



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE LAOISE LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL

Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly,
3rd Floor North,
Ballymun Civic Centre,
Main Street,
Ballymun,
Dublin, D09 C8P5

EASTERN & MIDLAND
16 APR 2019
REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Re: Response to the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy Amendments on behalf of Laois County Council

Date: 11th April 2019

A Chara,

I wish to acknowledge the notice given that the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly have proposed material amendments to the draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the period 2019-2031, as required under section 24 (8) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2018. I wish to advise our comments with regard to the amendments as follows.

We support the following amendments as itemized in the document in relation to Portlaoise currently on public display: -

59. New RPO – Portlaoise

Support the vision and objectives of the J17 National Enterprise Park Masterplan which aims to deliver a viable economic zone within Portlaoise which will accommodate a range of potential businesses and industries whilst having regard to spatial planning, infrastructural, environmental and transportation requirements and compatibility with adjoining land uses.

60. New RPO – Portlaoise

Tá Fáilte Romhat
Gnó a Dhéanamh
as Gaeilge



Support the development and expansion of the Midlands Regional Hospital to be a centre of excellence for Portlaoise and its catchment area.

In relation to Graiguecullen , we support the amendments indicated as follows

61. Amend RPO 4.49 – Graiguecullen-Carlow

A cross-boundary Joint Local Area Plan (LAP) shall be prepared for Carlow by Carlow County Council and Laois County Council having regard to its location within the combined functional area of both local authorities. The Joint UAP shall provide a coordinated planning framework to identify and deliver strategic sites and regeneration areas for the future physical, economic and social development of Carlow/**Graiguecullen** to ensure it achieves targeted compact growth of a minimum of 30% and ensure a co-ordinated approach is taken to the future growth and **development of the combined urban area** to ensure that it has the capacity to grow sustainably and secure investment as a **Key Town**. The Joint LAP shall identify a boundary for the plan area and strategic housing and employment development areas and infrastructure investment requirements to promote greater co-ordination and sequential delivery of serviced lands for development. Regard shall be had to the respective housing, retail and other Local Authority strategies that may be in place.

62. New RPO - Graiguecullen-Carlow

Support development of underused lands along the River Barrow.

We request that amendment No 62 be worded as per our original submission as follows

- ***To support development of underused lands along the River Barrow. Any future development of underused lands along the River Barrow will include an assessment of any impacts that may arise on sensitive Natura 2000 habitats;***

We would however ask that the following also be considered

- ***To seek investment in sustainable transport including provision of a Town Bus Service;***
- ***To support delivery of the Southern Relief Road N80 – R448 and other transport measures through a Local Transport Plan;***
- ***To support development of underused lands along the River Barrow. Any future development of underused lands along the River Barrow will include an assessment of any impacts that may arise on sensitive Natura 2000 habitats;***

While we also welcome the amendments relating to the small towns and villages – under Section 4.8. amendments 63-67, we are disappointed that more emphasis has

not be placed on the contribution that small towns and villages make to the rural counties social and economic well being.

We are also disappointed that the following RPO has not been included in Section 7.5 and Section 7.6 relating to the future development of the Slieve Blooms given the good working relationship between Laois County Council, Offaly County Council, Coilte and NPWS and external stakeholders in relation to its future development.

- ***Facilitate cross boundary co-ordination between local authorities and the relevant agencies of the region to provide clear governance arrangements and coordination mechanisms to continue to promote the development of improved visitor experiences and facilities in the Slieve Bloom Mountains.***

We welcome Amendment No 97 which includes "Abbeyleix Bog" under *Bogs and Peatlands* under Table 7.1.

We welcome Amendment 114 to Table 8.4 which includes

- N80 Improvements including inter regional and intra regional accessibility.

The future improvements to the N80 corridor is of uttermost importance to many of the residents of the Towns that lie thereon from a quality of life perspective but also in facilitating the further connectivity of the south and eastern and midland regions.

We request that you consider further the suggested RPO's put forward in January 2019 as part of the previous submission.

If you require any clarification in relation to the matters above please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Mise le Meas



Angela McEvoy
Senior Planner
Laois County Council