

Forward/Strategic Planning
Economic Development Directorate
Limerick City & County Council
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By e.mail; devplan@limerick.ie

Dáta | Date
6 April, 2022

Ár dTag | Our Ref.
TII22-117706

Re. Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Limerick Development Plan, 2022-2028

Dear Sir/Madam,

TII acknowledges receipt of referral of Proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Limerick Development Plan, 2022 - 2028. The Authority acknowledges and welcomes the Proposed Material Alterations arising from consideration of the Authority's initial submission on the Draft Plan. In relation to other Proposed Material Alterations on display, TII outlines the following observations;

MATERIAL ALTERATION NO. 6

Map 3.6 Tall Buildings at City Level

TII notes the proposed Gateway Building location identified in the vicinity of M7 Junction 30 on Map 3.6 of the Proposed amendments to the Draft Plan.

As acknowledged in TII's submission on the Draft Plan, the Draft Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS), reflecting official policy, identifies the importance of ensuring that localised junction congestion does not impact on the strategic function of the M7/N18 national road.

Section 2.7 of the DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities require that planning authorities exercise particular care in their assessment and management of development proposals in the Development Plan relating to the zoning of locations at or close to junctions on the national road network where such development could generate significant additional traffic, thereby potentially compromising the capacity and efficiency of the national road/associated junctions and possibly leading to the premature and unacceptable reduction in the level of service available to road users.

Recommendation

- In TII's opinion, development proposals in the vicinity of national road junctions, including those in the City Environs, will require particular care and robust assessment to ensure development proceeds complementary to safeguarding the strategic function of the national road network in accordance with Government objectives.

Section 3.5 Level 2: Key Towns

Proposed text amendment to Section 3.5 of the Draft Plan confirms that a Local Area Plan (LAP) is in place for Newcastle West and will be reviewed on completion of the Development Plan. In addition, it is outlined that the Council is committed to the preparation of a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Newcastle West.

Próiseálann BIÉ sonraí pearsanta a sholáthraítear dó i gcomhréir lena Fhógra ar Chosaint Sonraí atá ar fáil ag www.tii.ie.
TII processes personal data in accordance with its Data Protection Notice available at www.tii.ie.

Recommendation

- TII would welcome consultation on the review of the Newcastle West Local Area Plan and Local Transport Plan.
- In TII's opinion, preparation of the LTP should be informed by the TII/NTA Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) Guidance. TII also considers that the findings and recommendations of the LTP should inform the Local Area Plan Review process to ensure coordination of land use and transport planning.

MATERIAL ALTERATION NO. 53

Section 7.5 Sustainable Mobility

TII notes the proposed new Objective which outlines the Councils commitment to ensure that the design standards applied to all roads and streets within urban areas and within 60 km/h speed limit zones are in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS); Objective TR O2 - Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets refers.

In addition to the requirements relating to DMURS, the Council will be aware of complementary TII Publication 'The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads' (TII Publications DN-GEO-03084).

The TII Publications Standard describes the requirements that shall be implemented on National Roads on the approaches to towns and villages in terms of the provision of traffic calming measures and pedestrian crossings. National Roads within 60km/h zones can traverse many areas with very different characteristics such as low-density residential areas, industrial areas, mixed use neighbourhoods and town and village centres. This requires different design solutions within each of these different contexts, in the interests of the safety of all road users.

TII does acknowledge and welcome that this clarification is provided in Objective TR O44 - Link Roads.

Recommendation

TII would welcome consideration by the Council of the following:

- Update to Proposed Objective TR O2 to incorporate reference to TII Publications Standard DN-GEO-03084 'The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads' in the Development Plan in association with reference to DMURS, in the interests of providing clarification that the complementary national road standard will be applied, in the interests of road user safety, on national roads.

Section 7.8 Strategic Roads Infrastructure

TII notes the inclusion of additional text in Section 7.8 of the Plan and Objective TR O36 relating to the Limerick Northern Distributor Road (LNDR).

In relation to the Limerick Northern Distributor Road (LNDR), TII has previously acknowledged that the LNDR is not a national road scheme.

Recommendation

- As previously identified, any additional crossings of the River Shannon should evaluate the consequences of the special requirements of the tolling scheme (N18 Limerick Tunnel PPP Scheme) and the financial implications of same for the Exchequer. Details of these implications have previously been circulated to Limerick City and County Council.

Section 7.9.1 National Road Network

TII notes the proposed alteration to Objective TR O39 - National Roads which introduces the following statement to Objective TR O35 (a);

'Prevent, except in exceptional circumstances as outlined in the Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines 'Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DoECLG, 2012), inappropriate development on lands adjacent to the existing national road network, which would adversely affect the safety, current and future capacity and function of national roads and having regard to reservation corridors, to cater for possible future upgrades of the national roads and junctions'.

