

Submission to the Draft County Development Plan A Chairde, The Draft Plan is very comprehensive and well written. I think it would be easier for a layperson to read if a summary of the main issues was provided. The Council must respond to the demise of the peat industry by securing funding for a strategy for the development of County Offaly to recreate a vibrant County. For example, some of the following issues could be highlighted: The food industry; virtually every town and village in Offaly has a food/agricultural enterprise e.g. meat factories, Dairy, Distilling, Grain handling and very many artisan scale enterprises. Resource-based activity e.g. sand and gravel, concrete works, timber/forestry generated industry. Heritage and Culture:e.g.Birr Heritage Town, Monastic Heritage. "The land of saints and scholars"..monastic sites, 6th-10th Century universities in Clonmacnoise and Durrow. Rahan and the Jesuit connection, Scientific and Educational and Literary Connection. Landscape areas of cultural, scientific and Educational value e.g.Peatlands, wetlands, Rivers and Streams, Eskers, Sl. Bloom area, Croghan Hill, Charleville Forest and Lough .Boora Parklands, Emerging assets like DEW, Tullamore, University Hospital, Lough Boora Parklands, Derryonce, Mount Lucas etc. The availability in the future of large tracts of cutover peatlands; Bord na Mona work sites like Boora, Clonsast redundant power stations at Rhode, Lumcloon, Edenderry and Shannonbridge. Accessibility and Connectivity are key to the future well-being of the people of Offaly. Urgent improvement of the N52 from junction 5 on the M6 to Tullamore The improvement of the N80 from the Tullamore bypass to Mountmellick along a new line avoiding Killeigh village and its monastic complex. Mountmellick and then connecting with the M7 and M8 south of Portlaoise. Develop the N62 Southwards from Doon, bypassing Ferbane, Birr and Roscrea to link with the M7 Northeast of Roscrea. Progressively improve the road from Tullamore to the Edenderry bypass and then to the M4 near Enfield. Bypass Kilcormac to the North of the town thus securing a new link road Northwards to Lough Boora Parklands Climate Change Promote public transport both Road and Rail. There is immediate scope to improve rail services to both Clara and Tullamore and then to upgrade the line from Tullamore to Portarlinton. Bus services throughout the county are fragmented and require rationalisation in the first instance and then integration with the rail network at Tullamore. Promote Tullamore as a pilot scheme for an integrated cycle network to become the Tilburg of Ireland. Develop renewal energy infrastructure on cutaway peatlands Connectivity to 3rd and 4th level Education is vital to the well-being of the people of Offaly in the post peat burning era. Currently, the county is remote from the 7 universities in the country. Access to University-level education needs to be provided urgently. A good start has been made in both Birr and Tullamore through connecting local based resources with Universities in Dublin,

Limerick, Galway and Cork. The Natural, Heritage and Cultural resources of County Offaly provide fertile ground for linkages with Universities throughout Ireland and the rest of the world. These initiatives can be built into a university-style complex. Working from home which is usually skill-based gives scope for expansion into Hubs and larger units. Clara has much more potential than the other “towns” with which it is categorised. Clara deserves to be lumped in with Edenderry and Portarlinton or at least it should be in a category of its own. Commuting from Clara has strong links with Tullamore. This can be facilitated by an improved road/rail public transport initiative. Clara has a very strong music/drama/film tradition which should be facilitated and encouraged. Opportunity Sites Opportunity site No 2 could be extended to include underused buildings on Main St. and the Square. St Anthony’s old school site could likewise be identified as an opportunity site. Ferbane Opportunity site No.2 could be extended northwards to cater for a link road to the Athlone road thus consolidating the town centre. Kilcormac There is inadequate provision for the development of industry/employment. Tullamore Opportunity site No 1 Extend the site to include the Parochial House block and car park Site No 2. Extend the site to the Patrick St and Bury Quay frontages. Provide a link road from Harbour St. to Kilbride Plaza, Sit2 No.4 Develop a link from Tanyard lane to the High street to allow the removal of through traffic from O’Connor Square. Site No. 5 Develop a public transport hub. Facilitate access to back lands between the Railway station and the malt house. 11.2.3 Delete the objective to provide a Regional hub sludge centre in Tullamore. This type activity should be located elsewhere. Care should be exercised in allowing Data Centres. These consume large amounts of renewable energy that may be put to more productive use Signed Vincent Hussey