



Forward Planning,
Planning Department,
Leitrim County Council,
Áras an Chontae,
Carrick-on-Shannon,
Co. Leitrim

06 May 2026

Proposed Variation No. 1 to the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029

Dear Sir/Madam

I refer to the above. The Department of Education and Youth wish to make the following submission to proposed Variation 1 to the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029. The department has considered the above document and notes that the purpose of the proposed variation is to align the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029, with the NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines, to include the addition of further lands with a 'New Residential' land use zoning objective to address the new housing growth requirements and to include the land use zoning objectives and the land use zoning map for Carrick-on-Shannon as contained in the Carrick-on-Shannon Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031 into the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 thereby ensuring that all zoned lands in the county are now contained in the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029.

In terms of future population growth in County Leitrim as proposed in this variation, the department notes proposed amended 2.7 Housing Yield from Proposed Zoned Lands includes a Total Household Yield for the county of 1,986 units. Allowing for the average of 2.55 persons per household as per Census 2022, a development of 1,986 units could result in an additional cc 5,000+ people for County Leitrim.

A development of 1,986 units could see the demand for school places increase and could place considerable pressure on existing schools to cater for the extra school place requirements across the various settlements in County Leitrim.

In terms of future school place provision, the department notes the following settlements identified in the Housing Yield from Proposed Zoned Lands Table of the Variation and would like to make the following observations on them. The department's preference would be to expand existing facilities (if possible) should there be a requirement for additional school places resulting from planned population increases. Therefore, the department requests the Planning Authority to examine the potential of protecting a land buffer around each school to enable them expand further if required.



Carrick-on-Shannon

The department notes that as per Table 2.7 there is a projected Total Household Yield of 644 units. The projected Total Household Yield figure is 282 units above the CDP Total Household Yield of 362 units.

These projected figures (should they materialize) could see an increase in primary school place demand, which potentially could be met by the possible expansion of the existing facilities, if required. These figures could also see an increase in post-primary school place demand, which potentially could be met by the possible expansion of the existing facilities, if required.

The department notes Proposed Amendment No 31 to change the land use zoning objective of land in the townland of Aghameeny, Carrick-on-Shannon from 'Social and Community' to 'New Residential' and to zone additional lands as 'New Residential' land use zoning objective. The department notes that there is currently no requirement for a new school in Carrick-on-Shannon but there may be a requirement for an expansion of an existing school. The department's preference is always to expand existing facilities (if possible) where the potential requirement for additional school places arises as a result of planned population increases. Therefore, the department requests the Planning Authority to examine the potential of protecting a land buffer around each school to enable them expand further if required. The proposed re-zoned lands as per Amendment No 31 are adjacent to Gaelscoil Liatroma. It is acknowledged that the purpose of the site was originally for a nursing home. Notwithstanding that this site will now be re-zoned for residential development purposes, the department requests the Council to ensure that there are sufficient lands available to cater for the potential expansion of the school should that ever be required.

Ballinamore

The department notes that as per Table 2.7 there is a projected Total Household Yield of 166 units. The projected Total Household Yield figure is 53 units above the CDP Total Household Yield of 113 units.

These projected figures (should they materialize) could see an increase in primary school place demand, which potentially could be met by the possible expansion of the existing facilities, if required. These figures could also see an increase in post-primary school place demand, which potentially could be met by the possible expansion of the existing facilities, if required.

The department notes Proposed Amendment No 36 to Change the land use zoning objective of land in the townland of Aghadark, Ballinamore from 'Social and Community' to 'Mixed Use'. The lands are to the rear of Scoil Chlann Naofa which is the only primary school in Ballinamore. As there is currently no requirement for a new school in Ballinamore but allowing for potential population growth identified through this variation and future development plans, there may be a requirement for an expansion to this existing school at some stage in the future.



Manorhamilton

The department notes that as per Table 2.7 there is a projected Total Household Yield of 189 units. The projected Total Household Yield figure is 59 units above the CDP Total Household Yield of 130 units.

