



COMHAIRLE CHONTAE LAOISE LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL

Comhairle Chontae
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R32 EHP9

Laois County Council
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Review of County Development Plan,

Forward Planning Department,

Offaly County Council,

Áras an Chontae,

Charleville Road,

Tullamore,

Co. Offaly.

RE: Review of existing Offaly County Development Plan 2014-2020 and the preparation of the new Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

Date 16th September 2019

A Chara,

We acknowledge your notification to review the **Offaly County Development Plan 2014-2020 and the preparation of the new Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027** dated 29th July 2019.

We welcome the opportunity to make a submission to the new plan for the period 2021-2027 and would like to make the following comments in relation to the 'Public Consultation - Issues Paper' enclosed with your letter.

We note the context within which your new County Development Plan must be prepared. The National Planning Framework (NPF) 2018 and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2019 has set overarching goals and outcomes and within this context we would like to emphasise that the following be included in relation to collaborative and cross boundary initiatives that would be further supported by both Councils.

Within the new Core Strategy for County Offaly, the **position of Portarlinton** should be retained as "Key Service Town" given its population. Currently capacity exists in the Foul Sewer Network, Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Public Water Supply.

The Council recognises the need to facilitate public transport improvements and provide measures to help alleviate traffic congestion in the town centre and at the pinch point on Barrow Bridge and at Kilmalogue Crossroads. The current Laois Plan includes for a relief road; however the environmental constraints in that regard must be recognized.

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Gnó a Dhéanamh
as Gaeilge





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The potential to grow Portarlington as an economic driver remains an objective of Laois County Council which has been developed over the past couple of years with investment in Portarlington Enterprise Centre and the identification and development of industrial/ Commercial land banks. The Council in conjunction with Tidy Towns has improved the appearance of Portarlington and continues to work on initiatives to promote the town for its betterment.

We request that the Plan be drafted having regard to the objectives of the Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan 2018 - 2024 prepared as a collaboration between Laois County Council and Offaly County Council in 2018 and the Core Strategy contained therein. Laois County Council will continue to work in partnership with Offaly County Council to review the Portarlington LAP once both the Laois and Offaly County Development Plans have been reviewed and adopted.

We note that the RSES promotes the Eastern and Midland Region as a key destination for tourism, leisure and recreation activities and supports the development of an integrated network of greenways, blueways and peatways.

In this regard Laois County Council suggests that Offaly County Council continue to include objectives supporting the **principal of promoting the Slieve Bloom Mountains, Derrycastle Lakes and Trails** and further upgrading of the amenities (e.g. walks, etc), and linkages with other key tourism assets within the County given the potential to contribute to the tourism, recreational amenity and economic development of both the Laois and Offaly Areas.

The Cross boundary Slieve Bloom Mountain Biking Trail being carried out in conjunction with Coilte has the potential to contribute greatly to the rural and tourism development within the Western part of Laois and eastern part of Offaly. We support its continued development subject to proper planning and development and compliance with SAC/ SPA conservation objectives.

We welcome the opportunity to work with Offaly County Council on further joint rural development initiatives which can benefit both counties and the Midlands in totality.

We suggest that an objective to support this, in conjunction with Laois County Council and other relevant stakeholders be included in the forthcoming Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027.

We suggest that the forthcoming Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027 includes an objective to encourage and **facilitate investment in the N80** having regard to its role as an inter-regional route between the Midlands and the South east of the Country and

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the port of Rosslare. It is suggested that opportunities for the provision of a cycle lanes along this route should be explored, and recognised within the Plan.

We also request that you continue to put in objectives to continue to support **rural public transport** initiatives such as “Laois – Offaly Local Link” which provides a much needed service for both counties.

I would be grateful if you could take the comments made into account when drafting the new County Development Plan for Offaly County Council.

Is mise le meas

Angela McEvoy

Senior Planner

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‘I bpáirt leis an bpobal’

Arna phrinteáil ar pháipéar atá 100% athchúrsáilte – Do Chomhshaoil a chothú

