

# STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

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FOR  
**PROPOSED VARIATION**  
TO THE  
**LAOIS COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011-2017**

**for: Laois County Council**

Áras an Chontae  
Portlaoise,  
Co. Laois.



**by: CAAS Ltd.**

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# **Section 1 Introduction and Terms of Reference**

## **1.1 Introduction**

Laois County Council has prepared a Proposed Variation to the Laois County Development Plan (2011-2017).

As the Council did not determine that the Proposed Variation would be likely to have significant environmental effects, the Proposed Variation had to be screened for the need to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Screening is the process for deciding whether a particular plan - or variation to a plan -, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant SEA. This report provides the findings of the evaluation of the requirement for SEA to be undertaken on the Proposed Variation to the Laois County Development Plan 2011-2017.

The Laois County Development Plan 2011-2017 was previously subject to SEA and Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with legislative requirements. The AA concluded that once the mitigation integrated into the Plan is fully implemented, there is unlikely to be a significant adverse effect upon the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites within or adjacent to the County Development Plan area.

## **1.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment Legislative Requirements**

SEA is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or program, or variation to a plan or program, before a decision is made to adopt it. The SEA Directive<sup>1</sup> requires, inter alia, that SEA is undertaken for certain plans, programs or variations to these.

Under Article 7 (13K) of the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 436 of 2004) as amended by the Planning and Development (SEA) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 201 of 2011), Laois County Council is required to determine whether any Proposed Variation needs to be subject to SEA. Screening is the process for determining whether a particular plan - or variation to a plan -, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant SEA.

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<sup>1</sup> European Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment

### 1.3 Purpose of the Proposed Variation

The purpose of the Proposed Variation is to enable the implementation of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 and to provide active and efficient use of unused or underused zoned lands served by existing public infrastructure and facilities.

### 1.4 Consultations

As part of the SEA screening process, environmental authorities were notified that a submission or observation in relation to whether or not implementation of the Proposed Variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment may be made to the Council (a period of three weeks was allowed for replies in compliance with the Regulations). In order to help facilitate the environmental authorities' response to this notice an earlier version of this SEA Screening Report accompanied the notice.

Both a submission by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and a letter of acknowledgment from the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DAHRRGA) were made within the three week consultation period. The EPA submission is responded to at Table 1.1 below.

In addition to these replies a late submission was made by the DAHRRGA. Being made after the three week period allowed for, in compliance with the Regulations, this submission cannot be taken into account. Were the submission made within the three week period allowed for, then the response would be as provided on Table 1.2 below.

**Table 1.1 Response to EPA Submission**

Submission Text	Response
<p>SEA Determination</p> <p>Laois County Council should determine whether or not implementation of the Proposed Variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.</p> <p>The criteria set out in Annex II of Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (The SEA Directive) and in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004) should be taken into account. Laois County Council is obliged to take the relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A into account in making its determination as to whether or not the Proposed Variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Specific Comments in relation to the Proposed Variation</p> <p>A number of issues to take into account are provided below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The variation should ensure that development is carried out on a phased basis and that adequate and appropriate critical service infrastructure (drinking water, wastewater, waste etc) is provided in advance of further development in order to ensure sustainable development.</li> <li>ii. The extent and location of any proposed rezoning and phasing of vacant sites which may be proposed in implementing the Variation should be clarified where possible.</li> <li>iii. In implementing the Variation, you should ensure that, the relevant policies and objectives of the Laois County Development Plan 2011-2017, responsible for the protection of environmental sensitivities (biodiversity, national sites, water quality, landscape etc.) are taken into account.</li> </ul>	<p>These issues are noted. Further comments are provided in the same bulleted order below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The existing Plan already provides for phasing and the provision of infrastructure</li> <li>ii. The Proposed Variation does not introduce phasing. One part of the Proposed Variation relates to zoning (Policy HS 4/P44) and this is clarified in the text of the Proposed Variation.</li> <li>iii. All development under the Plan when varied will be required to comply with the provisions contained within the Plan, including those relating to the protection of the environment.</li> </ul>