These projected figures (should they materialize) could see an increase in primary school place demand, which potentially could be met by the possible expansion of the existing facilities, if required. These figures could also see an increase in post-primary school place demand, which potentially could be met by the possible expansion of the existing facilities, if required.

Other settlements

Projected growth figures outlined in the variation could see increases in primary school and post primary demand in Dromahair, Drumshanbo, Mohill, Kinlough and Dromod which potentially could be met by the possible expansion of the existing facilities, if required.

In terms of the identification of future school place requirements that necessitates the need for the reservation and acquisitions of sites for future new schools or the requirement of new sites to facilitate the relocation of existing schools, the department would like to highlight the following points.

It is generally considered that schools are enabling infrastructure for housing and as such, schools should be positioned in the heart of new and expanding sustainable communities, allowing for the maximum benefit to the community inside and outside school hours. Further to this, other community facilities and amenities should also be positioned close to school facilities to allow for all community facilities be complimentary to each other for the benefit of the whole community. It is the department's request that the sites identified fits the criteria above.

Further to this, all enabling infrastructure required to develop and operate school facilities should be provided in advance of the need for such schools. This infrastructure includes road, electricity, water infrastructure, sustainable transport links, active travel networks, road safety measures and safe routes to school facilities. It should be noted that it is not within the remit of the Department of Education and Youth to develop or fund this enabling infrastructure.

In relation to further proposed changes in the proposed variation, the department notes the following.

Proposed Amendment No 28 to change the land use zoning objective of land in the townland of Cloonsheebane, Carrick-on-Shannon from 'Social and Community' to 'New Residential'.



Proposed Amendment No 40 to change the land use zoning objective of land in the townland of Drumahaire, Dromahair from 'Social and Community' to 'New Residential'.

The department also anticipates that additional Special Education Needs (SEN) provision at both Primary and Post Primary level will be required in the future throughout the country and this may result in schools requiring additional accommodation or space to meet this growing need. On a point of information, the Department of Education and Youth engages closely with the National Council for Special Education in relation to the forward planning of new special classes and additional special school places. The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) has a statutory function to plan and co-ordinate the provision of education and support services to children with special educational needs, in consultation with the relevant education partners and the Health Service Executive (HSE). This includes the establishment of special class and special school placements in various geographical areas where there is an identified need.

The department and the NCSE are working with schools and patrons to make increased provision for children with special education needs, both in special classes at mainstream schools and in special schools. At post primary level, all schools have been advised to plan for an average of 4 special classes per school. At primary level, the focus is on ensuring appropriate provision at all medium to large primary schools (8 mainstream classes or more) in the first instance. Most special classes are established in existing accommodation and where there is a further requirement within that accommodation, additional capacity can be catered for through the provision of extension facilities.

In recent years, the department has seen an increase in SEN school place requirement. Since 2019, 11 new special schools have been established, with five more due to be established for the 2025/26 school year. The continuing need for additional provision across the country, including in County Leitrim, is kept under constant review. In this regard, the department will consult with the Council if and when additional special education needs accommodation or sites for future special schools are required within specific locations. In the context of this variation and being mindful of a substantial population growth that may arise from the various future planned housing developments within its environs, the department would welcome explicit support within the plan for the provision of school accommodation for children and young people with special educational needs.

In terms of assessing current and future capacity, the Department of Education and Youth has to be mindful of potential unforeseen circumstances such as the Ukrainian crisis, which have the ability to put undue pressure on school place provision and could necessitate reassessments of school place provision from time to time. The department will engage with the Council where the findings of an assessment require a review of existing or future school site provision within a specific location.

Finally, the department welcomes the continued engagement with the Council regarding the development of both new and existing schools, as appropriate, and emphasizes the critical importance of the ongoing work of the Council in ensuring sufficient land is zoned



for this purpose. It would be both essential and beneficial for the department to have further engagement with the Council in relation to the potential and significant additional school provision that may be required arising from the adoption of this variation as it is proposed.

Yours sincerely,

Mairead Garry

Statutory Plans

Forward Planning & Site Acquisition Section