



# Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029

## Appropriate Assessment Conclusion Statement



Comhairle  
Chontae  
Liatroma | Leitrim  
County  
Council

# APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT CONCLUSION STATEMENT

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## FOR THE LEITRIM COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023-2029

**for: Leitrim County Council**

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# Section 1 Introduction and Background

## 1.1 Introduction

This is the Appropriate Assessment (AA) Conclusion Statement for the Leitrim County Development Plan. The obligation to undertake AA derives from Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC as transposed into Irish legislation by, inter alia, the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. AA is a focused and detailed impact assessment of the implications of a strategic action (such as a plan or programme) or project, alone and in combination with other strategic actions and projects, on the integrity of any European Site in view of its conservation objectives. This AA Conclusion Statement should be read in conjunction with the Plan and associated documents including the AA Natura Impact Report (NIR).

## 1.2 Legislative Requirements in relation to AA

In carrying out the AA for the Plan, Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, requires, inter alia, that the Council considers the matters arrayed in the first column on Table 1.1 below. The second column identifies how these issues have been addressed.

**Table 1.1 Matters taken into account by the AA**

Matter specified by the Regulations	How addressed by AA
(a) the Natura Impact Report	An AA NIR accompanies this AA Conclusion Statement and the Plan.
(b) any supplemental information furnished in relation to any such report	This AA Conclusion Statement accompanies the NIR that provides additional detail on European Sites.
(c) if appropriate, any additional information sought by the authority and furnished by the applicant in relation to a Natura Impact Report	
(d) any information or advice obtained by the public authority	Submissions made during the Plan preparation/AA process that were relevant to the AA resulted in updates being made to the AA NIR.
(e) if appropriate, any written submissions or observations made to the public authority in relation to the application for consent for proposed plan or project	Proposed Material Alterations were screened for the need to undertake Stage 2 AA (Stage 2 AA was undertaken on certain alterations).
(f) any other relevant information	

In addition to the above, the Regulations require that the Council makes available for inspection a determination regarding the outcome of the assessment with respect to whether or not the Plan would adversely affect the integrity of a European site (a copy of this determination is provided at Section 4).

## 1.3 AA Conclusion Statement

Non-Statutory AA guidance (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009) states that (Section 4.14) it *"is recommended that planning authorities include a clear and discrete AA Conclusion Statement as a distinct section in the written statement of the plan separate to the SEA statement."* This guidance recommends that the following issues are addressed by the AA Conclusion Statement:

- Summary of how the findings of the AA were factored into the Plan (see Section 2);
- Reasons for choosing the Plan as adopted, in the light of other reasonable alternatives considered as part of the AA process (see Section 3);
- A declaration that the Plan as adopted will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of European Sites (provided at Section 4); and
- The NIR (the AA NIR is accompanied by this AA Conclusion Statement and has informed the AA Determination – see Section 4).

Furthermore, as stated in the Draft "Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2021):

*"...There is a similar requirement to publish a determination relating to the AA that may have been undertaken. Under Article 6.3 of the Habitats Directive the determination (often termed an 'AA Conclusion Statement') must state as to whether or not the Draft Plan would adversely affect the integrity of a European site. However as stated in Section 3.5, this determination must have been made prior to the adoption of the Draft Plan."*

As recommended, this AA Conclusion Statement addresses the above issues, including the signed AA Determination included at Section 4.

## Section 2 How the findings of the AA were factored into the Plan

The SEA and AA team worked with the Plan-preparation team at the Council in order to integrate requirements for environmental protection and management into the Plan.

The Plan was prepared in an iterative manner whereby the Plan and AA documents have informed subsequent versions of the other. The findings of the AA were integrated into the Plan through mitigation measures. These mitigation measures ensure that there will be no significant effects to the ecological integrity of any European site from implementation of the Plan. The mitigation measures most relevant to the protection of European sites are identified in Table 2.1 below.

Furthermore, the detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input from the SEA and AA process facilitated zoning that avoids inappropriate development being permitted in areas of high ecological sensitivity.

**Table 2.1 Mitigation relating to AA<sup>1</sup>**

Topic	Measures integrated into the Plan, including:
Natural Heritage and Biodiversity	<p>TREE POL 1 To require the submission of landscape plans, where appropriate, to accompany planning applications for rural development proposals prepared by competent professionals and to promote the use of native trees for boundary treatment and shelter belts.</p> <p>TREE POL 2 To retain and protect significant stands/lengths of existing trees/hedgerows/woodlands, and seek increased planting of native trees, where appropriate, in new developments.</p> <p>TREE POL 3 To protect and preserve existing hedgerows in new developments and where their removal is necessary during seek their replacement with new hedgerows of native species and of native provenance indigenous to the area.</p> <p>TREE OBJ 1 To consider the use of Tree Preservation Orders for the preservation of any tree, trees or group of trees or woodland of special amenity or environmental value.</p> <p>NH POL 1 To protect and conserve Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.</p> <p>NH POL 2 To implement Article 6(3) and where necessary Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, including to ensure that Appropriate Assessment is carried out in relation to works, plans and projects with the potential to impact European sites (SACs and SPAs), whether directly or indirectly or in combination with any other plan(s) or project(s). All assessments must be in compliance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended, and the Planning and Development Act, as relevant.</p> <p>NH POL 3 To protect designated Natural Heritage Area (NHA) sites, including proposed Natural Heritage Area sites (pNHA) and seek to develop linkages between designated sites and other non-designated sites of ecological importance, where feasible and as resources permit.</p> <p>NH POL 4 To consult with relevant prescribed bodies, such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service (DoHLGH), and take account of any licensing requirements when undertaking, approving and authorising development which is likely to affect plant, animal or bird species or habitats protected by law.</p> <p>NH POL 5 To ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact on plant, animal or bird species or habitats protected by law, subject to satisfactory mitigation measures.</p> <p>Objectives</p> <p>NH OBJ 1 To ensure that no project or programme giving rise to significant adverse, direct, indirect, secondary or cumulative impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site(s), having regard to their qualifying interests</p>

<sup>1</sup> Note that non-material changes to individual Plan provisions referenced in this report may be updated during the finalisation of the Plan, including numbering, formatting and graphic design.

