

Your Ref

Our Ref

Date 6th February 2019

Email planning@fermanaghomagh.com



Fermanagh & Omagh
District Council
Comhairle Ceantair
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

RSES Submissions
NWRA
The Square
Ballaghaderreen
Co. Roscommon
F45 W674

Brendan Hegarty
Chief Executive

Planning Department

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the above consultation. The Council is broadly content with the Growth Ambitions set out in the draft NW RSES and the importance that is placed on sustainable growth, protection of the environment, improving accessibility and connectivity including by road and digital, diversifying the economy and improving the quality of life.

The Council is fully supportive of cross-border co-operation and collaboration in areas such as transportation, economic opportunities and tourism and has noted the focus given in the draft NW RSES to two case studies of successful tourism initiatives - the Ulster Canal and Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark – for which the Council has part responsibility. In terms of transportation, the A5 Road Development is also identified as a project (Regional Policy Objective 108) to be delivered by 2027 and the Council welcomes this inclusion within the draft NW RSES. The Council would also assert that the A4 and N16 roads are important as a primary connection route between Enniskillen and Sligo.

The potential for further Greenways is also referenced in the document, and the Council would be supportive of such opportunities where they would link up on a cross border basis.

The Council would wish to highlight the possible implications of Brexit upon the Border Region and is of the belief that the RSES should be sufficiently flexible to reflect changes to the region as a result of Brexit. While at the time of writing it is not possible to fully detail the implications of Brexit, the Council would suggest that these could include the impact of trade barriers that may emerge, the affect on flows of people and labour on either side of the border and the loss of access to EU funding which may have particular implications for cross community projects and tourism initiatives. Continuing cooperation and discussion around risks and opportunities associated with Brexit will be essential in order to develop solutions to these issues.

The Council has not provided a view on the contents of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) as it considers that given the regional nature of the draft NW RSES, this should be sought from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency in its capacity as the statutory nature conservation body in Northern Ireland.

In conclusion, the Council reaffirms its commitment to biodiversity and the highest standards of environmental protection, cross-border working and collaboration through its support for projects which yield outcomes of mutual benefit and through representation on bodies such as the Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN).

Yours faithfully



Hilda Clements
Principal Planning Officer
Development Plan