Submission Text	Response
<p>iv. The requirements of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines (DoEHLG/OPW, 2009) should be fully incorporated as appropriate, into the varied Plan.</p> <p>v. In implementing the Variation, the likelihood for potential "cumulative" and "in-combination" effects from other relevant Plans / Programmes should be taken into account in the SEA Screening determination, where appropriate.</p> <p>vi. The EPA has recently published our State of the Environment Report for 2016 Ireland's Environment – An Assessment (EPA, 2016). The recommendations, key issues and challenges described within this report should be taken into account, as relevant and appropriate in preparing the Variation and associated SEA. This report can be consulted at: <a href="http://www.epa.ie/irelandsenvironment/stateoftheenvironmentreport/">http://www.epa.ie/irelandsenvironment/stateoftheenvironmentreport/</a></p>	<p>iv. The existing Plan already integrates provisions relating to the Floods Directive and the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines.</p> <p>v. The SEA Screening considers the full range of potential effects including those that could arise cumulatively and in combination with other plans and programmes.</p> <p>vi. Noted. This report has been taken considered in the preparation of the screening report.</p>
<p>Future Variations to the Draft Plan Laois County Council should determine whether or not any future Variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. This assessment should take account of the SEA Regulations Schedule 2A Criteria (S.I. No. 436 of 2004).</p>	<p>Noted. It is the practice of the Council to comply with the SEA Regulations as amended.</p>
<p>Appropriate Assessment The requirements of Article 6 of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, the Habitats Directive should be taken into account. Appropriate Assessment, in accordance with the Directive is required for: "Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (Natura 2000 sites) but likely to have significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the sites conservation Objectives..." The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) should be consulted with regard to screening of the Variation for Appropriate Assessment. Where Appropriate Assessment is required, any findings or recommendations should be incorporated into the SEA and varied Plan, as appropriate.</p>	<p>AA Screening has been undertaken on the Proposed Variation as required. The AA Screening Report accompanies the Proposed Variation on public display. There is no specific provision in the legislation to consult with the NPWS on AA Screening.</p> <p>However, the Proposed Variation and associated SEA and AA Screening documents will be circulated to environmental authorities consulted as part of the SEA Screening, including the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.</p>
<p>Updated SEA Regulations/Circular Amending SEA Regulations were signed into Irish law on 3rd May 2011, amending the original SEA Regulations, and should be referenced and integrated into the Plan and SEA process as appropriate: Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011, (S.I. No. 201 of 2011), amending the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004).</p> <p>The DoECLG Circular (PSSP 6/2011) Further Transposition of the EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)' should also be referred to and integrated into the Variation</p>	<p>Noted. It is the practice of the Council to comply with the SEA Regulations as amended and associated government Circular.</p>
<p>European Communities The requirements of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), should also be taken into account in implementing the Variation.</p>	<p>Noted. It is the practice of the Council to comply with the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations as amended.</p>
<p>Environmental Authorities Under the SEA Regulations (S.I. No. 436 of 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, notice should also be given to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government (now the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government)</li> <li>• Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and the Minister for Communications Energy and Natural Resources (now the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment), where it appears to the planning authority that the plan or programme, or modification of the plan or programme, might have significant effects on fisheries or the marine environment</li> <li>• where it appears to the competent authority that the plan or programme, or amendment to a plan or programme, might have significant effects in relation to the architectural heritage or to nature conservation, the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (now the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs), and</li> </ul>	<p>Noted – notice has already been provided to these authorities.</p>

Submission Text	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>any adjoining planning authority whose area is continuous to the area of a planning authority which prepared a draft plan, proposed variation or local area plan.</li> </ul>	
<p>A copy of your decision regarding the determination should be made available for public inspection at your offices, local authority website and should also be notified to any Environmental Authorities already consulted.</p>	<p>Noted - the SEA Screening Report and associated Determination will be placed on public display with the Proposed Variation. Environmental authorities already consulted will be notified.</p>