Topic	Measures integrated into the Plan, including:
	<p>and conservation objectives, arising from their size, scale, area or land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) <sup>2</sup>.</p> <p>NH OBJ 2 To protect and conserve those sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) during the lifetime of this plan. The list of current SACs is contained in Table 1 of this chapter.</p> <p>NH OBJ 3 To protect and conserve those sites designated as Special Protection Areas during the lifetime of this plan. There is current one SPA in Co. Leitrim which is contained in Table 2 of this chapter.</p> <p>NH OBJ 4 To protect and conserve Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) that become designated and notified to the Local Authority during the lifetime of this plan. The list of current NHAs and proposed NHAs are contained in Table 3 and 4 of this chapter.</p> <p>NH OBJ 5 To protect the character, appearance and quality of the habitats and semi-natural features in County Leitrim such as woodlands, hedgerows, peatlands, wetlands and artificial waterways of historic or ecological importance.</p> <p>NH OBJ 6 To promote, in partnership with the relevant agencies, the development and implementation of codes of best practice through initiatives such as the Local Floral Pride initiatives, Community Environmental Action and the Green Schools projects.</p> <p>NH POL 6 To protect and where possible enhance wildlife habitats and landscape features which act as ecological corridors/networks and stepping stones, such as river corridors, hedgerows and road verges, and to minimise the loss of habitats and features of the wider countryside (such as ponds, wetlands, trees) which are not within designated sites.</p> <p>NH POL 7 To treat the uplands of North Leitrim located above the 160m contour, as an ecologically-sensitive entity, where these uplands are not already designated as such.</p> <p>NH POL 8 To protect ecological networks linking protected and designated important sites within the County, in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>NH POL 9 To ensure that appropriate mitigation and/or compensation measures to conserve biodiversity, landscape character and green infrastructure networks are required in developments where habitats are at risk or lost as part of a development.</p> <p>NH OBJ 7 To encourage appropriate management of landscape features, particularly through the development management process and using planning agreements with landowners and developers, where appropriate.</p> <p>NH OBJ 8 To identify and map over the lifetime of the Plan habitats and green infrastructure / sites of local biodiversity value of county importance and to raise awareness and understanding of the county's natural heritage and biodiversity.</p> <p>NH POL 10 To ensure the protection, conservation and enhancement of the biodiversity of the county.</p> <p>NH OBJ 9 To support the implementation of the relevant recommendations contained in the National Biodiversity Action Plan and the All Ireland Pollinator Plan.</p> <p>NH OBJ 10 To support the implementation of the actions contained in the Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2025 when finalised, or any successor plan, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders and subject to the availability of the necessary funding sources.</p> <p>TWH POL 1 To discourage the felling of healthy mature trees to facilitate development and to encourage the retention of healthy mature trees within developments to the maximum extent practicable.</p>

<sup>2</sup> Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be: a) no alternative solution available, b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project to proceed; and c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.

Topic	Measures integrated into the Plan, including:
	<p>TWH POL 2 To require the planting of native broadleaved species, and species of local provenance, in new developments as appropriate. (See Table 5 in this regard).</p> <p>TWH POL 3 To support the Native Woodland and Neighbourwood schemes and other initiatives that aim to establish and enhance woodlands for recreational and wildlife benefits, in partnership with local communities.</p> <p>TWH POL 4 To protect and preserve existing hedgerows and minimise their removal. Where their removal is necessary, to seek their replacement with new hedgerow material native to the area (See Table 5 in this regard).</p> <p>TWH POL 5 To retain distinctive boundary treatment such as stone walls, when undertaking, authorising or approving development. Where the loss of the existing boundary is unavoidable as part of development, to ensure that the wall is re-built using local stone and local vernacular design.</p> <p>TWH OBJ 1 To use Tree Preservation Orders to protect important trees, groups of trees or woodlands, as appropriate which may be at risk or have an amenity, biodiversity or historic value during the lifetime of this plan.</p> <p>POLL OBJ 1 To manage and restore semi-natural habitats and their native plants on Council land in as far as is practicable and affordable.</p> <p>LCA POL 1 To conserve and enhance the high nature conservation value of the Landscape Character Areas in order to create/protect ecologically resilient and varied landscapes.</p> <p>LCA POL 2 To protect, enhance and contribute to the physical, visual and scenic character of County Leitrim and to preserve its unique landscape character.</p> <p>LCA POL 3 To ensure that landscape sensitivity and the preservation of the uniqueness of a landscape character area (where appropriate) is an important consideration in determining the appropriateness of development uses and proposals in areas of landscape sensitivity, (scenery, nature conservation or archaeology) in conjunction with the siting, design and materials proposed.</p> <p>LCA POL 4 To seek to ensure that local landscape features, including historic features and buildings, hedgerows, shelter belts and stone walls, are retained, protected and enhanced where appropriate, so as to preserve the local landscape and character of an area, whilst providing for future development</p> <p>LCA POL 5 To require landscape and visual impact assessments prepared by suitably qualified professionals be submitted with planning applications for development which may have significant impact on landscape character areas of medium or high sensitivity.</p> <p>LCA OBJ 1 To protect and enhance the quality, character, and distinctiveness of the physical, visual and scenic character of landscapes of the County in accordance with national policy and guidelines and the recommendations of the Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment (2020) in Appendix *.</p> <p>LCA OBJ 2 To ensure that the management of development will have regard to the value of the landscape, its character, importance, sensitivity and capacity to absorb change as outlined in Appendix * Leitrim Landscape Character Assessment (2020) and its recommendations.</p>
Peatlands, wetlands and surface water courses	<p>PEAT POL 1 To conserve peatlands and protect peatland landscapes within the County.</p> <p>PEAT POL 2 To seek hydrological reports for significant developments within and close to peatlands, to assess potential impacts on the integrity of the peatland ecosystems.</p> <p>WET POL 1 To have regard to the County Leitrim Wetlands Survey 2019 and subsequent wetland surveys that may be published during the lifetime of this Plan in assessing individual development management proposals. This will include the protection of surveyed wetland sites that have been rated of A (International), B (National) and C+ (County) importance.</p> <p>WET POL 2 To implement the relevant parts of the Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2011 and the European Communities</p>



