



Planning Department,  
Roscommon County Council,  
Áras an Chontae,  
Roscommon,  
Co. Roscommon.



23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024

**Re: Draft Roscommon Town Local Area Plan 2024-2030**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to acknowledge receipt of notification of the above draft LAP. The Department of Education has examined the contents therein and would like to make the following submission.

In the context of future population trends and their potential impact on school place requirements, the Department notes that this draft LAP refers to the population growth identified for Roscommon Town in the recent draft CDP 2022-2028. The Department notes that the population scenario envisaged for Co Roscommon overall is the NPF target of 71,500 people by 2026. Within that scenario, the plan envisages a population increase of 6,956 people for County Roscommon in the period from 2016 to 2027, it was reasonable to assume that a proportion of the potential increase to 2031 would be applied to Roscommon Town. The Department considered this data and made its submission to the draft CDP 2022-2028 regarding Roscommon on the basis of potential population growth within the town and its environs between 2022 and 2031. In Table 4.1 Population Growth Forecast and Residential Land Requirements of the Draft LAP, it is anticipated that Roscommon Town will have a population growth of 1,608 persons for the draft LAP period and anticipates a further 170 persons between 2028 and 2031. The Department has assessed the draft LAP's overall allocated figure of 1,778 persons to 2031 in terms of potential future school place provision requirements.

There are 5 schools (two primary and three post-primary) located in Roscommon town. The Department's preference would be to expand these existing facilities (if possible) should there be a requirement for additional school places as a result of the planned population increases. The Department requests the Planning Authority to examine the potential of protecting a land buffer around each of the primary schools to enable them expand further if required to meet the future population growth in Roscommon town. The schools in question are:

St Coman's Wood Primary School (R/N 20498B)  
Gaelscoil De hÍde (R/N 20126K) which is currently in temporary accommodation. The permanent building will be located in the Education campus with Roscommon Community College.



The projected growth figures will see an increase in post-primary school place demand but it is currently expected that this extra requirement could be accommodated by the planned expansion of existing facilities. Most notably, there is an extension project for Roscommon Community College which will create additional future capacity.

The Department notes in section 2.5 Education where it states that there are currently four primary schools in Roscommon – Abbey National School, St Coman's Wood Primary School, St Mary's Convent and Gaelscoil de hÍde. This is incorrect as there are only two primary schools in the town, St Coman's Wood Primary School and Gaelscoil de hÍde. St Coman's Wood Primary School was formed as a result of Abbey Boys NS and Scoil Mhuire Convent Primary School amalgamating in 2017.

The Department notes and welcomes Objective RN 60 to facilitate a collaborative and co-ordinated approach with all relevant community and commercial stakeholders, to protect and support the retention and expansion of local social, community and cultural facilities.

The Department notes and supports Objective RN 61 to facilitate the location of new educational facilities along sustainable transport corridors, where such facilities can be accessed by walking, cycling or public transport. The Department supports the development of sustainable travel links between schools and residential areas.

In terms of assessing current and future capacity, the Department of Education 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. The Department also anticipates that additional Special Education Needs 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 to meet this growing need. The Department will consult with the Council if and when additional SEN accommodation is required within specific locations.

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.

Yours sincerely,

  
Mairead Garry  
Statutory Plans  
Forward Planning Section

