

**Members Briefing Note**

Proposed Variation No. 4 of the South Dublin County Council County Development Plan 2016-2022

Alignment of the County Development Plan with the National Planning Framework 2040 (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019 - 2031.

1. **Proposal**

This paper proposes Variation number 4 to the Council Development Plan. The variation takes account of SDCC’s requirement to vary our Plan in light of the recently adopted RSES. The paper sets out the process involved whereby we will commence public consultation in October 2019 with a view to returning the variation to Council for agreement in late 2019.

1. **Introduction:**

Project Ireland 2040; National Planning Framework (‘NPF’) was published on the 16th of February 2018 and sets out a course for planning and development in Ireland. The NPF was adopted on the 29th of May 2018[[1]](#footnote-1) and was further supported by the publication of the Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework (‘Roadmap’) which was published on the 3rd of July 2018. This document confirmed that the NPF was adopted as a strategy to replace the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and advised that the NPF is of direct relevance to the preparation of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) and County Development Plans.

The Roadmap highlights that one of the key reasons Government has put in place the NPF is to shape and coordinate planning, economic and spatial development and infrastructure investment at national, regional and local levels, through RSESs, prepared by the three Regional Assemblies, and City and County Development Plans and Local Area Plans.

The thirty-one City and County Development Plans follow a six-year review cycle, meaning that the planning process in Ireland benefits from frequently reviewed plans. However, due to varying review periods in the past, every local authority has different Development Plan cycles, which means that co-ordination across plan boundaries and throughout the region can be difficult due to the different lifespans applying to different plans in each local authority area.

1. **The Requirement for Alignment**

The RSES for the East Midlands Regional Area was adopted on 3rd May 2019. Since this time, the Minister has issued a Section 31A Direction directing the Midland Regional Assembly to carry out amendments to the Strategy that include:

* Changes to Section 5.6 ‘Integrated Land Use and Transportation’ regarding the deletion of text in respect of particular rail infrastructure (Rail, Metro and Luas); and
* Changes to Table 8.2 ‘Rail Projects for the Region’ regarding the deletion of text in respect of particular rail infrastructure (Rail, Metro and Luas).

The reason given for the Direction are that a breach of legislative requirements has occurred with the Material Amendments No. 69 and No. 113 of the RSES. The Direction and appendices are currently on display from since the 20th August 2019 to Monday 2nd August 2019.

Alongside the adoption of the RSES, the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government has put in place a mechanism to ensure:

a) Local Authority Development Plan review processes underway within the RSES finalisation period could be paused until such time as they could benefit from the latest data and policy contexts from the RSES; and

b) Recently adopted plans, which ordinarily last for six years, would be brought forward for review or variation.

Both of the above mechanisms are intended to ensure that there is an efficient and effective process of alignment between all the levels of spatial planning in our planning process, from national to regional and to local.

Therefore, additional legislative provisions have been made under Section 11(1) of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018 which included provisions for the initiation of review of City/County Development Plans to be:

i. Deferred on a once-off basis, where due to commence prior to or within a period of 3 months after the initial making of the relevant RSES, until not later than a period of 3 months after the relevant RSES has been made;

ii. Temporarily suspended, where commenced and ongoing and where a draft plan has not been submitted to the members of the Planning Authority under Section 11(5)(a) of the Act, prior to the initial making of the relevant RSES in each case, until not later than a period of 3 months after the relevant RSES has been made;

iii. Rendered consistent with the RSES, either through (a) a variation of the Development Plan or (b) if considered more appropriate, a full review, to commence within a maximum period of 6 months after the making of the relevant RSES.

The above means that most, if not all City/County Development Plans will be subject to review during 2019/21, so that they are broadly aligned to address a six-year period to 2026/27. It should be noted that this will also tie-in with the intercensal period from 2021-2026.

1. **The Proposal for Alignment with the NPF and the RSES**

As the South Dublin County Council County Development Plan 2016-2022 (CDP) was only adopted in May 2016 and a deferral or suspension has not occurred option iii above ‘rendering the CDP consistent with the RSES, either through (a) a variation of the Development Plan or (b) if considered more appropriate, a full review, to commence within a maximum period of 6 months after the making of the relevant RSES’ is the most relevant option for South Dublin County Council.

Having carried out an analysis of the RSES and the CDP it is considered that the process for varying the CDP in accordance with Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) is the most suitable option to achieve alignment with the NPF and RSES.

1. **Proposed Variation Content**

As discussed above, a central issue in assessing whether a full review of the CDP should be commenced is an assessment of projected population growth as set out in the RSES. It is noted that the SDCC CDP population forecast (Table 2 of the CDP refers) for 2022 of 310,851 falls within the population projections set out in the NPF and the RSES i.e. the low range for 2026 of 308,000 and the higher range of 314,000ppl.

The analysis carried out of the RSES and CDP has identified that there will be a number of minor text changes throughout the CDP document particularly where references are made to the National Spatial Strategy 2002 and Regional Planning Guidelines 2016-2022. Changes include minor amendments/additions to a small number of objectives throughout the plan with the vast majority of the variation relating to minor updates/amendments to the Core Strategy Table in order to ensure alignment with the population projections for the County.

The following table provides a brief overview of the extent of works required in order to achieve alignment with the RSES/NPF.

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| **Chapter** | **Title** | **Alignment Requirement/Overview** |
| 1 | Introduction and Core Strategy | * Minor text changes/updates * Updates to population and housing tables |
| 2 | Housing | * Minor text changes/updates |
| 3 | Community Infrastructure | * Minor text changes/updates |
| 4 | Economic Development and Tourism | * Minor text changes/updates |
| 5 | Urban Centres and Retailing | * Minor text changes/updates |
| 6 | Transport and Mobility | * Minor text changes/updates |
| 7 | Infrastructure and Environmental Quality | * Minor text changes/updates |
| 8 | Green Infrastructure | * No Changes envisaged |
| 9 | Heritage, Conservation & Landscape | * No Changes envisaged |
| 10 | Energy | * Minor text changes/updates |
| 11 | Implementation | * No Changes envisaged |

***Table 1: Variation Overview***

1. **Variation Timeframe**

Figure 1 below outlines the 4 stages for completing the variation process in accordance with Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). It is envisaged that the variation will be completed over a period of 9 weeks.

***Figure 1: Variation Timeframe***

1. **Next Steps**

It is proposed that the full variation document will go on public display on the 7th of October with the public notices required under Section 13 of the Planning Development Act 2000 (as amended) outlining that the submissions can be made over a 4-week period up to the 4th of November. The Chief Executives report will be prepared and submitted to the members for their consideration on the 25th of November with the report being considered at the council meeting on the 9th of December 2019.

1. Circular FP S06/2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)