Topic	Measures integrated into the Plan, including:
	<p>(Amendment to Planning and Development) Regulations 2011 which require planning permission to be applied for where the area impacted by works relating to the drainage or reclamation of a wetland exceeds 0.1 hectares or where such works may have a significant effect on the environment. Such planning applications may also require the undertaking of an Appropriate Assessment where considered necessary.</p> <p>WET POL 3 To ensure that all proposed land zonings take cognisance of appropriate riparian setback distances that support the attainment of high ecological status for water bodies, the conservation of biodiversity and good ecosystem health, and buffer zones from flood plains.</p> <p>Various text under Section 13.20.1 Wind Energy.</p>
<p>Water services, groundwater and water quality</p>	<p>WI POL 3 To support Irish Water in the promotion of effective management of trade discharges to sewers in order to maximise the capacity of existing sewer networks and minimise detrimental impacts on wastewater treatment works.</p> <p>WI POL 4 To ensure that all new developments connect to the public wastewater infrastructure, where available, and to encourage existing developments that are in close proximity to a public sewer to connect to that sewer subject to obtaining a connection agreement with Irish Water.</p> <p>WI POL 5 To ensure the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure, in order to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements and a cleaner environment. Water abstractions should ensure appropriate levels of environmental management and protection, including ensuring compliance with the Water Framework Directive and Habitats Directive.</p> <p>WQ POL 1 To protect existing groundwater sources and aquifers in the county and to manage development in a manner consistent with the protection of these resources.</p> <p>WQ POL 2 To support the preparation of Drinking Water Protection Plans and Source Protection Plans to protect sources of public water supply, in accordance with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the current and future cycles of River Basin Management Plans. In this regard, the Council supports mitigation and protection measures for all protected areas, including Drinking Water Protected Areas.</p> <p>WQ POL 3 In conjunction with Irish Water, to have regard to the EPA 2019 publication "Drinking Water Report for Public Water Supplies 2018" (and any subsequent update) in the establishment and maintenance of water sources in the County.</p> <p>WQ POL 4 To ensure that the delivery and phasing of water services are subject to the required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes and avoid impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.</p> <p>WQ POL 5 To encourage the use of catchment-sensitive farming practices, in order to meet Water Framework Directive targets and to comply with the objectives of the River Basin Management Plan.</p> <p>WQ POL 6 To discourage the over-concentration of individual septic tanks and treatment plants in any given area to minimise the risk of groundwater pollution.</p> <p>WQ POL 7 To seek to protect water quality in areas of high groundwater vulnerability in the consideration of development proposals which rely on individual wastewater treatment systems and which would increase effluent loading from such systems within a concentrated area.</p> <p>WQ POL 8 To provide guidance and advice regarding the protection of water supply to private wells with the overall responsibility remaining with the householder.</p> <p>WQ POL 9 To permit new development only in instances where it has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of Irish Water that there is sufficient capacity (in compliance with the Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plan) for appropriate collection, treatment and disposal of waste water to cater for the anticipated loading arising from the proposed development.</p>

Topic	Measures integrated into the Plan, including:
	<p>WQ POL 10 To assess proposals for development in terms of their impact on human health to include, inter alia, the potential impact on existing adjacent developments, on existing land uses and / or the surrounding landscape. Where proposed developments would be likely to have a significant adverse effect on the amenities of the area through pollution by noise, fumes, odours, dust, grit or vibration, or cause pollution of air, water and/or soil, mitigation measures shall be introduced in order to eliminate adverse environmental impacts or reduce them to an acceptable operating level.</p> <p>WQ POL 11 Where brownfield redevelopment is proposed, adequate and appropriate investigations shall be carried out into the nature and extent of any soil and groundwater contamination and the risks associated with site development work.</p> <p>WWT POL 1 To ensure that private wastewater treatment plants, where permitted, are operated in compliance with the EPA Code of Practice for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent <math>\leq 10</math>) (March 2021), as may be amended.</p> <p>WWT POL 2 To promote the discontinuation of use of septic tanks / individual wastewater treatment systems and the connection of houses to piped foul sewers in all cases where this is feasible (subject to connection agreements with Irish Water) and require that all new developments utilise and connect to the piped wastewater infrastructure where available.</p>
Tourism	<p>ADV TOUR POL1 To develop the water-based leisure sector in the region in a sustainable manner making the best use of existing and planned infrastructure and resources, in a manner that is sensitive to the natural and cultural heritage resources.</p> <p>ADV TOUR OBJ 2 To support the development of infrastructure and tourism enterprises which increase the tourism offering on waterways including boating, canoeing, angling, water sports, bird watching, and the provision of storage, shelters and other facilities to enhance the user experience subject to planning permission and only where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.</p> <p>ADV TOUR OBJ 4 To prepare Habitat and Visitor Management Plans for the protection of areas which are particularly sensitive to visitors subject to the availability of funding. The first such plan will be developed for Sheemore.</p>
Built environment	<p>HF POL 1 To co-operate with the Health Service Executive and other statutory and voluntary agencies and the private sector in facilitating the provision of appropriate health care facilities and well being services, covering the full spectrum of such care subject to proper planning considerations and the principles of sustainable development.</p> <p>FS OBJ 2 To facilitate the development of a new fire station on a site identified in the Manorhamilton land use zoning objectives map subject to the undertaking of the necessary environmental assessments as part of the planning consent process.</p> <p>SWM POL 1 To implement Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) in developments to encourage a more sustainable approach to storm water management.</p> <p>SWM POL 2 To resist the discharge of additional surface water to combined sewers and promote Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDs) and solutions to maximise the capacity of towns with combined drainage systems, where practicable.</p> <p>SWM POL 3 To require that new developments are adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure which meets the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, associated River Basin Management Plans and CFRAM Management Plans.</p> <p>SWM POL 4 To limit the rate of surface water run off to pre development levels for all green-field developments.</p>

Topic	Measures integrated into the Plan, including:
	<p>SWM POL 5 In the case of one-off rural dwellings, surface water shall be disposed of, in its entirety within the curtilage of the development site by way of suitably sized soak holes.</p> <p>SWM OBJ 1 To require the use of SuDS to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable drainage techniques where appropriate, for new development or for extensions to existing developments, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks.</p> <p>SWM OBJ 2 To encourage the use of Green Roof technology particularly on apartment, commercial, leisure and educational buildings.</p> <p>ENI POL 3 To require comprehensive studies to be undertaken for all technical and environmental considerations, to inform the assessment of proposed transmission routes brought forward for planning consent.</p> <p>RUR SET POL 7 To have regard to the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities, April 2005, and any replacement guidance which require that new houses in rural areas be sited and designed to integrate with their physical surroundings and be generally compatible with: The protection of water quality in the arrangements made for onsite wastewater disposal facilities, The provision of a safe means of access in relation to road and public safety, and, The conservation of sensitive areas such as natural habitats, protected landscapes, the environs of protected structures and other aspects of our heritage.</p>
Invasive species	<p>IS POL 1 To require relevant development proposals to address the presence or absence of invasive alien species on proposed development sites and (if necessary) require applicants to prepare and submit an Invasive Species Management Plan where such a species exists to comply with the provisions of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015 and the EU Regulation on Invasive Alien Species 1143/2014.</p>
Agriculture	<p>RUR ECON POL 2 To facilitate the continuation of agriculture, and the broadening of the rural economy, while conserving the landscape, environment and natural diversity of the countryside</p> <p>RUR ECON POL 5 The Council will provide for the sustainable development of fisheries, where this is in compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives and other ecological protection objectives. Where new infrastructure is being provided, it should be positioned at already modified locations where feasible and sedimentation and siltation issues should be considered, with floating infrastructure used where feasible. Fishery related developments may necessitate the preparation of a Visitor/Habitat Management Plan that includes requirements in relation to sustainable fishing practices that would not affect the ecological site integrity and invasive species.</p> <p>RUR ECON OBJ 3 To develop and support sustainable and economically efficient rural economies enhancing sectors such as agricultural and food, forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bio-economy, renewable energy, tourism, outdoor recreation and creative arts sector and facilitating diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, while protecting the natural landscape and built heritage.</p> <p>RUR ECON OBJ 4 To identify and protect rural resources, such as locally and regionally important aquifers and water sources, from development which would prejudice their sustainable future usage.</p> <p>AGR OBJ 1 To facilitate the development of agriculture while ensuring that natural waters, wildlife habitats and conservation areas are protected from pollution.</p> <p>WQ POL 5 To encourage the use of catchment-sensitive farming practices, in order to meet Water Framework Directive targets and to comply with the objectives of the River Basin Management Plan.</p>
Water abstraction	<p>WI POL 5 To ensure the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure, in order to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements and a cleaner environment. Water abstractions should</p>

