



Draft Consultation Response - Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029

General

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (FODC) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposed material alterations to the Draft Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 (DLCDP). This draft response will be discussed at the Council's Regeneration and Community Committee meeting on 13 December 2022, and any amendments will be forwarded to Leitrim County Council (LCC) following that meeting.

We wish to acknowledge the participatory role of the Council in cross boundary working.

The Council supports LCC's approach to make material alterations to its DLCDP in response to representations received during the public consultation process. FODC took a similar approach and published a schedule of proposed changes following detailed consideration of the representations received to the FODC Local Development Plan Draft Plan Strategy.

Monitoring

FODC supports the inclusion of additional detail in relation to monitoring, in order to assess the success with which the development plan is being implemented.

This includes Core Strategy Monitoring (annually) and Plan Objectives Monitoring (including SEA Monitoring) every two years. LCC indicate that this will assist to illustrate the development trends being experienced at settlement level and to assess the consistency of such trends with the agreed housing and population targets as set out in the Core Strategy of the development plan.

FODC advise that monitoring and review are essential and will help establish if any policies within the plan require updating to ensure the objectives of the plan are being achieved.

Housing Strategy

The Council notes the introduction of RUR SET POL 10 which is to encourage the sensitive restoration of vernacular structures as an alternative to the construction of a one-off dwelling. LCC advise that retaining, restoring and reusing such vernacular dwellings exemplifies sustainable development.

FODC also recognises the importance of vernacular buildings and the retention of these are desirable to ensure a continued understanding of the history of our district at a local level. Draft Policy HE09 within the FODC Local Development Plan Draft

Plan Strategy outlines that the change of use, sympathetic conversion or re-use of an unlisted locally important building or unlisted vernacular building will be encouraged.

FODC notes the inclusion of RUR SET OBJ 4 which is to support the ongoing monitoring of new rural housing to ensure 20% of new rural development occurs on brownfield sites including partially previously developed sites (i.e., in towns/villages under 1,500 population and rural areas/countryside).

Tourism

FODC welcomes the amendment to TOUR POL 4, which is to develop opportunities for 'Slow Tourism' or 'Regenerative Tourism' clusters to be established within the county.

The Council also notes the introduction of objective TOUR OBJ 11, which is to support the preparation of Destination Experience Development Plans (DEDP) and other tourism masterplans both within the county and also those which cross from the county into neighbouring counties in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and other tourism stakeholders.

FODC has recently agreed, following public consultation, a Visitor Experience Development Plan for Fermanagh Lakelands and Omagh and the Sperrins.

The Council also supports the introduction of TOUR POL 10, to facilitate, where appropriate, proposals to improve access for all at existing tourism sites and facilities, and to require all new tourism related developments to ensure the development is accessible to everyone, regardless of their age, or ability. This will promote the interests of inclusivity

Transport

The Council supports the introduction of policy WC POL 6 and objective WC OBJ 6 which will promote and facilitate active travel, accessibility and connectivity in settlements in order to encourage cycling as an everyday mode choice, in particular to provide cycling infrastructure near schools.

Within the FODC Local Development Plan Draft Plan Strategy, Draft Policy DE02 requires new development proposals to integrate sustainable modes of transport including walking and cycling and minimise the impact of car parking.

The Council recognises the importance of ensuring that all new developments within our settlements are well connected to existing public transport, cycling and walking routes, as well as providing facilities such as cycle parking and shower facilities to facilitate those using sustainable modes of transport

Forestry

The Council notes that LCC commissioned RPS to undertake a landscape capacity assessment for future commercial forestry planting in Co. Leitrim. FODC agrees that this will ensure the demands for commercial forestry plantations and conservation of

landscape character and visual amenity including residential visual amenity are appropriately balanced and considered.

Extractive Industries

FODC notes the introduction of an additional policy which restricts the use of certain chemicals as a processing agent as part of any proposed processing operation located above or adjacent to surface or ground waters, or which could potentially impact such waters. The chemicals include mercury, cyanide or cyanide compounds, breakdown products of cyanide, or sulfuric acid.

Climate change and renewable energy

LCC has introduced a new bio energy policy, BE POL 6 which seeks to support, in principle, the development of appropriately scaled local multi-feedstock bio-refining hubs across the region as well as the potential creation of bio-districts/clusters.

FODC acknowledges that bio energy is a more sustainable alternative to fossil fuels, however bio energy has potential to create greenhouse gas emissions, albeit at lower levels than burning fossil fuels like coal, oil or gas.

Conclusion

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council considers that the contents of the material alterations to the Draft Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 are not in conflict with our Council's Draft Plan Strategy, although we recognise that in addressing specific issues, the respective Councils' approaches have developed slightly differently.

The Council also welcomes consultation on any significant planning applications or other planning matters of mutual interest, which may be proposed adjacent to Fermanagh and Omagh's district council boundary.