

Variation No. 4
of the
Meath County Development Plan

2013–2019
Adopted
4th December 2017



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council



1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 was adopted on 17th December 2012 and came into effect on 22nd January 2013. Since the adoption of the County Development Plan, three variations have been proposed and adopted.

This variation was prepared by Meath County Council in conjunction with John Spain and Associates, Town Planning and Development Consultants.

2.0 PURPOSE OF VARIATION NO. 4 OF THE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The purpose of Variation No. 4 of the County Development Plan is to facilitate the implementation of the requirements arising from the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 which was signed into law on 28th July 2015. The Act has a number of components, all of which are collectively intended to incentivise urban regeneration and address housing supply related issues. The Act has six parts:

- Part 1 - Preliminary and General
- Part 2 – Vacant Site Levy
- Part 3 – Amendment to Section 23 of the Derelict Sites Act 1990
- Part 4 – Development Plans and Development Contributions
- Part 5 – Amendment of Part V of the Act of 2000 (Housing Supply)
- Part 6 – Amendment of Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009

The Urban Regeneration & Housing Act 2015 is cited as:

‘An Act to make provision with respect to land in areas in which housing is required and in areas which are in need of renewal to prevent it lying idle or remaining vacant, to establish a register of vacant sites in those areas, to provide for a vacant sites levy, to amend the Derelict Sites Act 1990, to amend Parts II, III and V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, to amend the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 and to provide for related matters.

The overall vacant site levy mechanism, which will primarily be orchestrated through the planning process, is intended to stimulate site activation in urban areas, which will “bring underutilised vacant sites and buildings into beneficial use, ensuring more sustainable urban development and an efficient return on state investment in enabling infrastructure.”¹

Variation No.4 to the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019 incorporates objectives that will provide for the renewal of areas in need of regeneration as defined under Section 10(2)(h) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

3.0 CONTENT OF VARIATION NO. 4 OF THE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Variation No. 4 of the Meath County Development Plan comprises of the following text inserted into Chapter 3 Settlement Strategy and Housing Chapter of the Written Statement of the County Development Plan:

¹ Circular letter PL6/2015, 31 August 2015.

Chapter 3 – Settlement Strategy and Housing

Section 3.6.2 Housing Strategy Vision and Aim

Insert a new paragraph at the end of Section 3.6.2 as follows:

The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 aims to incentivise urban regeneration and facilitate increased activity in the housing construction sector. Under the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015, the Planning Authority is required to identify vacant sites that fall within the definition set by the Act, maintain a register of vacant sites and apply a levy in respect of such sites. The sustainable development of vacant sites in Meath will be promoted through the targeted application of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015 (Vacant Site Levy) in the following areas: Navan, Southern Environs of Drogheda, Maynooth Environs, Kilcock Environs, Dunboyne, Ashbourne, Kells, Trim and Dunshaughlin. It is proposed to optimise the impact of this initiative, by adopting a focused approach in these identified centres in Meath.

Insert new objective on page 72 as follows:

HS OBJ6 - To promote the sustainable development of vacant residential and regeneration sites in Navan, Southern Environs of Drogheda, Maynooth Environs, Kilcock Environs, Dunboyne, Ashbourne, Kells, Trim and Dunshaughlin through the application of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015, Vacant Site Levy, on lands zoned for Town Centre, Regeneration and Residential uses.

4.0 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before the decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. The purpose is to “provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.”(European Directive 2001/42/EC) The Planning Authority has continued to use the Strategic Environmental Objectives from the County Development Plan SEA to assess this variation and this is considered both practical and pragmatic.

The Planning Authority determined, using the screening criteria set out in Schedule 2A Planning & Development Regulations 2001 – 2004, the DoEHLG SEA Guidelines and Annex 2 of Directive 2001/42/EC, that a Strategic Environmental Assessment was not required for variation No. 4 to the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019.

5.0 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING

Article 6(3) of European Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive) requires competent authorities, in this case Meath County Council, to undertake an Appropriate Assessment (AA) of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects. The assessment examines the implications of proceeding with the plan or project in view of the site's conservation objectives.

An Appropriate Assessment Screening was undertaken of the proposed draft variation 4 of the Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019, in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3)

of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). It was determined that a Stage II Appropriate Assessment was not required.