Topic	Measures integrated into the Plan, including:
	ensure appropriate levels of environmental management and protection, including ensuring compliance with the Water Framework Directive and Habitats Directive.
Flood Risk Management	<p>FRM POL 1 To adopt a comprehensive risk-based planning approach to flood management to prevent or minimise future flood risk. In accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, the avoidance of development in areas where flood risk has been identified shall be the primary response.</p> <p>FRM POL 2 To ensure that a flood risk assessment is carried out for any development proposal, in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management (DoEHLG/OPW 2009) and Circular PL2/2014. This assessment shall be appropriate to the scale and nature of risk to the potential development.</p>
Forestry	<p>FOR POL 1 To seek the sustainable development of the forestry sector in Co. Leitrim in a manner which maximises its contribution to and does not detract from, the economic and social wellbeing of the county, and which is compatible with the protection of the environment including the avoidance of likely significant effects on European Sites (SACs and SPAs) and other designated and non- designated habitats and sensitive landscapes.</p> <p>FOR POL 2 To encourage sustainable forestry development, which is established, managed and harvested in with national and European law and standards set by the Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.</p> <p>FOR POL 3 To have regard to the recommendations contained in the Landscape Capacity Study for Commercial Forestry (March 2022) which forms Appendix VI to this Draft Plan in informing the responses submitted by the Local Authority to all relevant applications for Tree Planting and Tree Felling licenses to the Forest Service or subsequent appeals to the Forestry Appeals Committee. This will be in line with the content of Section 10.6.5.</p> <p>Various other text in Section 10.6 Forestry.</p>
Fisheries	<p>RUR ECON POL 5 The Council will provide for the sustainable development of fisheries, where this is in compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives and other ecological protection objectives. Where new infrastructure is being provided, it should be positioned at already modified locations where feasible and sedimentation and siltation issues should be considered, with floating infrastructure used where feasible. Fishery related developments may necessitate the preparation of a Visitor/Habitat Management Plan that includes requirements in relation to sustainable fishing practices that would not affect the ecological site integrity and invasive species.</p>
Light, air & noise pollution	<p>AQ POL 1 To promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/5/0/EC) and ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 201) (or any updated/superseding documents).</p> <p>AQ POL 2 To promote air quality improvements, where practicable, through a shift to more sustainable modes of transport, reduced use of fossil fuels and a resulting reduction in carbon dioxide emissions.</p> <p>NP POL 1 To support the implementation of the Noise Directive 2002/49/EC and associated Environmental Noise Regulations 2006.</p> <p>NP POL 2 To require individual development proposals to be assessed against the Noise Assessment Criteria contained in Section ** of Chapter 12, Development Management Standards.</p> <p>NP POL 4 Development proposals should identify and implement noise mitigation measures, where warranted, for development proposed in the vicinity of existing or proposed national roads. The costs of implementing mitigation measures shall be borne by the developer, as the Authority will not be responsible for the provision of additional noise mitigation</p> <p>NP POL 3 To have regard to acoustical planning in the planning process to ensure that future developments include provisions to protect the population</p>

Topic	Measures integrated into the Plan, including:
	<p>from the effects of environmental noise in the interests of residential amenity and public health.</p> <p>PL POL 1 To control lighting in urban and rural areas and in particular in sensitive locations, in order to minimise impacts on residential amenity, habitats and species of importance.</p>
<p>Geology/ Extractive Industry</p>	<p>AGI POL 1 To recognise the need to identify sites of geological interest in the County and to protect these sites in the interest of protecting our geological heritage.</p> <p>AGI POL 2 To protect County Geological Sites from inappropriate development, as outlined in Appendix ** of this Plan.</p> <p>AGG RES POL 8: To ensure that the extraction of minerals and aggregates protects to the maximum practicable extent the visual quality of the receiving landscape and do not adversely affect the environment or adjoining existing land uses.</p> <p>AGG RES POL 9: The use of the following chemicals as a processing agent shall not be permitted as part of any proposed processing operation located above or adjacent to surface or ground waters, or which could potentially impact such waters regardless of their location - mercury, cyanide or cyanide compounds, breakdown products of cyanide, or sulfuric acid. These present an unreasonable risk of environmental harm due to the toxicity of such chemicals and their demonstrated potential to cause damage to the environment.</p> <p>Various other text in Section 13.18.2 – Extractive Industries</p>
<p>Extractive Industry</p>	<p>AGG RES POL 1 To facilitate adequate supplies of aggregate resources to meet the future growth needs of the County and the wider region while addressing key environmental, traffic and social impacts and details of rehabilitation.</p> <p>AGG RES POL 2 To facilitate the further development of the extractive industry by permitting the continuation and extension of existing quarries and the development of new quarries, where such development does not adversely impact on human health, the receiving environment including the visual quality of the landscape, existing infrastructure, adjoining land uses and the amenity value of neighbouring lands and of adjoining residential development.</p> <p>AGG RES POL 3 To facilitate the exploitation of the County's natural resources and to exercise appropriate control over the types of development, including rural housing, taking place in areas containing proven deposits, whilst also ensuring that such developments are carried out in a manner which would not unduly impinge on the visual amenity or environmental quality in the area.</p> <p>AGG RES POL 4 To ensure that projects associated with the extractive industry carry out screening for Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the E.C. Habitats Directive and comply with all relevant Environmental Legislation as required.</p> <p>AGG RES POL 6 To ensure that all existing workings are rehabilitated to suitable land uses and that all future extraction activities allow for the rehabilitation of pits and proper land use management. The biodiversity value of the site should be considered in the first instance when preparing restoration plans. Where land filling is proposed, inert material is the preferred method. Each planning application shall be considered on a case by case basis and where relevant will be dealt with under the relevant regional Waste Management Plan.</p> <p>AGG RES POL 7 To ensure that development for aggregates / mineral extraction, processing and associated processes does not significantly impact in the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Special Areas of Conservation and / or Special Protection Areas,</li> <li>b) Natural Heritage Areas and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas,</li> <li>c) Other areas of importance for the conservation of flora and fauna,</li> <li>d) Areas of significant archaeological potential,</li> <li>e) In the vicinity of a recorded National Monument, and,</li> <li>f) Sensitive Landscapes</li> </ol>

