



Our Ref: **DP00070/2019**

(Please quote in all related correspondence)

11 October 2019

RSES Material Amendment Submissions,
Southern Regional Assembly,
Assembly House,
O'Connell Street,
Waterford,
X91 F8PC

Via email rses@southernassembly.ie

**Re: Public Consultation on the Proposed Material Amendments for the Draft
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region**

A chara

On behalf of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, I refer to correspondence received in connection with the above.

It is noted that the Southern Regional Assembly has proposed material amendments to the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region. The proposed material amendments are currently on public display, together with the associated environmental assessment report incorporating updates in relation to the SEA Environmental Report, Natura Impact Report (NIR), and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

The Department welcomes the invitation to make observations in relation to the material amendments of the draft strategy. Outlined below are the nature conservation related observations/recommendations of the Department.

Nature Conservation

Context of observations

The following observations are made by the Department in its role as a prescribed body under planning legislation and as the authority with overarching responsibility for nature conservation and the nature directives (i.e. the Birds and Habitats Directives). The observations are not exhaustive and are offered to assist the Regional Assembly in meeting obligations and commitments in relation to nature conservation, European sites, biodiversity and environmental protection in the context of the strategy and its implementation.



Matters relating to environmental assessment

These observations should be read in conjunction with the Department's earlier submissions in relation to the preparation of the RSES (our ref: DP00071/2018). It is noted that the Draft RSES and subsequent proposed material amendments have been subject to SEA, AA and SFRA and these processes are reflected in the Environmental Report, Natura Impact Report (NIR), and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) prepared by the RPS group on behalf of the Southern Regional Assembly.

These environmental assessment processes have clearly identified risks, impact pathways and concerns for nature conservation interests that are associated with elements of the draft RSES. These reports, including the updates contained in the Environmental Assessment Report for the proposed material amendments, have proposed a wide range of mitigation measures to address these concerns.

The Department recommends that all these mitigation measures are fully incorporated in the final RSES to ensure that a high level of protection of the environment is achieved as part of the plan-making process. In this regard, the Department acknowledges and welcomes the positive changes made in a number of the material amendments to incorporate environmental considerations in the RSES.

You are requested to send further communications to this Department's Development Applications Unit (DAU) at manager.dau@chg.gov.ie (team monitored); if this is not possible, correspondence may alternatively be sent to:

The Manager
Development Applications Unit (DAU)
Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
Newtown Road
Wexford
Y35 AP90

Is mise, le meas

Joanne Lyons
Development Applications Unit