



30 August 2021

Senior Planner,
Planning Department
Waterford City and County Council
Menapia Building
The Mall
Waterford City

Re: Draft Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022-2028

Dear Sir/Madam,

I refer to the above. The Department of Education acknowledges the draft Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022-2028 and makes the following submission.

The Department notes that while the development plan is for the period 2022-2028 that the population and housing targets are provided up to 2031. The longer-term framework is of assistance to the Department in considering school requirements. The Department notes that the plan has to sit within the framework of the ESRI's 50:50 scenario which aligns with the NPF's 2040 population targets and settlement pattern. Population and housing targets are a key driver of school place requirements. The plan projects a population of 144,000 people in 2031. This represents an increase of 27,824 people over the 2016 population of 116,176. It is noted that the bulk of the increase (67%) is to be in Waterford City and its suburbs. The Waterford Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) will provide a high level strategic framework for the sustainable development of the Waterford Metropolitan Area. The Department notes that to supplement the land use zoning objectives and other policy objectives of the Development Plan, there will be a number of local area plans. These will be for areas of Waterford City, Dungarvan/Ballinroad, Tramore, Dunmore East, Portlaw, Lismore and Gaeltacht na nDéise (including Sean Phobal).

In terms of the overall education objectives, the Department welcomes the general Education Policy Objective (EDU 01) to facilitate the provision of schools. This commitment is very welcome to protect certain sites where this would support the provision or improvement of education facilities and secure the provision of mixed use, compact 10-minute neighbourhoods. 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 in the future, in order to meet emerging requirements in Co. Waterford (and nationally). In that context, the Department suggests that this objective could be made even more explicit/stronger, along the following lines:



To ensure that existing and new school sites are protected for educational use and that lands adjacent to existing schools are protected for future educational use in order to allow for expansion of these schools, if required, subject to site suitability.

In addition, the Department would welcome specific support for educational campus development, where feasible.

In regard to sustainable community policy objectives, the Department welcomes the objectives SC15 to SC 19 relating to educational facilities, namely:

- SC 15: Locate new schools centrally in communities
- SC 16: Protect existing school sites and their amenities
- SC 17: Locate new and re-furbished schools centrally and aligned to public transport (There seems to be part duplication with objective SC 15)
- SC 18: Note that this objective falls within the remit of Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
- SC 19: Support for climate change adaptation in schools

In order to strengthen the zoning provision on existing school sites and to aid future planning, the Department requests, if possible that all existing school sites are zoned and mapped on the Co Council's GIS system. In addition, if possible, could all future education sites be zoned and mapped. This would enable the Department to pick up the mapping and zoning on our own GIS system and aid us both in the school planning function.

In considering the implications of the Draft Plan for school accommodation requirements, the 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. The Department also took into account planned school capacity increases in considering the plan, as well as underlying demographic trends at both primary and post-primary levels which will serve to mitigate additional school place demand arising from the population increases that are envisaged in the Draft Plan. Based on all factors, a view has been formed concerning projected future requirements and how they can best be met at each settlement and commentary is provided in this regard. In the context of Table 2.2, it is also worth noting that in its assessment of population trends, the Department uses a number of parameters to determine future needs. Requirements at primary level are currently assessed on 11.5% of population and 25 students per classroom. Post-primary requirements are assessed at 7.5% of population numbers.

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. In respect of the settlements identified in the Core Strategy Table 8, this Department has the following observations:



Waterford City

Waterford City is the largest urban centre in the south-east and the State's fifth largest city.

The population of the total Waterford City area (City, suburbs and rural) was 51,615 people in the 2016 Census. This does not include the population in the (mostly newer) part of the Ferrybank area of the city which lies within the administrative boundary of Kilkenny. Ferrybank and Belview Port (Port of Waterford) are included in the Waterford Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) area and although located in Kilkenny, will be developed as part of an agreed Waterford Metropolitan Strategy (MASP).

The draft plan states that a substantial proportion of the City Area, approximately 40%, has a rural character.

The draft plan projects a population increase for the Waterford City area (urban and rural area situated in Co. Waterford) of some 19,380 people to a total of 70,995 by 2031 (an increase of c.37%). A population increase of 1,452 people for the Ferrybank area is indicated in the Co. Kilkenny draft development plan as part of the Waterford MASP. The area lying within County Kilkenny is the subject of the Ferrybank and Belview Local Area Plan 2018. The Department notes the aim to build on the critical mass of Waterford as a balanced Concentric Metropolitan Area, north and south of the River Suir, and that in the long term, an increased proportion of the population will lie north of the River.

The Ferrybank neighbourhood is divided between two local authorities, with the electoral division of Ferrybank located in Waterford City and the Kilculliheen electoral division located in County Kilkenny. Ferrybank is perceived at local level to comprise of old and new Ferrybank, with the area characterised as old Ferrybank being situated in Waterford City and the newer area for the most part being situated in Kilkenny. Thus, there is a need for co-operation and joined up thinking between the two local authorities in the delivery of services, through the process of development management and planning for the future of the area. In this regard the setting up and operation of the MASP implementation body will be critical to providing balanced development across the administrative boundary with Kilkenny County Council as envisaged and supported in Policy Objective W City 21 and 30.