Topic	Measures integrated into the Plan, including:
SEVESO	<p>SEV POL 1 To comply with the Seveso III Directive in reducing the risk and limiting the potential consequences of major industrial accidents.</p> <p>SEV POL 2 To have regard to the advice of the Health &amp; Safety Authority when considering proposals for new SEVESO sites.</p>
Climate	<p>CA POL 1 To support the implementation of the European, national, regional and local objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation detailed in the EU Green Deal, Programme for Government 2020, Climate Action Plan 2019, National Climate Change Adaptation Framework 2018, Climate Adaptation Strategy, any Regional Decarbonisation Plan, relevant sectoral adaptation plans prepared to comply with the requirements of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, the Leitrim Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024, or any replacement plans or strategies.</p> <p>CA POL 2 To support the transition of the County towards a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 by providing for consolidated development forms which facilitate the reduction of energy demand and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and which supports sustainable travel patterns in line with the Core Strategy.</p> <p>CA POL 3 To co-operate with and support the role of the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office (CARO).</p> <p>CA POL 4 To provide for a reduction in energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions by providing for consolidated development forms in settlements in Co. Leitrim.</p> <p>CA POL 5 To promote and encourage positive community and / co-operative led climate action initiatives and projects that seek to reduce emissions, improve energy efficiency, enhance green infrastructure and encourage awareness on climate change issues.</p> <p>CA POL 6 To encourage innovation and facilitate the development of pilot schemes that support climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.</p> <p>CA OBJ 1 To work in collaboration with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) and relevant stakeholders to deliver and support a number of Sustainable Energy Communities (SECs) throughout the county.</p> <p>CA OBJ 2 To develop a Decarbonisation Zone in Carrick on Shannon in accordance with Action 165 of the Climate Action Plan 2019. (see also CS OBJ 10 for further detail in this regard).</p> <p>CA OBJ 3 To review the outcomes of the forthcoming update to the Development Plan Guidelines when finalised and to consider reasonable steps to align with the approach to climate change advocated in the guidelines over the lifetime of the Plan.</p> <p>CA OBJ 4 To support the development of both climate mitigation and climate adaptation initiatives and seek funding for the implementation of these initiatives from available sources including the Climate Action Fund administered by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC).</p>
Renewable Energy	<p>RE POL 1 To encourage and facilitate the production of energy from renewable sources, such as from wind, solar, bioenergy, hydroelectricity, and geothermal, subject to compliance with proper planning and environmental considerations.</p> <p>RE POL 2 To promote and support developments and actions that assist in achieving the national targets for energy from renewable resources and reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy production.</p> <p>RE POL 3 To ensure environmental assessments for new energy developments should address reasonable alternatives for location. Where existing infrastructural assets such as sub-stations, powerlines and roads already exist within proposed development areas, then such assets should be considered for sustainable use by the proposed development where the assets have capacity to absorb the new development.</p>
Green / Blue Infrastructure	<p>BG POL 1 To continue to support the develop an integrated and connected network of sustainable greenways, blueways and green routes within Co. Leitrim and into adjoining counties.</p>

Topic	Measures integrated into the Plan, including:
	<p>BG POL 2 To support the implementation of the strategy for Greenway Development in Ireland - "Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways" in relation to the development and extension of greenways throughout the county.</p> <p>BG POL 3 To progress the expansion of the National Cycle Network</p> <p>BG POL 4 To protect established Greenways and Blueways within the County against inappropriate new vehicular accesses and increased traffic movements.</p> <p>BG POL 5 To engage in the Compulsory Purchase Order process, when required, to facilitate the timely delivery of the Greenway and Blueway programme within the County.</p> <p>BG OBJ 1 To facilitate and lead in the delivery and completion of the Sligo Leitrim Northern Counties Railway Greenway along / adjoining the former Sligo Leitrim Northern Counties Railway (SLNCR) between Collooney, Co. Sligo and Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh in co-operation with Sligo and Cavan County Councils and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council subject to obtaining the necessary planning consent and only where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. All proposed developments shall be in accordance with the Birds and Habitats Directive, Water Framework Directive and all other relevant EU Directives.</p> <p>BG OBJ 2 To seek to advance the design and obtaining necessary planning consent to construct a Greenway along / adjoining the former Cavan &amp; Leitrim Rail line between Dromod and Belturbet, Co. Cavan in co-operation with Cavan County Council. The required planning consent will require the demonstration that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. All proposed developments shall be in accordance with the Birds and Habitats Directive, Water Framework Directive and all other relevant EU Directives.</p> <p>BG OBJ 3 To develop, in conjunction with the Local Rail to Trail Group and local communities, demonstration stretches along / adjoining the former Cavan &amp; Leitrim Rail line subject to undertaking the necessary environmental assessment, obtaining the necessary planning consents and obtaining the legal agreement of affected landowners.</p> <p>BG OBJ 4 To deliver a Blueway linking Carrick-on-Shannon to Leitrim Village and onwards to Battlebridge subject to obtaining the necessary planning consent and only where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. All proposed developments shall be in accordance with the Birds and Habitats Directive, Water Framework Directive and all other relevant EU Directives.</p> <p>BG OBJ 3 To complete the Blueway from Kilclare to Ballinamore subject to obtaining the necessary planning consent and only where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. All proposed developments shall be in accordance with the Birds and Habitats Directive, Water Framework Directive and all other relevant EU Directives.</p> <p>BG OBJ 4 To promote Leitrim as an unsurpassed walking destination and support the further development of walking trails in the county, augmenting the visitor experience through the provision of enabling infrastructure and visitor interpretation along trails, including storyboards, artworks and other media, to create a greater sense of place, connecting and immersing visitors in our local heritage and stories.</p> <p>BG OBJ 5 To support the provision of services for visitors using walking and cycling trails which are appropriate to the location and activity, including bike rental and service points, picnic benches at scenic locations, public toilets, and other ancillary services in remote areas.</p> <p>BG OBJ 6 To promote the principles of 'Leave no Trace' in all trail information panels, promotional materials and events and use all statutory procedures to deter</p>