TII is of the view that the proposed alteration conflicts with the provisions of the Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines 'Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DoECLG, 2012). The approach proposed in the amended Objective TR O35 (a) appears to defer critical policy and safety considerations concerning access to national roads to the development management function of the planning authority. This approach, in the opinion of TII, is considered inappropriate and contrary to the provisions of the DoECLG Guidelines.

The Council will be aware that where the DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines address provisions relating to 'exceptional circumstances', the Guidelines require an evidence-based plan-led approach.

Deferring such critical considerations to the development management function of the planning authority is not provided for in the DoECLG Guidelines. To address this conflict with official policy, TII suggests the following wording alteration for the Councils consideration;

'Prevent, except in exceptional circumstances and subject to a plan-led evidence-based approach, in consultation with Transport Infrastructure Ireland, and incorporated into the Development Plan in accordance with as outlined in the Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines 'Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DoECLG, 2012), inappropriate development on lands adjacent to the existing national road network, which would adversely affect the safety, current and future capacity and function of national roads and having regard to reservation corridors, to cater for possible future upgrades of the national roads and junctions';

TII also notes proposed amendment to Objective TR O35 (d) and welcomes this proposal in giving effect to Government policy concerning rural housing development management and access to national roads.

Recommendation

TII would welcome consideration by the Council of the following text alteration to Objective TR O35 (a):

- *'Prevent, except in exceptional circumstances and subject to a plan-led evidence-based approach, in consultation with Transport Infrastructure Ireland, and incorporated into the Development Plan in accordance with as outlined in the Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines 'Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DoECLG, 2012), inappropriate development on lands adjacent to the existing national road network, which would adversely affect the safety, current and future capacity and function of national roads and having regard to reservation corridors, to cater for possible future upgrades of the national roads and junctions';*

MATERIAL ALTERATION NO. 109

It is noted that Material Alteration no. 109 proposes to introduce a Data Centre Land Use Zoning Objective into the Development Plan. The proposed objective is stated as being to accommodate the provision of a Data Centre on the lands identified at Rosbrien and other appropriately zoned lands.

It is unclear in the Proposed Material Alteration if the proposed land use is specifically restricted to Data Centre and directly related development as the associated Land Use Matrix has not been updated to reflect this change. Clarification of this matter in the Plan would be welcome.

Material Alteration no. 140 proposes to amend the Zoning Map to include an area of 18.88ha. of land zoned for a Data Centre at Rosbrien. The lands identified are in the vicinity of M7/M20 Junction 30.

Material Alteration 149 proposes to include the Zoning of an area of 33ha. for Data Centre development at Ballysimon House, Commons Road, Ballysimon. The lands identified are in the vicinity of the M7/N24 Ballysimon Junction (Junction 29) and the N24, national primary road, and remote from the established zoning extents of the City and Environs. As such the lands do not appear to represent compact or consolidated growth.

In both instances, no access proposals are identified but it is noted that access is available to the local non-national road network. Also, no evidence base land use or transport analysis is provided.

In relation to development proposals in the vicinity of national roads and associated junctions, safeguarding the strategic function of the existing national road network so that it continues to support economic development in

the region and provide access to markets and international gateways is critical to ensuring Limerick continues to perform and enhance its regional role. Compromising the strategic function of the national road network in the area has the potential to inhibit growth, impact economic performance and reduce accessibility.

Section 2.7 of the DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities require that planning authorities exercise particular care in their assessment and management of development proposals in the Development Plan relating to the zoning of locations at or close to junctions on the national road network where such development could generate significant additional traffic, thereby potentially compromising the capacity and efficiency of the national road/associated junctions and possibly leading to the premature and unacceptable reduction in the level of service available to road users. TII is not aware of a supporting evidence base for the lands identified.

In particular and as noted above, in the environs of the City, Draft LSMATS recognises localised congestion on the grade separated junctions along the M7/N18 Limerick City Bypass, noting, in particular, Mackey (Newport) Roundabout, Ballysimon Interchange and Dock Road Interchange. In addition, the Draft Strategy acknowledges that ensuring that localised junction congestion does not impact on the strategic function of the M7/N18 road is of importance to the Strategy.

