

Title of Report: Item 9 – Consultation on Donegal County Development Plan Variation – SEA & HRA Scoping re. Ten-T Roads Improvements	Officer Presenting: Principal Planning Officer
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1 Purpose of Report / Recommendations

- 1.1 The purpose of this Paper is to advise Members of a consultation received from Donegal County Council regarding the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report, the Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report and on the Proposed Variation No 1 to the County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024.
- 1.2 Consideration and any comments on these documents is sought before the close of consultation on 4th November 2020.

2 Background

- 2.1 On 30th April 2020, RPS consultants wrote to this Council, on behalf of Donegal County Council, stating that they had been commissioned to prepare environmental studies in regards to a proposed Ten-T Roads Improvement project in the county. This project relates to 3 road sections, namely:
 - the N15 to by-pass Ballybofey-Stranorlar
 - the N13 near Letterkenny, to improve its access towards Derry, Strabane and to Sligo
 - the N14 from near Letterkenny to Lifford / Strabane / A5 Link
- 2.2 The project was at early-EIA stage and they requested our observations on the preferred options and the project as a whole. A letter was issued by our Planning officers on 17th June 2020, setting out comments about the important strategic role of the North West Region and the importance of new / improved infrastructure for our progress, as well as positive comments on the 3 proposed road projects and environmental matters that might be considered in the future reports.

- 2.3 On 21st July, Donegal County Council wrote to this Council with a consultation regarding the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report, the Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report and on the Proposed Variation to the County Donegal Development Plan. Given the timing of the consultation in relation to the summer recess of the Council, as well as the technical nature of the Environmental reports, our officers proceeded to issue a response on the 10th August 2020.
- 2.4 On 13th October, this Council (as an Adjoining Planning Authority) received a further, similar, consultation letter, stating that Donegal Council had 'subsequently found it necessary to prepare a new Proposed Variation' and also done new SEA and AA Screening Reports. They have asked for any observations or comments to be submitted no later than the 4th of November 2020.
- 2.5 The Consultation letter is attached at Appendix 9 and the Consultation documents can be viewed at the following link:
[http://www.donegalcoco.ie/services/planning/developmentplansbuiltheritageincludinggrants/cdp%202018-2024%20\(variation%20no.%201%20ten-t\)/](http://www.donegalcoco.ie/services/planning/developmentplansbuiltheritageincludinggrants/cdp%202018-2024%20(variation%20no.%201%20ten-t)/)

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 As stated above, Donegal County Council has prepared a new Proposed Variation to the County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024 and therefore they have also done a new SEA screening and a new AA screening; they have determined that:
 - 1) a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report will be required regarding the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the proposed variation, and
 - 2) Appropriate Assessment is required into effects on European sites
- 3.2 This Council's Planning officers have reviewed the consultation documents and are broadly in agreement and accept the findings of the respective documents. Therefore, the comments and observations are set out in the proposed response letter at Appendix 10, very similar to those given in the previous consultation.

4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR, Improvement, Rural Needs and other Implications

- 4.1 There are not considered to be any financial, equality, HR, Improvement, Rural Needs or other implications arising out of this paper.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are requested to note the contents of this Paper and agree for officers to issue the attached letter to Donegal County Council, before close of consultation at the end of 4th November 2020.

Appendix 9: Copy of consultation Letter sent to this Council

Appendix 10: Draft Response Letter to issue to Donegal County Council regarding the Environmental Reports for the Variation to the Donegal County Development Plan and the Ten-T Road Improvements project.