



Offaly County Council  
Áras an Chontae  
Charville Road  
Tullamore  
R35 F893  
Co Offaly

25 September 2019

**Re: Offaly County Council: Review of existing County Development Plan 2014-2020 and preparation of new County Development Plan 2021-2027**

**Your Ref:**

**Our Ref: 19/184 [c.f. 19/178]**

A chara,

Thank you for your letter received on 02 August 2019, concerning the review of the existing County Development Plan 2014-2020 and the preparation for the new County Development Plan 2021-2027.

Geological Survey Ireland, a division of Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, is the national earth science agency and has datasets on Bedrock Geology, Quaternary Geology, Geological Heritage Sites, Mineral deposits, Groundwater Resources and the Irish Seabed. These comprise maps, reports and extensive databases that include mineral occurrences, bedrock/mineral exploration groundwater/site investigation boreholes, karst features, wells and springs. Please see our [website](#) for data availability and we recommend using these various data sets, when undergoing the planning and scoping processes. Geological Survey Ireland should be referenced to as such and should any data or geological maps be used, they should be attributed correctly to Geological Survey Ireland.

These are Geological Survey Ireland's comments on the Draft Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027:

#### **Soils**

- We recommend the title for **section 3.4** be changed to 'Geology and Soils' or 'Soils and Geology'.
- We commend the inclusion of the 28 County Geological Sites (CGS). For the overall report, individual site reports and the Offaly shapefile, please see our website for the [County Audit of Offaly](#), which was published in 2016. The CGSs can be mentioned in **section 3.9** of the report.
- We encourage the use of the data on our 'Landslide Events' layer on our [Map Viewer](#) within **section 3.4**.

#### **Water**

- Our [Map Viewer](#) is updated with our latest data and we suggest keeping up to date with data added, using the latest datasets in reports. There will shortly be a new 'Flood Risk Map' added, a collaboration between Geological Survey Ireland and the Environmental Protection Agency. This can be mentioned in **sections 3.5 and 4.5**.
- We recommend using Groundwater Flooding and Karst data from our [Map Viewer](#) where appropriate. These can be mentioned in **sections 3.5 and 4.5**.
- Our 'Groundwater Drinking Water Protection Areas' and 'Groundwater Catchment and WFD Management Units' data on our [Map Viewer](#) can be referred to in section **3.7.1.2**.

#### **Aggregates**

- We would like to draw your attention to our 'Active Quarries', 'Mineral Localities' and 'Aggregate Potential' layers on our [Map Viewer](#). These can be used to promote sustainable development and reduce the carbon footprint of buildings by using local stone to build and referred to in **sections 3.7 and 4.4**. We will be happy to assist in any way with advice on the sourcing of local building materials.



- Data, maps, interpretations and advice on matters related to minerals, their use and their development can be found in our [Minerals section](#) of the website. This can be mentioned in **section 3.7**.

#### **Government of Ireland Climate Action Plan**

- Geological Survey Ireland is responsible for a number of Actions in the Government of Ireland Climate Action Plan 2019, some of which relate to the Midlands of Ireland. We recommend that these Actions are referenced in the County Development Plan, particularly the geothermal potential. Ireland has widespread shallow geothermal resources for small and medium-scale heating applications for both domestic and commercial use. Ireland also has recognised potential for deep geothermal resources. Geological Survey Ireland currently supports and funds research into this national energy resource, so we recommend keeping up to date with our data. For more information on Geological Survey Ireland's involvement in the Climate Action Plan and geothermal potential, click [here](#) and [here](#) respectively.

I hope that these comments are of assistance, and if we can be of any further help, please do not hesitate to contact me, or my colleague Siobhán Power ([Siobhan.Power@gsi.ie](mailto:Siobhan.Power@gsi.ie)).

Le meas,

Amrine Dubois Gafar  
**Geoheritage Programme**