



Planning Office
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Mayo
via portal: consult.mayo.ie

26/07/2024

RE: DRAFT MINISTERIAL DIRECTION ON THE WESTPORT LOCAL AREA PLAN 2024-2030

A Chara,

I refer to your notification of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's Notice of Intention to Issue a Direction to Mayo County Council regarding the Westport Local Area Plan 2024-2030 ('the LAP') and thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

The LAP was formally made by the Elected Members of the Westport Municipal District of Mayo County Council on 27 May 2024. The Assembly made two previous submissions to the planning authority during the LAP plan-making process i.e. a submission on the draft LAP and a submission on the proposed Material Alterations to the draft LAP.

This submission sets out the content of the draft Ministerial Direction and opinion of the Assembly from a regional perspective, taking into consideration the content of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 ('the RSES') and previous submissions made by the Assembly on the draft Plan.

THE DRAFT MINISTERIAL DIRECTION

The draft Ministerial Direction states that following the review of a recommendation from the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) the Minister has decided to issue a draft Ministerial Direction to the planning authority. (1) of the draft Ministerial Direction cites the name of the Direction. (2) of the draft Ministerial Direction provides for the proposed changes to be made to the adopted LA as follows:

(2) The Planning Authority is hereby directed to take the following steps with regard to the Local Area Plan:

- (a) Delete the following material alterations from the adopted Local Area Plan:
- (i) Material Alteration MA 2 – i.e. Policy DSP10;
 - (ii) Material Alteration MA 31 – i.e. the amendment to Footnote 2 of the Land Use Zoning Matric Table;
 - (iii) Material Alteration 39 – i.e. the subjected lands revert to Agriculture as per the Draft Local Area Plan, from Strategic Residential Reserve.
and apply all necessary consequential updates to the text of the plan consistent with the foregoing.

A Statement of Reasons for the deletions is given in the draft Ministerial Direction and in summary states:

- The introduction of provisions to facilitate single houses in a haphazard and piecemeal manner, exacerbating urban sprawl and inconsistent with compact and sustainable development of the town;
- Excessive zoning for residential development in peripheral and non-sequential locations;
- Failed to implement the recommendations of the Office of the Planning Regulator;
- Inconsistency with the Core Strategy and objectives of the County Development Plan;
- Inconsistent with National Planning Framework;
- Inconsistent with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy;
- Fails to set out and overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area; and
- Not in compliance with the requirements of the Act.

ASSESSMENT OF THE DRAFT MINISTERIAL DIRECTION

The Assembly notes that in its submission made on the proposed Material Alterations (dated 05 April 2024), it had recommended that the three Material Amendments referred to in the draft Ministerial Direction (i.e. MA 2, MA 31 and MA 39) not be made for the following reasons:

...the NWRA recommend that proposed material alterations MA 2, MA31, MA33, MA35, MA36, MA37, MA38, MA39, MA40 and MA41 are not made as these proposed material amendments may impede achieving objectives RPO 3.1, RPO 3.2 (c), RPO 3.3, RPO 3.4 and RPO 7.20 of the RSES and hence are not consistent with the RSES.

Specifically, in relation to MA 2 and MA 31, the Assembly in its submission on the proposed Material Alterations stated:

Proposed material alterations MA 2 and MA 31 seek to introduce new text into the LAP that facilitates single houses on fully serviced land for people with genuine need (definition given) on all land not zoned new residential or strategic residential reserve in the plan boundary area. However, these proposed material alterations do not promote the concept of plan-led

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development, compact urban growth or the efficient use of land and may impede achieving RPO 3.1 (delivery of urban places of regional scale), RPO 3.2 (c)(achieve 30% of new housing within existing built-up footprint), RPO 3.3 (achieve 20% of new housing on brownfield lands), RPO 3.4 (support regeneration and renewal) and RPO 7.20 (increase population living within settlements) of the RSES.

In relation to MA 39 the Assembly in its submission on the proposed Material Alterations stated:

Proposed material alterations MA 32 to MA 41 relate to revised land use zoning.... The material alterations documentation does not provide an up-to-date Core Strategy table to determine the impact the proposed alterations will have in relation to the amount of zoned lands for residential use. However, adequate land was zoned for residential development in the draft LAP (285 units required and c. 22ha land zoned "new residential" with further potential output from Residential Infill and Town Centre/Opportunity Sites). Furthermore, an amended Residential Settlement Capacity Assessment does not appear to have been provided to ascertain if the proposed alterations to re-zone land for residential are adequately serviced.

The Assembly's position on the matter has not changed. The Assembly therefore supports 2 (a)(i), 2 (a)(ii) and 2 (a)(iii) of the draft Ministerial Direction.

CONCLUSION

The RSES 2022 - 2032 identifies and supports the ongoing and future role of Westport as a Place of Strategic Potential.

In pursuit of compact and sustainable urban growth, which aligns with the principles and RPO's of Chapter 3 of the RSES, the Assembly supports the Draft Ministerial Direction.

I trust that the above is of assistance and the Assembly wish to thank Mayo County Council for the opportunity given to provide this submission. If you have any queries in respect of the above, then do not hesitate to revert.

Mise le meas



Denis Kelly
Director