**Table 1.2 Response to Late DAHRRGA Submission**

Submission Text	Response
<p>This is a screening in relation to need for SEA for a variation to the County Development Plan. The variation is in relation to policies for housing and use of vacant land.</p>	<p>The purpose of the Proposed Variation is to enable the implementation of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 and to provide active and efficient use of unused or underused zoned lands served by existing public infrastructure and facilities.</p> <p>The Proposed Variation has been screened for the need to undertake SEA and the findings of the assessment are included in this SEA Screening Report.</p>
<p>This clearly has a potential to impact on both known and unknown archaeological heritage.</p>	<p>Development has the potential, if unmitigated, to impact upon unknown archaeological heritage.</p> <p>This existing Development Plan, to which the Proposed Variation relates, already contains provisions that will contribute towards the protection of archaeological heritage, including unknown archaeological heritage.</p> <p>The existing 2011 Plan already provides for development, including urban regeneration and renewal. The Proposed Variation further contributes towards such provisions and provides additional detail on this issue. There are no additional adverse effects arising from the Proposed Variation (significant, potential or uncertain) that were not envisaged and mitigated by the SEA of the Plan. The SEA process has successfully facilitated the integration of mitigation into the Plan in order to contribute towards the protection of the environment, including archaeological heritage. Positive effects arising from development related to the Proposed Variation, including urban regeneration and renewal, have already been considered by the SEA of the Plan and will be further contributed towards.</p> <p>Taking in account the above considerations, which are expanded upon in this SEA Screening Report, SEA is not required to be undertaken on the Proposed Variation.</p>
<p>While possible impact on architectural heritage and natural heritage are referred to in the correspondence received archaeological heritage is not mentioned.</p>	<p>The SEA screening exercise considers the environmental components required to be taken into account by the SEA Directive and transposing Regulations. Archaeological heritage is one of these environmental components and is referred to in this SEA Screening Report.</p>
<p>Having regard to potential impact on archaeological heritage, SEA is recommended.</p>	<p>As identified above, SEA is not required to be undertaken on the Proposed Variation.</p>

## Section 2 SEA Screening

### 2.1 Introduction

This section examines whether each part of the Proposed Variation would be likely to have significant environmental effects and thus would warrant the undertaking of Strategic Environmental Assessment.

### 2.2 Appropriate Assessment

Appropriate Assessment (AA) is an impact assessment process concerning Natura 2000, or European, sites that have been designated or proposed for designation by virtue of their ecological importance.

The Habitats Directive requires, inter alia, that Proposed Variations to plans undergo an AA screening process to establish the likely or potential effects arising from implementation of the Variation. If the effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant or uncertain then the Proposed Variation must undergo Stage 2 AA.

AA Screening is being undertaken on the Proposed Variation and the emerging conclusion is that the Proposed Variation would not affect any European Site.

### 2.3 SEA Screening Analysis

Table 2.1 examines whether each part of the Proposed Variation would be likely to have significant environmental effects (and thus would have warranted the undertaking of SEA) and is supplemented by Table 2.2 which provides details on:

- The likely significant effects, if unmitigated, of implementing the Proposed Variation in combination with the Draft Plan;
- Key mitigation measure(s) that are already contained within the Draft Plan; and
- Residual non-significant adverse effects.

The examination takes into account relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A '*Criteria for determining whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on the Environment*' of the SEA Regulations, as amended (see Section 2.4).

The full range of environmental effects, including cumulative effects<sup>2</sup> are considered by this assessment.