The Department notes the immediate plans for development in three specific areas, namely:

- City South West Neighbourhood: Kilbarry (LIHAF location) which will create a potential for 450 new housing units in the short-term.
- City North West Neighbourhood: Carrickphierish (LIHAF location) with a potential for 200 new housing units in the short-term.
- Development of lands zoned for residential development in Ferrybank for c 850 units.



Waterford is served by twenty-two mainstream primary schools and ten post-primary schools (non fee-paying). In addition, there are 3 special schools (two schools in Waterford City and one school in Dungarvan).

At primary level, taking into account the underlying demographic trends and the level of potential increase in school place requirements arising from the increased population, the Department anticipates a potential future requirement for up to two new primary schools; at least one of which would need to be located in the Ferrybank area.

There may also be small increased requirements at some of the existing schools, depending on how population increase is distributed and on expansion capacity of existing schools.

At post-primary level, a potential increased requirement has been identified based on the projected population. Given that there are ten post-primary schools in the city, the anticipated level of the increase is of a scale that could potentially be met at existing facilities.

In addition, the Department is actively seeking a site for one of the existing post-primary schools, Gaelcholáiste Phort Láirge, an Irish-medium secondary school serving the area of Waterford City, Tramore, Portlaw, Dunmore East & environs. A site identification and assessment exercise is currently underway by the Department to secure a permanent site for this school to meet their needs, accommodate up to 400 post primary school places and serve this catchment area. It is anticipated that the school will remain in interim accommodation on their current site in Ballygunner, for which planning permission has been secured for the next 5 years, until permanent accommodation is secured.

Key Town:

- **Dungarvan:**

The population of Dungarvan was 10,388 people in the 2016 Census. The draft plan projects that it will have increased by 1,949 people to a total of 12,337 by 2031 (an increase of c.19%).

Dungarvan is served by five mainstream primary schools and four post-primary schools.

At primary level, taking into account the underlying demographic trends, it is anticipated that the existing schools could meet the requirements arising from the increased population.

Similarly, at post-primary level, it is anticipated that additional potential requirement arising from the projected population increase could be met by existing facilities.



- **Clonmel environs**

Clonmel is a key town situated within the Co. Tipperary planning authority but part of the environs lie within Co. Waterford. It is noted that Tipperary County Council propose the production of a new Clonmel and Environs LAP and this would afford an opportunity to review educational requirements for Clonmel and its environs.

Large urban town:

- **Tramore**

The population of Tramore was 10,381 people in the 2016 Census. The draft plan projects that it will have increased by 1,492 people to a total of 11,873 by 2031 (an increase of c.14%).

Tramore is served by four mainstream primary schools and one post-primary school.

At primary level, taking into account the underlying demographic trends, the Department anticipates that the level of potential increase in school place requirements arising from the increased population will be met by existing facilities.

At post-primary level, the Department anticipates that taking account of the underlying demographic trends in the existing population, that the existing school will meet school place requirements arising from the increased population.

Urban town:

- **Dunmore East**

The population of Dunmore East was 1,808 people in the 2016 Census. The draft plan projects that it will have increased by 260 people to a total of 2,068 by 2031 (an increase of c.14%).

The town is served by two mainstream primary schools. At post-primary level, the needs of the town are met in Waterford City.

At primary level, taking into account underlying demographic trends, the Department anticipates that the level of potential increase in school place requirements arising from the increased population can be met by existing facilities.

At post-primary level, it is considered that the schools in Waterford City will continue to be in a position to meet the requirements from Dunmore East.



- **Portlaw**

The population of Portlaw was 1,742 people in the 2016 Census. The draft plan projects that it will have increased by 250 people to a total of 1,992 by 2031 (an increase of c. 14%).

The town is served by one mainstream primary school. Its post-primary requirements are met at the nearby town of Carrick-on-Suir where there are three post-primary schools. The Department anticipates no increase in school place requirements and existing facilities will meet future needs.

- **Lismore**

The population of Lismore was 1,374 people in the 2016 Census. The draft plan projects that it will have increased by 198 people to a total of 1,572 by 2031 (an increase of c. 14%).

The Department anticipates no increase in school place requirements for Lismore.

Rural towns and Villages

The Department has examined the projected requirements of rural towns and villages based on the projected population growth in the draft plan. The Department anticipates that these requirements can be met by existing facilities (of an expansion thereof if required).

Small towns and villages

No other educational requirements have been identified at any other settlements in Co. Waterford

Conclusion

This Department has not identified any significant requirement for additional mainstream school place provision at any other settlement in Co Waterford based on this draft plan. In terms of special schools, we have no immediate need identified to provide an additional special school in Co. Waterford at present, but if a need arises the Department will get in touch with the Council. School accommodation requirements across the county will continue to be kept under review. In that regard, the Department welcomes the ongoing engagement with Waterford 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. The critical importance of the existing schools in meeting future needs is evidenced in the submission and therefore it is vital to protect their zoning and to have land buffers around them, wherever possible, in order to cater for future needs. The Department acknowledges the crucial importance of the ongoing work of the



Council in ensuring sufficient and appropriate land is zoned for educational needs. The Department wishes to thank Waterford County Council for the consideration given to the Department's submission to the Issues Paper in September 2020.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Hanlon', written over a horizontal line.

Alan Hanlon
Statutory Plans
Forward Planning Section