Recommendation

TII recommends consideration of the following requirements;

- Development in the vicinity of national road junctions, including those in the City Environs, will require particular care and robust assessment to ensure development proceeds complementary to safeguarding the strategic function of the national road network in accordance with Government objectives.
- TII considers that the development of an evidence base in accordance with the requirements of Section 2.7 of the Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines 'Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DoECLG, 2012) is required in advance of any decision to incorporate the subject lands in the Development Plan.
- Clarification in the Development Plan that only Data Centre related development will be accommodated on the lands identified with the land use zoning designation 'Data Centre'.

Material Alteration no. 142 and Material Alteration no. 153

Material Alteration no. 142 proposes to change the zoning of four plots of land comprising Plot A (5.57ha), Plot B (4.25ha), Plot C (5.57ha) and Plot D (6.496ha.) from Agriculture to Enterprise and Employment at Ballykeefe and Material Alteration no. 153 proposes to change the zoning of 14ha from Agriculture to Enterprise and Employment at Ballykeefe, Mungret.

The zoning alteration proposals are in the vicinity of N18/N69 Junction 2 (Dock Road). TII previously submitted observations in relation to zoning proposals in the vicinity of Junction 2 (Dock Road), most recently in relation to the Limerick Southern Environs Local Area Plan, 2021 – 2027. The observations submitted on the Southern Environs Local Area Plan, remain TII's position.

LSMATS recognises localised congestion on the grade separated junctions along the M7/N18 Limerick City Bypass, noting, in particular, Mackey (Newport) Roundabout, Ballysimon Interchange and Dock Road Interchange. As outlined in Section 2.2.1 above, ensuring that this localised junction congestion does not impact on the strategic function of the M7/N18 road is of importance to the Strategy.

A significant extent of lands are now proposed to be zoned in the vicinity of the Dock Road Junction with an Enterprise and Employment designation. TII notes that the subject lands were rezoned as Agriculture in the recently adopted Limerick Southern Environs Local Area Plan, 2021 – 2027. The current proposed amendments appear to conflict with the zoning strategy in the recently adopted Local Area Plan.

The Authority has consistently expressed concern that proposals to zone additional lands adjoining the N18/N69 Junction have been advanced in the absence of any quantified impact on the operation of the national road network in the area. The Authority also identified that zoning designations that extended to the line/boundary of the existing mainline national road network and associated junctions was not a practice consistent with objectives for providing for any future enhancements to the network that may be required.

With regard to the foregoing, the Council was requested to review the proposed zoning objectives and development objectives adjoining and in proximity to the national road network to take into consideration the issues identified. TII notes the requirements outlined in official policy to develop an evidence-based approach to planning policy where a development plan or local area plan proposes development to take place on zoned lands adjacent to national roads which could affect the operation and capacity of such roads.

The Authority is not aware that an evidence base has been developed by the Council to demonstrate that the zoning designation of the subject lands in the vicinity of the Dock Road junction accord with the provisions of official policy. In relation to the zoning of such lands, TII's opinion, remains as previously set out.

Recommendation

- The Authority is not aware that the policies and zoning designations included in the local area plan in relation to the zoning proposals in the vicinity of the Dock Road Junction have been subject to an evidenced based approach in plan preparation in accordance with the requirements of the DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities. The current proposed amendments appear to conflict with the zoning strategy in the recently adopted Local Area Plan. Accordingly, TII recommends a review of proposed zoning amendments in the vicinity of the Dock Road Junction to ensure the development of an appropriate evidence base demonstrating compliance with the provisions of the DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

Material Alteration no. 167

TII notes the proposed amendment related to Foynes and the 'Marine Related Industry' Zoning Objective clarifying that all development proposals will be subject to a Traffic and Transport Assessment and Road Safety Audit in accordance with Chapter 3 of the DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines at planning application stage.

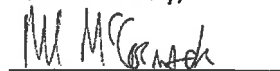
TII's initial submission on the Draft Plan identified that the 'Marine Related Industry' zoning objective in the Foynes Settlement Plan, adjoins the N69, national road, at a location outside where a 50 – 60kph urban speed limit applies. TII requested that access to the lands, to accord with the provisions of official policy, should be outlined. TII notes that the Draft Plan nor Proposed Material Alterations have addressed access requirements. TII's position therefore remains as set out in the initial submission on the Draft Plan.

Recommendation

- The 'Marine Related Industry' zoning objective in the Foynes Settlement Plan adjoins the N69, national road, at a location outside where a 50 – 60kph urban speed limit applies. Access to the lands, to accord with the provisions of official policy, should be outlined and TII would welcome such clarification.

It is respectfully requested that the above observations are taken into consideration prior to the adoption of the Limerick Development Plan, 2022 – 2028.

Yours sincerely,



Michael McCormack
Senior Land Use Planner