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<sup>2</sup> The Plan to be varied sits within a hierarchy of strategic actions such as plans and programmes and is subject to a number of high level environmental protection policies and objectives with which it must comply (including those detailed in Appendix I). The Plan as varied will be implemented within areas that have existing plans and programmes for a range of sectors at a range of levels (e.g. National, River Basin District, Regional, County and Local) that are already subject to more specific higher and lower tier SEA and AA. The Plan and associated Proposed Variation are consistent with such plans, programmes and legislation and may, in turn, guide lower level strategic actions. In this regard, Appendix I includes statutory provisions, plans, policies and strategies that set the context within which the Plan and associated Proposed Variation are framed.

**Table 2.1 SEA Screening of the Proposed Variation**

<b>Proposed Variation</b>	<b>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening</b>
<p>To add the following bullet point under Section 3.2.2 Core Aim</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide for active and efficient use of unused or underused zoned lands served by existing public infrastructure and facilities, with a particular focus on the larger towns of Portlaoise (Principal Town), Portarlington (Key Service Town), Mountmellick (Service Town) and Graiguecullen (Service Town), through the preparation of local area plans, the development management process and other initiatives including the imposition of the vacant sites levy.</li> </ul>	<p>Active and efficient use of unused or underused zoned lands served by existing public infrastructure and facilities will contribute towards sustainable mobility, minimising increases in energy usage and emissions to air, including greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions. Such development would also avoid the need to develop more sensitive greenfield lands elsewhere in the County and beyond, thereby avoiding potential adverse effects on various environmental components.</p> <p>The existing 2011 Plan already provides for urban regeneration and renewal (including active and efficient use of unused or underused zoned lands served by existing public infrastructure and facilities, active and full use of town centre buildings, the redevelopment or reuse of vacant or derelict buildings in town centres, the redevelopment of brownfield sites within urban centres, the efficient use of land generally, compact development of lands in proximity to sustainable transport nodes, commercial services and municipal infrastructure). The proposed change further contributes towards such provisions and provides additional detail on this issue. There are no additional adverse effects arising from this change (significant, potential or uncertain) that were not envisaged and mitigated by the SEA of the Plan. The SEA process has successfully facilitated the integration of mitigation into the Plan in order to contribute towards the protection of the environment – see Table 2.2. Positive effects arising from the development of these sites have already been considered and will be further contributed towards.</p> <p>As these changes would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>
<p>To add the following sub-section to Section 4 Housing:</p> <p>4.8 Vacant Sites, Urban Regeneration and Housing</p> <p>The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 provides for the imposition of the Vacant Site Levy within areas where housing is required and areas in need of renewal.</p> <p>HS 4/O01 Encourage and facilitate the appropriate development and renewal of areas that are in need of regeneration in order to prevent (i) adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land (ii) urban blight or decay (iii) anti-social behaviour, or (iv) as shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use to a mixture of residential and other uses.</p> <p>HS 4/O02 Utilise the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act to (i) encourage the delivery of completed dwelling units in line with identified housing need (ii) support the local economy (iii) consolidate the urban form improving the quality of streetscapes and providing for efficient use of existing public infrastructure and facilities.</p> <p>HS 4 O03 Maintain the Laois Register of Vacant Sites, entering or deleting Sites from the Register in accordance with the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 and related Departmental Guidance.</p> <p>HS 4/O04 Identify Additional Regeneration Area(s) or make determinations that a need for housing exists in additional Laois Towns during the Plan period as appropriate.</p>	<p>Urban regeneration and housing and the appropriate development and renewal of areas that are in need of regeneration will contribute towards sustainable mobility, minimising increases in energy usage and emissions to air, including greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions. Such development would also avoid the need to develop more sensitive greenfield lands elsewhere in the County and beyond, thereby avoiding potential adverse effects on various environmental components.</p> <p>The existing 2011 Plan already provides for urban regeneration and renewal (including active and efficient use of unused or underused zoned lands served by existing public infrastructure and facilities, active and full use of town centre buildings, the redevelopment or reuse of vacant or derelict buildings in town centres, the redevelopment of brownfield sites within urban centres, the efficient use of land generally, compact development of lands in proximity to sustainable transport nodes, commercial services and municipal infrastructure). The proposed change further contributes towards such provisions and provides additional detail on this issue. There are no additional adverse effects arising from this change (significant, potential or uncertain) that were not envisaged and mitigated by the SEA of the Plan. The SEA process has successfully facilitated the integration of mitigation into the Plan in order to contribute towards the protection of the environment – see Table</p>

