement is from the Arterial Drainage channel to the west. A site visit confirmed that the watercourse enters a culvert adjacent to the Proposed Residential (PR) zoning and this has a very deep invert (flows to south). The CS zoning does not encroach within Benefitting Lands and the risk from the culverted section of the watercourse is low. Through the length of the culvert under the PR lands the levels gradually rise to the south where it borders the R395 road. Elsewhere in the settlement there are isolated areas of surface water ponding identified by the PFRA.
Climate Change	Potential increase/sensitivity to fluvial and pluvial risk.
Conclusion	Risk is not significant. PR zoning is appropriate in the west of the above settlement but must be subject to FRA at Development Management stage. Pluvial flooding is a potential risk to undeveloped Enterprise & Employment (EE) lands but again, the risk can be managed by appropriately designed stormwater systems to be detailed at Development Management stage. Risk can be managed in line with approved WMCDDP Policy and the guidance provided within the SFRA section on Development Management & Flood Risk. CS zoning is appropriate in the west of the settlement but must be subject to a Stage 3 detailed FRA at Development Management stage. The FRA should be in accordance with approved WMCDDP Policy

and the guidance provided within the SFRA section on Development Management & Flood Risk. Pluvial flooding is a potential risk to undeveloped EE and PR lands in the east of the settlement and the risk must be assessed and managed by an appropriately designed stormwater management system at Development Management stage. The FRA should be in accordance with approved WMCDP Policy.

The IE lands to the south east of the settlement should be subject to a Stage 3 detailed FRA at Development Management stage to clarify the risk from the OPW arterial drainage channel or else only consider water compatible development use. The FRA should be in accordance with approved WMCDP Policy and the guidance provided within the SFRA section on Development Management & Flood Risk.

Section 8.17 Rochfortbridge

Hierarchy/Tier	Self-Sustaining Towns Tier 4
Area for Further Assessment under CFRAM programme?	No



© Reproduced under copyright agreement from Ordnance Survey of Ireland. All rights reserved, licence no. CCMA9802.

The flood mapping has been produced in accordance with the Planning Guidelines and therefore ignores the impact of flood protection structures. Areas protected by flood defences still carry a residual risk of flooding due to overtopping or breach, there may also be no guarantee of maintenance in perpetuity. Areas that benefit from defences are annotated separately.

Flood Zone Data	OPW PFRA Pluvial & Fluvial (taken to represent Flood Zone A/B best available dataset) BENEFITTING LANDS
------------------------	--

Historic Flooding	None found
Comment	The Arterial Drainage channel flows through centre of the town. Extensive Benefitting Lands flood extents are overestimated, and this was confirmed by a site visit. PFRA extents are more representative of risk and should be used as an indicative estimate of Flood Zones. Flood risk predominantly impacts water compatible use except in the centre where there appears to be some risk to existing development ESC, MU & ER. The EE zoning to the south of the settlement has a significant small overlap with the BL mapping, which is likely to be an overestimation.
Climate Change	High fluvial sensitivity. Pluvial flooding is limited in the settlement.
Conclusion	Risk is generally low, but any redevelopment within the ESC, MU & ER adjacent to the watercourse must have an appropriately detailed FRA. EE lands to the south overlap Flood Zone A/B and Stage 3 FRA is required at Development Management stage, Flood Zone A/B should be defined and kept as open space/water compatible use. IE lands also have a border with the watercourse and should apply a riparian border and be subject to an appropriately detailed FRA. Manage flood risk and development in line with approved WMCDP Policy and the guidance provided within the SFRA section on Development Management & Flood Risk. Any development within the ESC, MU, EE & ER adjacent to the watercourse must have an appropriately detailed FRA. IE lands also have a border with the watercourse and should apply a riparian border and be subject to an appropriately detailed FRA in accordance with approved WMCDP Policy and the guidance provided within the SFRA section on Development Management & Flood Risk.

Volume 5 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Proposed Amendment FR 2		
Section:	Heading	Page No.
4	Data Collection and Review	17
4.1	Flood Zone Development	18

4 SEA/AA Screening of the Material Amendments to the Draft Plan

The likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the proposed Material Amendments have been assessed and determinations in accordance with Section 12 (7) (aa) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) prepared in relation to information on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the proposed Material Amendments.

