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Forward Planning Section  
Offaly County Council  
Charleville Road  
Tullamore  
Co. Offaly

28<sup>th</sup> November 2017

Our Ref: 171102.1

## **Re. Proposed Variation No.1 to the Offaly County Development Plan 2014-20**

Dear Sir / Madam,

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) acknowledges your notice, dated the 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017, regarding the above and notes its contents.

### **SEA Determination**

We note your position with regards to the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Proposed Variation to the Offaly County Development Plan 2014-2020 (the Variation).

### **Comments on the Variation**

- Where any brownfield lands are proposed for reuse / regeneration, these should be appropriately remediated to avoid or minimise any potential significant environmental impacts or human health impacts that may arise. The development of these areas, should be carried out in a manner that is consistent with the County Core Strategy and with the principles of sustainable development.
- The assessments should consider and provide information on aspects such as contaminated soil removal / remediation, noise and air quality, waste management, possible service infrastructure provision issues, possible presence of invasive species and ensuring appropriate management / control, implications for biodiversity etc.
- Where the above aspects are already provided for in the County Development Plan, including a table showing the key policies/objectives would be useful to include. This would clearly show the how the proposed re-use/re-development of these lands/vacant sites would take account of the any environmental sensitivities identified.
- There a few key significant plans currently (and undergoing SEA), which should be considered in implementing the Variation which include the following:
  - Draft National Planning Framework (DHPLG)
  - Draft National River Basin Management Plan for Ireland (DHPLG)

### **Future Modifications to the Variation**

Where changes to the Variation are made prior to finalisation, or where modifications to the Plan are proposed following its adoption, these should be screened for potential for likely significant effects in accordance with the criteria as set out in *SEA Regulations Schedule 2A Criteria (S.I. No. 436 of 2004)*.

### **Infrastructure Planning**

In proposing the Variation, and any related amendments, variations etc. of the Plan, and in implementing the Variation, adequate and appropriate infrastructure should be in place, or required to be put in place, to service any development proposed and authorised during the lifetime of the Plan.

### **Environmental Authorities**

Under the SEA Regulations (*S.I. No. 436 of 2004*), as amended by *S.I. No. 201 of 2011*, notice should also be given to the following:

- The Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government
- Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment), where it appears to the planning authority that the plan or programme, or modification of the plan or programme, might have significant effects on fisheries or the marine environment
- where it appears to the competent authority that the plan or programme, or amendment to a plan or programme, might have significant effects in relation to the architectural or archaeological heritage or to nature conservation, the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (now the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht), and
- any adjoining planning authority whose area is contiguous to the area of a planning authority which prepared a draft plan, proposed variation or local area plan.

A copy of your decision regarding the determination, including, as appropriate, the reasons for not requiring an environmental assessment, should be made available for public inspection at your offices, local authority website and should also be notified to any Environmental Authorities already consulted.

Should you have any queries or require further information in relation to the above please contact the undersigned. I would be grateful if an acknowledgement of receipt of this submission could be sent electronically to the following address: [sea@epa.ie](mailto:sea@epa.ie).

Yours sincerely,



**Cian O'Mahony**  
*Scientific Officer*  
*SEA Section*  
*Office of Evidence and Assessment*  
*Environmental Protection Agency*  
*Regional Inspectorate*  
*Inniscarra, County Cork*