Proposed Variation	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening
	<p>2.2. Positive effects arising from the development of these sites have already been considered and will be further contributed towards.</p> <p>Any amendments or variations to Plans on foot of an identification of additional regeneration areas or a determination that a need for housing exists would need to be subject to their own SEA and AA screening processes as relevant.</p> <p>As these changes would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>
<p>To add the following sub-section to Section 4.8 Vacant Sites, Urban Regeneration and Housing:</p> <p><b>4.8.1 Vacant Housing Sites</b></p> <p>By reference to criteria set out in the 2015 Act as they apply to Laois (set out below), Laois County Council has determined that a need for housing exists in the Towns of Portlaoise, Portarlinton, Mountmellick and Graiguecullen. The Planning Authority may determine that a need for housing exists in additional Laois Towns during the Plan period.</p> <p>(a) The projected increase in the number of households as per Core Strategy and Housing Strategy during the period 2011-2017 is significant – Portlaoise (1563), Portarlinton (181), Mountmellick (263), Graiguecullen (164)</p> <p>(b) The cost of house prices and the cost of renting are increasing indicating increased housing need (see Proposed Variation for detailed table)</p> <p>(c) Cited area of choice on social housing waiting list (Housing Department, Laois County Council 30/09/16) indicates housing need in these Towns – Portlaoise (944), Portarlinton (377), Mountmellick (322), Graiguecullen (63). Note: up to 3 choices of area per household relates.</p> <p>(d) The number of habitable houses available for purchase and for rent is less than 5% of the total number of habitable houses in the area, indicating housing need.</p> <p><i>HS 4/P42 Implement the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 by entering vacant housing sites on the Laois Register of Vacant Sites and thereafter imposing levies in accordance with the Act within lands zoned Residential 1 or Residential 2 in Portlaoise, Portarlinton, Mountmellick, Graiguecullen and any other Laois towns with an identified housing need, as appropriate.</i></p>	<p>Much of this text does not comprise Plan provisions but sets the context for Plan provisions and would not interact with the environment.</p> <p>Any increases in urban regeneration and housing – including those which may arise as a result of the Register of Vacant Sites – will contribute towards sustainable mobility, minimising increases in energy usage and emissions to air, including greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions. Such development would also avoid the need to develop more sensitive greenfield lands elsewhere in the County and beyond, thereby avoiding potential adverse effects on various environmental components.</p> <p>The existing 2011 Plan already provides for urban regeneration and renewal (including active and efficient use of unused or underused zoned lands served by existing public infrastructure and facilities, active and full use of town centre buildings, the redevelopment or reuse of vacant or derelict buildings in town centres, the redevelopment of brownfield sites within urban centres, the efficient use of land generally, compact development of lands in proximity to sustainable transport nodes, commercial services and municipal infrastructure). The proposed change further contributes towards such provisions. There are no additional adverse effects arising from this change (significant, potential or uncertain) that were not envisaged and mitigated by the SEA of the Plan. The SEA process has successfully facilitated the integration of mitigation into the Plan in order to contribute towards the protection of the environment – see Table 2.2. Positive effects arising from the development of these sites have already been considered and will be further contributed towards.</p> <p>As these changes would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>
<p><b>4.8.2 Vacant Regeneration Sites</b></p> <p>Laois County Council has identified the following Regeneration Area in Portlaoise as being in need of renewal. Additional Regeneration Areas may be identified in Portlaoise or in other Laois towns during the Plan period.</p>	<p>Much of this text does not comprise Plan provisions but sets the context for Plan provisions and would not interact with the environment.</p> <p>Any increases in urban regeneration and housing – including those which may arise as a result of the Register of Vacant Sites and the identification of Regeneration Areas – will contribute towards sustainable mobility, minimising increases in energy usage and emissions to air, including greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions. Such development would also avoid the need to develop more sensitive greenfield lands elsewhere in the County and beyond, thereby avoiding potential adverse effects on various environmental components.</p>