Topic	Measures integrated into the Plan, including:
	<p>negative environmental impact resulting from use of our trails and outdoor recreation amenities.</p> <p>BG OBJ 7 To encourage access to forestry and woodlands, including private forestry, in co-operation with key stakeholders for walking routes, bridle paths, mountain biking, nature walks, orienteering, hiking, recreational areas and other similar facilities and to retain existing public rights of ways through forest lands.</p> <p>BG OBJ 8 To maximize both pedestrian and cycle connectivity to the network of existing greenways and blueways within the county.</p> <p>BG OBJ 9 To work with the Active Travel Initiative of the National Transport Authority and other stakeholders such as Fáilte Ireland and Waterways to develop a co-ordinated approach to the selection, delivery and servicing of future greenways, blueways and trails throughout the County.</p>
Waste Management	<p>WM POL 1 To support the implementation of the Connacht Ulster Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021(as amended) or any replacement plan with particular emphasis on encouraging reuse, recycling and disposal of residual waste.</p> <p>WM POL 2 To encourage and support waste prevention, minimisation, reuse, recycling and recovery as methods of managing waste.</p> <p>WM POL 3 To facilitate the transition from a waste management economy to a green circular economy to increase the value recovery and recirculation of resources.</p> <p>WM POL 5 To promote and facilitate communities to become involved in environmental awareness activities and community based recycling initiatives or environmental management initiatives that will lead to local sustainable waste management practices.</p> <p>WM POL 8 To encourage the recycling of construction and demolition waste and the reuse of aggregate and other materials in future construction projects.</p> <p>WM POL 9 To facilitate high quality sustainable waste recovery and disposal infrastructure / technology including composting (anaerobic digester) plants for managing organic solid waste, at appropriate locations, within the County subject to the protection of the amenities of the surrounding environment including European Sites, and in keeping with the EU waste hierarchy.</p>



## Section 3 Consideration of Alternatives

This section summarises the alternatives considered for the Plan during the preparation process. These alternatives have been incorporated into the Plan having regard to both:

1. The environmental effects (including those related to ecology and European sites) which are identified by the SEA (informed by the AA) and are detailed above; and
2. Planning - including social and economic - effects that also were considered by the Council.

### 3.1 Type 1: Alternatives for an Ecosystem Services Approach to the Plan

Although many natural capital<sup>3</sup> and ecosystem<sup>4</sup> service issues have been taken into account over previous Plan periods, the importance of these in fulfilling environmental obligations has increasingly emerged. An Ecosystems Services Approach would provide a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.

**Alternative Type 1 A: "A Plan follows an Ecosystems Services Approach to a greater degree"** would integrate a strategy throughout the Plan for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.

Principles that would be integrated throughout the Plan, in a coordinated and comprehensive manner, would include:

- Consideration of natural systems - by using knowledge of interactions in nature and how ecosystems function;
- Taking into account of the services that ecosystems provide - including those that underpin social and economic well-being, such as flood and climate regulation or recreation, culture and quality of life; and
- Involving people - those who benefit from the ecosystem services and those managing them need to be involved in decisions that affect them.

This would mean that there would be:

- An increased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of positive effects occurring with regard to natural capital and ecosystem service issues, such as the management of air quality, noise pollution, light pollution, pollination, flood risk, water bodies and river basins and natural resources supporting energy production and recreation; and
- A decreased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of adverse effects on natural capital and ecosystem services.

**Alternative Type 1 B: "A Plan that does not follow, or follows to a lesser degree, an Ecosystems Services Approach"** would not integrate a strategy throughout the Plan for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.

As has been the case over previous plan periods, many natural capital and ecosystem service issues would be integrated into decision making at lower tiers of plan preparation and development management. However, this approach would be less coordinated and comprehensive than would be the case under an Ecosystems Services Approach.

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<sup>3</sup> Renewable and non-renewable resources (e.g. plants, animals, air, water, soils, minerals)

<sup>4</sup> Ecosystems are multifunctional communities of living organisms interacting with each other and their environment. Ecosystems provide a series of services for human well-being (ecosystem services) either directly or indirectly contributing towards human wellbeing

This would mean that there would be:

- A decreased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of positive effects occurring with regard to natural capital and ecosystem service issues; and
- An increased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of adverse effects on natural capital and ecosystem services.

### **Selected Alternative for the Plan: Type 1 A.**

## **3.2 Type 2: Alternatives for Population Allocations**

Allocating higher or lower population allocations/future growth to different tiers of the settlement hierarchy provide reasonable alternatives for consideration.

- **Alternative Type 2 A** provides for the minimum requirement of growth for Carrick on Shannon of 30% as required under the RSES. Ballinamore and Manorhamilton are provided with 8% of the total population allocation each. Tier 4 Villages are provided with 7% of the total population allocation, Tier 5 Graigs are provided with 5% and Rural Housing is provided with 12%.
- **Alternative Type 2 B** provides more than the minimum requirement of growth for Carrick on Shannon as required under the RSES; 40% of the total population allocation under this Alternative. Ballinamore and Manorhamilton are provided with 8% of the total population allocation each. Tier 4 Villages are provided with 4% of the total population allocation, Tier 5 Graigs are provided with 3% and Rural Housing is provided with 7%.
- **Alternative Type 2 C** provides more than the minimum requirement of growth for Carrick on Shannon as required under the RSES; 35% of the total population allocation under this Alternative. Ballinamore and Manorhamilton are provided with 5.5% of the total population allocation each. Tier 4 Villages are provided with 7% of the total population allocation, Tier 5 Graigs are provided with 5% and Rural Housing is provided with 12%.