Submission WM-C2-MA-2 from the EPA notes the proposed determination regarding the need for SEA of the Amendments and that SEA is not required for the amendments to the Draft Plan. Reference is made to the guidance document '*SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans – EPA Recommendations and Resources*' which should be considered in the drafting of the SEA Determination together with the amendments to the Draft Plan. It is stated that the Council is required to ensure that the amended plan is consistent with national policy and the key actions and sustainable development goals contained within the EPA publication "Ireland's Environment: An assessment 2020". Reference is also made to a number of EPA websites and GIS Webtools. The submission also provides advice on the content of the SEA Statement which is to accompany the final Plan. It is advised that the Planning Authority consult with a number of Prescribed Environmental Authorities.

Chief Executive's Response & Recommendation

The following documents have been taken into account in undertaking the SEA for the plan and associated proposed material amendments:

- '*SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans – EPA Recommendations and Resources*' guidance document
- Sustainable Development Goals
- Guidance, resource documents and webtools cited

Future modifications to the plan will be examined in compliance with the Regulations. The SEA has been and will continue to be informed by the cited webtool. The above authorities have been consulted with in compliance with the Regulations.

The further modifications recommended by the Chief Executive have been considered by the SEA and AA processes which have advised, taking into account the measures that have been already integrated into the Draft Plan that provide for and contribute towards environmental protection, environmental management and sustainable development, that the further modifications, as recommended:

- Would not be likely to have any significant environmental effect; and
- Would not adversely affect the integrity of a European Site.

SEA and AA documents will be updated at adoption of the Plan to take account of decisions of the Members with regard to the Proposed Material Alterations and any further modifications.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Procedure following consideration of the Chief Executive's Report

In accordance with section 12(10) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 as amended, the Members, having considered the Chief Executive's Report, shall, by resolution, make the plan with or without the proposed amendments, except where a decision is made to accept the amendment subject to any modifications of a minor nature.

The Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 will have effect 6 weeks from the day that it is made.



16 February 2021

Pat Gallagher

Date

Chief Executive

APPENDIX 1: List of written submission by Name & Reference No:

Ref No:	URL:	Name:
WM-C2-MA-1	WM-C2-MA-1	Ciaran Harte
WM-C2-MA-2	WM-C2-MA-2	Environmental Protection Agency
WM-C2-MA-3	WM-C2-MA-3	Department of Environment, Climate and Communications
WM-C2-MA-4	WM-C2-MA-4	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
WM-C2-MA-5	WM-C2-MA-5	Meath County Council Planning Department
WM-C2-MA-6	WM-C2-MA-6	Office of Public Works
WM-C2-MA-7	WM-C2-MA-7	Nora Fagan
WM-C2-MA-8	WM-C2-MA-8	Dara Reid
WM-C2-MA-9	WM-C2-MA-9	NTA
WM-C2-MA-10	WM-C2-MA-10	Department of Transport
WM-C2-MA-11	WM-C2-MA-11	Irish Water
WM-C2-MA-12	WM-C2-MA-12	Department of Education
WM-C2-MA-13	WM-C2-MA-13	Christine Roberts
WM-C2-MA-14	WM-C2-MA-14	Keep Ireland Open
WM-C2-MA-15	WM-C2-MA-15	Mary N Connaughton
WM-C2-MA-16	WM-C2-MA-16	John Reid
WM-C2-MA-17	WM-C2-MA-17	Ronan Casey
WM-C2-MA-18	WM-C2-MA-18	Eugene Kilduff
WM-C2-MA-19	WM-C2-MA-19	Galetech Energy Services
WM-C2-MA-20	WM-C2-MA-20	Catherine Farrell
WM-C2-MA-21	WM-C2-MA-21	Electricity Supply Board
WM-C2-MA-22	WM-C2-MA-22	Irish Peatland Conservation Council
WM-C2-MA-23	WM-C2-MA-23	Vinny McCormack
WM-C2-MA-24	WM-C2-MA-24	Liam Gavin
WM-C2-MA-25	WM-C2-MA-25	Helen O'Brien
WM-C2-MA-26	WM-C2-MA-26	Liam Gavin
WM-C2-MA-27	WM-C2-MA-27	Uisneach Management Limited
WM-C2-MA-28	WM-C2-MA-28	Meath Westmeath Peatlands Heritage Group
WM-C2-MA-29	WM-C2-MA-29	Uisneach Management Limited
WM-C2-MA-30	WM-C2-MA-30	Office of the Planning Regulator
WM-C2-MA-31	WM-C2-MA-31	Gas Networks Ireland
WM-C2-MA-32	WM-C2-MA-32	Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
WM-C2-MA-33	WM-C2-MA-33	Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly
WM-C2-MA-34	WM-C2-MA-34	Andrew Duncan
WM-C2-MA-35	WM-C2-MA-35	NWRA
WM-C2-MA-36	WM-C2-MA-36	Loughnavalley Community Development Association