Proposed Variation	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening
 <p>Most of the identified Regeneration Area in Portlaoise is zoned Town Centre Secondary. Due to its location, the area benefits from extensive existing public infrastructure including roads, water infrastructure, Portlaoise train station and schools (primary, secondary, further education), existing facilities include a running track, public park, family resource centre in the vicinity, as well as the commercial and civic services available in the Town Centre. Appropriate development has the potential to make efficient use of public infrastructure and facilities, deliver homes, enable smarter travel and sustainable communities as well as contribute to the implementation of the Council's Core Strategy, Housing Strategy and Retail Strategy in Portlaoise, as set out in the Plan.</p> <p>The Regeneration Area currently includes disused lands in neglected condition; its streetscapes are marred by inactive gap sites or derelict buildings that detract from its character, appearance and amenity. There are indications of anti-social behaviour in the Area and its vicinity, especially along Harpur's Lane with a number of derelict houses along that Street. In the opinion of the Planning Authority the existence of vacant sites within the Regeneration Area exacerbates anti-social behaviour in the identified area. Appropriate development has the potential to provide passive surveillance and active land uses, enlivening and enhancing the character, appearance and amenity of the area.</p> <p><i>HS 4/P43 Implement the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 by entering vacant regeneration sites, located within the Portlaoise Regeneration Area identified herein, or within any other identified Regeneration Area, on the Laois Register of Vacant Sites and thereafter impose levies in accordance with the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015</i></p> <p><i>HS 4/P44 Facilitate the development of all classes of dwelling units within the Regeneration Area identified herein in Portlaoise notwithstanding zoning restrictions relating to some classes of dwelling units set out in the zoning matrix of the Portlaoise Local Area Plan 2012-2018</i></p> <p>Within the identified Regeneration Area, the zoning matrix set out in the Portlaoise Local Area Plan 2012-2018 indicates that dwelling houses and sheltered housing/nursing homes are not permitted in principle. Policy HS 4/P44 conflicts with this. According to s. 18(4)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, where any provision of a local area plan conflicts with the provisions of the development plan as varied, the provision of the local area plan shall cease to have any effect. As such, dwelling houses and sheltered housing/nursing homes as well as apartments are acceptable in principle within the identified Regeneration Area in Portlaoise. Aside from this widening of allowable classes of dwelling units that are acceptable in principle, the remainder of the zoning matrix remains unaltered in relation to the identified Regeneration Area.</p>	<p>Both the existing 2011 County Plan and the Portlaoise LAP 2012-2018, already provide for urban regeneration and renewal (including active and efficient use of unused or underused zoned lands served by existing public infrastructure and facilities, active and full use of town centre buildings, the redevelopment or reuse of vacant or derelict buildings in town centres, the redevelopment of brownfield sites within urban centres, the efficient use of land generally, compact development of lands in proximity to sustainable transport nodes, commercial services and municipal infrastructure). The proposed change further contributes towards such provisions. There are no additional adverse effects arising from this change (significant, potential or uncertain) that were not envisaged and mitigated by either the SEA of the 2011 County Plan or the Portlaoise LAP 2012-2018 (it is noted that the existing zoning matrix for Portlaoise already provides for various types of built development within this area such as apartments and recreational buildings). These SEA processes have successfully facilitated the integration of mitigation into both Plans in order to contribute towards the protection of the environment – see Table 2.2 and Table 2.3. Positive effects arising from the development of these sites have already been considered and will be further contributed towards.</p> <p>Any amendments or variations to Plans on foot of an identification of additional regeneration areas would need to be subject to their own SEA and AA screening processes as relevant.</p> <p>As these changes would not result in significant environmental effects, SEA is not required.</p>

