

Northern & Western Regional Assembly (ROI): Publication of Draft Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES): Public Consultation Document	23rd January 2019
PLANNING COMMITTEE	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Outcomes
Leader and Champion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will establish key relationships with Government agencies and potential strategic partners in Northern Ireland and external to it which helps us to deliver our vision for this Council area.
Lead Officer	Local Development Plan Manager
Cost:	N/A

For Decision

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Northern & Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) has published its Draft 'Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES)' for public consultation.
- 1.2 Donegal County Council (DCC), which lies within the NWRA is one of this Borough's four adjoining councils, for the purposes of preparing the Local Development Plan (LDP); having a common water body (Lough Foyle) and a ferry crossing (Magilligan to Greencastle) (see map at Appendix 1).
- 1.3 This Borough also lies within the Donegal-Derry NWRA Sub Regional Catchment Area (see map at Appendix 2). As such, the transboundary implications of this Strategy must be considered.

2.0 Detail

RSES Issues Paper 2035

- 2.1 The NWRA previously published a 'RSES Issues Paper 2035' for pre-draft public consultation at the end of 2017. The Council responded to this through the head of planning as agreed at the 24th January 2018 planning committee.

Draft RSES

- 2.2 NWRA wrote to the Council again on 3rd December 2018 advising that the Assembly, at its meeting on 9th November 2018 adopted the Draft RSES. It was

published for comment on 19th November 2018, together with associated environmental documents: an SEA Environmental Report (ER); a Natura Impact Statement (NIS); and a Regional Flood Risk Assessment (RFRA). All documents can be viewed online at: <https://www.nwra.ie/rses/>

2.3 The purpose of the RSES is to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the region over a period of between 12 years and 20 years.

2.4 The draft RSES is split into the following sections:

- Strategic Analysis & Vision;
- People & Places;
- Growth Ambition 1: Economy & Employment – Vibrant Region;
- Growth Ambition 2: Environment – Natural Heritage;
- Growth Ambition 3: Connectivity – Connected Region;
- Growth Ambition 4: Quality of Life;
- Growth Ambition 5: Infrastructure – Enabling Our Region;
- All Island Cohesion; and
- Implementation.

3.0 Environmental Reports

3.1 The following environmental reports have been published alongside the Draft RSES for comment:

SEA Environmental Report

3.2 The purpose of the environmental report is to:

- Inform the development of the draft NW RSES;
- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the draft NW RSES and its reasonable alternatives; and
- Provide an early opportunity for statutory authorities and the public to offer views on any aspect of this environmental report and accompanying draft NW RSES documentation, through consultation.

Natura Impact Report

3.3 The overall purpose of the Appropriate Assessment (AA) process is to ensure that the RSES does not adversely affect the integrity of any European (Natura 2000) site in view of its conservation objectives.

3.4 The development of the RSES, SEA and AA process is an iterative one which requires engagement with all parties and consultation with stakeholders. The AA process involves the analysis of the relationship between the proposed elements

of the NW RSES and the conservation objectives of European (Natura 2000) sites.

Regional Flood Risk Assessment

- 3.5 The purpose of this RFRA is to ensure that the NW RSES follows the principles of the guidelines and implements policies and development strategies that:
- Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, unless there are proven wider sustainability grounds that justify appropriate development and where the flood risk can be reduced or managed to an acceptable level;
 - Avoid developments increasing flood risk elsewhere;
 - Adopt a sequential approach to flood risk management when assessing the location for new development based on avoidance, reduction and mitigation of flood risk;
 - Avoid unnecessary restriction of national, regional or local economic and social growth;
 - Incorporate flood risk assessments into the planning process;
 - Improve the understanding of flood risk among relevant stakeholders; and
 - Ensure that the requirements of EU and national law in relation to the natural environment and nature conservation are complied with at all stages of flood risk management.

4.0 Collaborative Working

- 4.1 The Council has been pro-active in its collaborative working with planning authorities in both jurisdictions in relation to the preparation of its LDP's:- namely Derry City & Strabane District and Donegal County Council. We see this as key to ensuring that key social, economic and environmental issues relevant to all three authorities are highlighted and discussed.
- 4.2 The three authorities also participate in the Cross-Border Development Plan Working Group and this collaboration is set to continue throughout all of our respective LDP work programmes.
- 4.3 Council's Place & Prosperity Section has also been consulted on the economic proposals contained within the document.
- 4.4 The public consultation period ends at 5pm on Friday 8th February 2019.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that Members agree to the Head of Planning issuing a consultation response on behalf of the Council.

Appendix 1: Map showing ROI Regional Assembly boundaries.

Map 2.1 Configuration of the Regional Assemblies in Ireland



Appendix 2: Map showing ROI Regional Assembly catchment areas.