In terms of allocating populations, and associated growth, across the County, concentrating allocations into the larger settlements (especially Carrick-on-Shannon but also Manorhamilton and, to a lesser extent, Ballinamore) would help to ensure a more sustainable type of growth, where there are greater opportunities to consolidate development within the existing urban footprint of settlements, through infill and brownfield development. These larger settlements generally have a number of positive attributes such as a greater range of services, transport links, stronger employment bases, and greater capacities to facilitate population and economic growth. By concentrating allocations into these settlements, lower levels of commuting would result, benefiting efforts to improve sustainable mobility and meet greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. Development within these centres would generally be better serviced (including with transport and water services) and there would be a reduced need for greenfield development (and associated adverse environmental effects) in less well-served, less-well connected and more sensitive locations in the County.

Directing development towards smaller settlements, including Rural Settlements, can also promote compact growth and provide viable alternatives to rural housing.

The more dispersed the allocation of population, the greater the difficulty in delivering key infrastructure and placemaking projects. Development is more likely to occur on greenfield lands as there are less infill and brownfield sites available in Rural Settlements and the Other Rural Areas. Services and public transport are more limited and there would generally be a greater dependence on commuting for employment and accessing services. Higher levels of commuting would conflict with efforts to improve sustainable mobility and meet greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. Higher levels of greenfield development (and associated adverse environmental effects) would manifest in less well-served, less-well connected and more sensitive locations in the County. This type of development would result in an elevated potential for adverse environmental impacts, including effects on water, drinking water, human health, ecology and landscape designations.

Alternative Type 2 A for Population Allocations would:

- Reinforce the critical mass of Carrick on Shannon which is the smallest county town in the country and the smallest of the Key Towns in the Region – to a lesser extent under this alternative than under Alternatives 2B or 2C;
- Help to ensure the return from investment in public infrastructure – to a lesser extent than Alternatives 2B and 2C;
- Provide an adequate allocation to Ballinamore and Manorhamilton, allowing for their sustainable development; and
- Provide a significant allocation for Rural Settlements and Other Rural Areas. This allocation would need to be accompanied by carefully prepared rural housing management and environmental protection/management policies.

Alternative Type 2 B for Population Allocations would:

- Reinforce the critical mass of Carrick on Shannon which is the smallest county town in the country and the smallest of the Key Towns in the Region – to the greatest extent of all three alternatives;
- Maximise the return from investment in public infrastructure – to the greatest extent of all three alternatives;
- Provide an adequate allocation to Ballinamore and Manorhamilton, allowing for their sustainable development; and
- Reduce the allocation for Rural Settlements and minimise the number of one-off houses Other Rural Areas, protecting the environment in rural areas to the greatest degree of all three alternatives. However, the reduced allocation, in particular for Rural Settlements, would have to be weighed against the socio-economic and societal impacts arising that are not fully within the scope of this assessment.

Alternative Type 2 C for Population Allocations would:

- Reinforce the critical mass of Carrick on Shannon which is the smallest county town in the country and the smallest of the Key Towns in the Region – to a lesser extent than Alternative 2B but to a greater extent than Alternative 2A;
- Help to ensure the return from investment in public infrastructure – to a lesser extent than Alternative 2B but to a greater extent than Alternative 2A;
- Not provide an adequate allocation Manorhamilton, as the town provides significant employment for its rural catchment to a greater extent presently than Carrick on Shannon. Ballinamore does not provide such an employment base presently; and
- Provide a significant allocation for Rural Settlements and Other Rural Areas. This allocation would need to be accompanied by carefully prepared rural housing management and environmental protection/management policies.

**Selected Alternative for the Plan: aligns closest to Type 2 A.**

### **3.3 Type 3: Alternatives for Settlement Role or Specialisms**

- **Alternative Type 3 A** (A Plan that provides additional focus to the particular roles/specialisations for the larger towns<sup>5</sup> in the County) would support the County's settlements in attracting new development by focusing on the strengths and opportunities that are relevant to each settlement. Such development would contribute towards the success of the County's larger towns by: facilitating sustainable, compact growth; facilitating inward investment; and allowing them to become more desirable places to live and work in.

Compact, sustainable development within the County's larger towns would help to:

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<sup>5</sup> Comprising: Tier 1 Key Town - Carrick on Shannon; Tier 2A Sub Regional Growth Centres - Manorhamilton & Ballinamore; and Tier 2B Support Towns - Dromahair, Drumshanbo, Mohill & Kinlough.

- Avoid potential adverse environmental effects on unzoned lands that are more environmentally sensitive, less well-serviced and less well-connected;
- Maximise benefits from infrastructural investment;;
- Contribute towards efforts to improve sustainable mobility (with associated effects on energy, air, noise and human health); and
- Deliver population growth targets and housing choice in line with the Core Strategy.

The expected development outcome would require a targeted economic marketing strategy to be prepared and pursued which identifies the sectors which the County seeks to develop for each urban centre. The success of such a strategy would also seek to provide additional employment opportunities in Ballinamore, Dromahair and Kinlough, again with a reduced carbon footprint associated with transport to and from work if more employment was provided locally. The reduction in the extent of commuting out of the County is an objective of the Plan but also to increase the level of employment within the County as a regional strength.

- **Alternative Type 3 B** (A Plan that does not provide additional focus to the particular roles/specialisations for the larger towns in the County) would be less likely to: facilitate sustainable, compact growth; facilitate inward investment into the County's larger towns; and allow County's larger towns to become more desirable places to live and work in.

#### **Selected Alternative for the Plan: Type 3 A**

### **3.4 Type 4: Serviced Sites within Rural Settlements**

- **Alternative Type 4 A:** Provide focus to and targeted policies/objectives for Rural Settlements to act as a viable alternative to one-off housing in the open countryside.

Serviced sites would be served by infrastructure (including water services infrastructure) and more likely to protect the environment including the status of ground and surface waters, water used for drinking water, human health, biodiversity and flora and fauna and the landscape. Development would be required to be subject to siting, design, protection of residential amenities and normal development management criteria, subject to the satisfactory provision of infrastructure and services and in keeping with the character of the settlement.

- **Alternative Type 4 B:** Rural Settlements are included but there is no focus or no targeted provisions for these locations to act as a viable alternative to one-off housing in the open countryside.

Alternative B would be less likely to provide a viable alternative to one-off housing in the open countryside. Development within the open countryside would be less likely to be served by infrastructure (including water services infrastructure) and less likely to protect the environment including the status of ground and surface waters, water used for drinking water, human health, biodiversity and flora and fauna and the landscape.

Alternative B would be the least sustainable of these two alternatives and would be most harmful to the environment.

#### **Selected Alternative for the Plan: Type 4 A.**

### 3.5 Type 5: Alternatives for Renewable Energy

- **Alternative Type 5 A**, a less favourable approach to wind energy development, would have the potential to:
  - Undermine and negate practical measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in compliance with high-level climate action policy (this approach may be contrary to such policy); and
  - Restrict the potential for wind energy development in the County, to the extent that the Plan may be contrary to national energy policy that supports reductions in the reliance on fossil fuels and the development of renewable energy resources, including wind energy infrastructure.

