



January 2021

Administrative Officer,
Draft County Development Plan,
Forward Planning Unit,
Longford County Council,
Áras an Chontae,
Great Water Street,
Longford,
N39 NH56.

Re: Draft Co Longford Development Plan 2021-2027

To whom it may concern,

I refer to the above. The Department of Education wishes to make the following submission in relation to the proposed Draft Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Department of Education wishes to acknowledge the Draft Plan and notes with interest section 7.4.6 on Education. The policy for the provision of new schools on well-located sites within or close to existing built-up areas that meet the diverse needs of local populations is welcome. The Department also notes and welcomes the various Education County Policy Objectives as outlined in Chapter 7: Placemaking. The Department also notes that in regard to development management standards in Chapter 16 that the Council will be guided by the Department of Education as to the need for new educational facilities or expansion of facilities at existing schools.

In considering the implications of Draft Plan for school accommodation requirements, this Department is cognisant of potentially differing scenarios where variances in factors such as household sizes, demographic profiles and housing delivery rates could significantly alter the future school accommodation requirements. In addition, given planning and construction timeframes, the Department assessed potential school accommodation requirements beyond the lifetime of the Plan in order to identify if additional sites were required. In this regard, the Department has considered the Draft Plan in the context of projected population growth in the County to 2031.

Based on its analysis, this Department anticipates that some requirements for additional educational accommodation may emerge over the lifetime of the Plan, should the projected population increases materialize but did not identify a requirement at this stage to zone additional school sites. Given the NPF objectives around compact growth, the facility to expand existing schools and/or to otherwise maximise the use of existing school sites will be critical for the community in Longford and for the Department in the future, in order to meet emerging requirements in Longford (and nationally). In that context, the inclusion of a



specific objective in the Plan explicitly supporting the intensification of development on existing school sites would be welcomed. Further, in order to strengthen the zoning provision on existing school sites it would be welcome if education is specifically referenced in the zoning by applying the zoning category "Social/Community/Education" to all existing school sites in Co. Longford.

In respect of the individual settlements in the County, this Department has the following observations:

Longford Town:

The Department has identified that there will be some requirement for school place provision at post-primary level should the proposed population increases materialise. This may possibly be served by the expansion of existing facilities.

Lanesboro:

The Department has identified that there will be a requirement for school place provision at post-primary level should the proposed population increases materialize. It is noted that there is only one post-primary school in the town. It is possible that an expansion to that facility will be required to cater for any increase.

Other areas

This Department has not identified the requirement for school site reservations at any other settlement in Co Longford at this time. However school accommodation requirements across the county will continue to be kept under review. In that regard, the Department welcomes the ongoing engagement with Longford County Council and will continue to work closely with the Council in relation to the provision of new schools and the development of existing schools. It also wishes to emphasise the critical importance of the ongoing work of the Council in ensuring sufficient and appropriate land is zoned for this purpose.

If you have any queries in respect of the above, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Hanlon
Statutory Plans
Forward Planning Section