

**An Roinn Tithíochta,
Pleanála agus Rialtais Áitiúil**
Department of Housing,
Planning and Local Government



07th March 2019

Forward Planning Section,
Planning Department,
Roscommon County Council,
Aras an Chontae,
Roscommon,
County Roscommon.



Re: Proposed Variation No. 2 to the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) Local Area Plan 2016 – 2022

A Chara

I am directed by the Minister for Housing and Urban Development to refer to your recent letter in relation to the above and set out hereunder observations on behalf of the Minister.

The Department commends and supports Roscommon County Council's initiative and collaborative approach with Westmeath County Council in producing the Draft Athlone Joint Retail Strategy.

The Draft Joint Retail Strategy appears to take a considered approach to the retail needs of the entire of Athlone, including the Monksland/Bellanamullia area, located within Roscommon County. An assessment of retail floorspace was undertaken together with an analysis of shopping patterns.

Variation No. 2 provides for the incorporation of the Draft Joint Retail Strategy into the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) Local Area Plan, where appropriate. Policy 89 specifically relates to the Monksland area, which facilitates the enhancement of retail services in this area while ensuring a more integrated approach with Athlone centre. The Department are supportive of this policy in the context of Athlone.



The Council have referred to the National Planning Framework and Draft Regional Spatial & Economic Strategies (RSEs) for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly within the Joint Retail Strategy and Variation No.2 to the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) Local Area Plan 2016 - 2022. The Council needs to ensure all provisions made within the RSEs are incorporated into the Joint Retail Strategy and where appropriate the relevant Plan.

The officials of the Department are available to discuss any matters and in the first instance you are advised to contact M/S. Laura Courtney, Planning Adviser on 01-8882203

Is mise le meas,

Niall Cussen
Chief Planner
Forward Planning Section