However, the need to mitigate potential construction and operational adverse environmental impacts arising from wind energy development would be reduced. This mitigation includes that relating to potential visual effects in sensitive landscapes, potential effects on biodiversity, potential effects on soil stability and potential effects on human health arising from noise and shadow flicker.

- **Alternative Type 5 B**, a more favourable approach to wind energy development, would have the potential to:
  - Contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in compliance with high-level climate action policy; and
  - Allow for appropriate wind energy development in the County, in line with national energy policy that supports reductions in the reliance on fossil fuels and the development of renewable energy resources, including wind energy infrastructure.

However, the need to mitigate potential construction and operational adverse environmental impacts arising from wind energy development would be increased. This mitigation includes that relating to potential visual effects in sensitive landscapes, potential effects on biodiversity, potential effects on soil stability and potential effects on human health arising from noise and shadow flicker.

**Selected Alternative for the Plan: Type 5 B, a more favourable approach to wind energy development. This alternative complies with Government policy on climate action and energy.**

## Section 4 AA Determination



### Comhairle Contae Liatroma Leitrim County Council

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### Appropriate Assessment Determination

under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended,  
for the

### Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029

In order to comply with the requirements of Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and pursuant to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive as to whether or not a plan or project would affect the integrity of any European site(s), this Appropriate Assessment determination is being made by Leitrim County Council relating to the potential for the Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 that is being adopted to have effects on the integrity of European sites.

In carrying out this Appropriate Assessment (AA), the Council is taking into account the matters specified under Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), including the following<sup>1</sup>:

- The Natura Impact Report for the Proposed Material Alterations;
- The Natura Impact Report prepared for the Draft Plan;
- Written submissions made during the Plan preparation process; and
- Ongoing advice on AA from the Council's agents.

As part of the AA, it was identified that the Plan may, if unmitigated, have significant effects on 24 (no.) European sites. Factors that could potentially affect the integrity of European sites include:

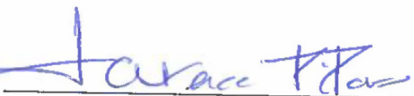
- Provisions (such as those relating to: housing, economic development, tourism, urban settlements, sustainable communities, transportation, infrastructure and energy, rural development, heritage and climate action and renewable energy) that introduce sources for effects through construction phase such as habitat destruction, light pollution, hydrological interactions and disturbance effects;
- Loading pressures from the operational phase of developments – these sources could result in habitat loss, disturbance effects, interactions with water quality and habitat fragmentation; and
- Increasing visitors to sensitive areas during the operational phase of, for example, recreational developments.

The undersigned, having carefully considered the information referred to above agrees with and adopts the reasoning and conclusions presented and determines that:

- Implementation of the Plan would have had the potential to result in effects to the integrity of European sites, if unmitigated.

<sup>1</sup> A consolidated Natura Impact Report has also been made available, integrating relevant elements of these matters into one document.

- The risks to the safeguarding and integrity of the qualifying interests, special conservation interests and conservation objectives of the European sites have been addressed by the inclusion of mitigation measures that will prioritise the avoidance of effects in the first place and reliably mitigate effects where these cannot be avoided. In addition, any lower-level plans and projects arising through the implementation of the Plan will themselves be subject to AA when further details of design and location are known.
- In-combination effects from interactions with other plans and projects have been considered in this assessment and the mitigation measures have been incorporated into the Plan – these measures are robust and will ensure there will be no effects on the integrity of European sites as a result of the implementation of the Plan either alone or in-combination with other plans/projects.
- Having incorporated mitigation measures<sup>2</sup>, the Plan is not foreseen to give rise to any effect on the integrity of any European site, alone or in combination with other plans or projects<sup>3</sup>. This evaluation is made in view of the conservation objectives of the habitats or species, for which these sites have been designated.

Signed: 

Lar Power, Chief Executive, Leitrim County Council

Date: 07/02/2023

<sup>2</sup> As detailed under the following reference numbers in the consolidated Natura Impact Report: TREE POL 1, TREE POL 2, TREE POL 3, TREE OBJ 1, NH POL 1, NH POL 2, NH POL 3, NH POL 4, NH POL 5, NH OBJ 1, NH OBJ 2, NH OBJ 3, NH OBJ 4, NH OBJ 5, NH OBJ 6, NH POL 6, NH POL 7, NH POL 8, NH POL 9, NH OBJ 7, NH OBJ 8, NH POL 10, NH OBJ 9, NH OBJ 10, TWH POL 1, TWH POL 2, TWH POL 3, TWH POL 4, TWH POL 5, TWH OBJ 1, POLL OBJ 1, LCA POL 1, LCA POL 2, LCA POL 3, LCA POL 4, LCA POL 5, LCA OBJ 1, LCA OBJ 2, PEAT POL 1, PEAT POL 2, WET POL 1, WET POL 2, WET POL 3, WI POL 3, WI POL 4, WI POL 5, WQ POL 1, WQ POL 2, WQ POL 3, WQ POL 4, WQ POL 5, WQ POL 6, WQ POL 7, WQ POL 8, WQ POL 9, WQ POL 10, WQ POL 11, WWT POL 1, WWT POL 2, ADV TOUR POL 1, ADV TOUR OBJ 2, ADV TOUR OBJ 4, HF POL 1, FS OBJ 2, SWM POL 1, SWM POL 2, SWM POL 3, SWM POL 4, SWM POL 5, SWM OBJ 1, SWM OBJ 2, ENI POL 3, RUR SET POL 7, IS POL 1, RUR ECON POL 2, RUR ECON POL 5, RUR ECON OBJ 3, RUR ECON OBJ 4, AGR OBJ 1, WQ POL 5, WI POL 5, FRM POL 1, FRM POL 2, FOR POL 1, FOR POL 2, FOR POL 3, Various other text in Section 10.6 Forestry, RUR ECON POL 5, AQ POL 1, AQ POL 2, NP POL 1, NP POL 2, NP POL 4, NP POL 3, PL POL 1, AGI POL 1, AGI POL 2, AGG RES POL 8, AGG RES POL 9 and Various other text in Section 13.18.2 Extractive Industries. Note that non-material changes to individual Plan provisions referenced in the report may be updated during the finalisation of the Plan, including numbering, formatting and graphic design.

<sup>3</sup> Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be: a) no alternative solution available, b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.



## Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029

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