



24th March 2021

TEN-T CDP Variation,
Central Planning Unit,
Donegal County Council,
County House,
Lifford,
Co. Donegal,
F93 Y622.

Re: Proposed Variation to the County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024 in respect of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal (Variation No. 1).

A chara,

I refer to the notification received from Donegal County Council on 18th February, 2021 that a variation is proposed to the Donegal County Development Plan 2018 – 2024 in respect of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal (“the TEN-T PRIPD”). The Northern and Western Regional Assembly welcome the opportunity to consider the proposed variation and to make observations on it. This submission is being made under section 27C of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

It is a requirement of Section 27C that the Regional Assembly make a submission that includes a report which will state whether, in the opinion of the Assembly, the draft variation of the development plan and in particular, its core strategy, are consistent with the RSES. Where it is not consistent, then the Assembly must make recommendations as to what amendments are required, in order to ensure that the proposed variation is consistent with the RSES.

The Proposed Variation

The TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal consists of and prioritises three Sections of the TEN-T road network in Donegal (“the Project”) for improvement namely:

- Section 1 (N15/N13 Ballybofey/Stranorlar Urban Region).
- Section 2 (N56/N13 Letterkenny to Manorcunningham).
- Section 3 (N14 Manorcunningham to Lifford/Strabane/A5 Link).

Donegal County Council has advised that the purpose of the proposed Variation is to:

- a. Reserve and protect the preferred route corridors by amending maps, objectives and policies and remove the corresponding historical route corridors.
- b. Insert new text, objectives and policies and for that purpose include necessary ancillary provisions.

Northern & Western Regional Assembly

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The Assembly note the proposed Variation includes proposed modifications / amendments to a suite of 33 separate Policies / Objectives (including Heritage, Archaeology, Zoning Objectives etc.) within the Donegal County Plan. These are intended to provide support for the project and to ensure compatibility with it.

Observations:

The Northern & Western Regional Assembly welcome the publication of the Proposed Variation to the Development Plan as it represents an opportunity to give effect to the NPF (Ireland 2040) as well as the RSES. One of the key overarching objectives of the NPF is to achieve Enhanced Regional Accessibility to the North West of Ireland (**NPO 2c**) including the ambition of improved connectivity across the North West.

The RSES amplifies this national objective through **RPO 3.7.30** (Letterkenny Regional Growth Centre Strategic Plan), which cites the Donegal Ten-T improvements as one of 9 critically enabling projects to enable the ambitions in demographic increases, and employment growth set out for Letterkenny and the County between now and 2040.

Additionally, Chapter 6 of the RSES (Connected Region) outlines the strategic roads projects to be advanced through pre appraisal and early Planning (**RPO 6.7**) and included amongst these are (i) N13 Ballybofey / Stranorlar Bypass and (ii) N13 / N14 / N15 Letterkenny by-pass and Dual Carriageway to Manorcunningham, and (iii) N14 Manorcunningham to Lifford - together these projects comprise the Donegal Ten-T Priority Route Improvement.

The Assembly note the suite of other objectives that are to be amended with the purpose of underpinning the priority that is being given to the delivery of the "TEN-T PRIPD" and this prioritisation is welcome. Furthermore, it is noted that the N13 Manorcunningham to Bridgend is identified in RPO 6.8 of the RSES as a priority project to be pursued and whilst it is included in Table 5.1A it is not included in Table 5.1B. It would be important to ensure that this does not negate driving investment forward in this route and the council should clarify same.

The Assembly consider that the proposed Variation is consistent with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and set out hereinunder, are the Assembly's observations in respect of the Variation:

Observation 1: The Northern and Western Regional Assembly strongly support the prioritisation of the "TEN-T PRIPD".

Observation 2: The N13 (Manorcunningham to Bridgend) is identified in RPO 6.8 of the RSES as a priority project to be pursued and whilst it is included in Table 5.1A it is not included in Table 5.1B – it would be important to clarify that its omission from the latter does not negate delivery of its upgrade.

If the Council have any further queries in relation to the above, do not hesitate to revert to the Assembly.

Is mise le meas,

David Minton, Director.

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