

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



**Oifig an Aire**  
Office of the Minister

 November 2019

Mr. John Devitt,  
Chief Executive,  
Transparency International Ireland,  
69 Middle Abbey Street,  
Dublin 1.

Dear Mr. Devitt,

I wish to refer to your recent letter dated regarding Donegal County Council.

I firstly wish to clarify that former Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government, John Gormley, announced in 2010 that a planning review would be undertaken by the Department involving seven local authorities, including Donegal. This led to the "Planning Review Report" which was published in 2012. The current "Review Into Certain Planning Matters in Respect of Donegal County Council" by Mr. Rory Mulcahy S.C., was initiated in 2015 by then Minister Alan Kelly.

Following receipt of this report in June 2017 an initial analysis and assessment of the report's findings and recommendations was undertaken. Interaction between the Department's own legal advisers and the Attorney General's Office followed. A comprehensive set of queries and a request for advice in relation to certain matters, including potential dissemination or publication of the report, was then submitted to the Attorney General's Office.

The Attorney's advice was received in late July 2018. Officials in this Department considered the advice further and prepared a submission for the Minister's consideration, including an assessment of the options available to him in terms of publication or dissemination of the report.

Developments adjacent to this advice subsequently raised fresh queries. The Minister consulted with his legal advisers and the Attorney General's office on these matters, and met with Senior Counsel in December 2018. On 17 December 2018 further correspondence from Senior Counsel was received.



The Minister is currently considering the report and the extensive legal advices received. Once he has concluded his deliberations he will be in a position to make a further statement.

I trust that this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Niamh Redmond in blue ink.

**Niamh Redmond**  
**Private Secretary**