**Table 2.2 Summary of effects, if unmitigated, arising from the current 2011 County Plan in combination with the Proposed Variation and key mitigation measures already in force**

<b>Environmental Components</b>	<b>Likely Significant Effect, if unmitigated</b>	<b>Mitigation Measure reference from the 2011 County Plan</b>
Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of Biodiversity with regards Natura 2000 sites and Annexed habitats and species</li> <li>Loss of Biodiversity with regard to designated sites including wildlife sites and listed species</li> <li>Loss of Biodiversity with record ecological connectivity, stepping stones and non-designated biodiversity</li> </ul>	Policies NH 13/ P01- P08 Policies NH 13/ P09- P12 Policies NH 13/ P22- P24 Policies NH 13/P45- P58
Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deterioration in human health as a result of environmental vectors arising from exposure to incompatible land uses</li> </ul>	Policies DPS 3/P01-15 Objectives TT 10/004-005 Policies TT 10/P01, P03
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soil pressure due to land changes, intensification of agriculture, erosion and overgrazing, afforestation, industry and urbanisation.</li> <li>Damage to the hydrological and ecological function of the soil resources</li> </ul>	Policies ENV 12/ P09- P12 Policies EC 7/ P19, P21, P22, P25, P27, P29 Policies ENV 12/ P20- P27
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adverse effects on water quality as a result of polluting substances</li> <li>Increase in risk of flooding</li> </ul>	Policies WS 11/ P07- P08 Policies ENV 12/ P02-P03-P05 Policies WS 11/ P02 Policies WS 11/ P07 and WS 11/ P18 Policies ENV 12/ P07 Development Plan Strategy DPS 3/ P09, P04 Policies TT 10/ P75- P81 Policies NH 13/ P22- P24 Policies NH 13/ P45- P58
Air and Climatic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emissions to air including greenhouse gases and other emissions</li> </ul>	Policies ENV 12/ P13- P16 Policies ET 9/ P02, P04 Policies ET 9/P01,P03,P05,P06 Objectives ENV 12/ O02 and O07 Objectives ET 9/O01 Design and Development Control Standard DCS 54
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effects on entries to the Record of monuments and places and other archaeological heritage</li> <li>Potential effects on protected archaeology and protected structures arising from construction and operation activities</li> </ul>	Objectives BH 14 / O01-O07 Objectives BH 14 / O01 Objectives NH 13 / O01 Policies BH P02, P06 Policies BH 14 / P30 Policies BH 14/ P012
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in waste levels</li> </ul>	Policies DPS 3 / P037 Policies EC 7 / P22, P26 Policies BH 14 / P09-P11 Policies DPS 3 /P01, P02 Policies EC 7 / P15 Policies DPS 3 / P47 Design and Development Control Standard DCS 67
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adverse visual impacts to sensitive areas, visually open and expansive areas and areas in the vicinity of natural heritage or built heritage assets or scenic views</li> </ul>	Policies NH 13 / P10 Policies BH 14/ P24, P26 A Landscape Character Assessment Appendix 6 of the Plan- has been prepared identifying 7 landscape types within County Laois, these have been incorporated into Chapter 13 – Natural Heritage with policies specific to each landscape type.

**Table 2.3 Summary of effects, if unmitigated, arising from the current 2012-2018 Portlaoise Local Area Plan in combination with the Proposed Variation and key mitigation measures already in force, in addition to those included in the 2011 County Plan**

<b>Environmental Components</b>	<b>Likely Significant Effect, if unmitigated</b>	<b>Mitigation Measure reference from the 2012 Portlaoise LAP, in addition to those included in the 2011 County Plan</b>
Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna	- Loss of biodiversity with regard to designated biodiversity and flora and fauna, ecological connectivity and stepping stones and non-designated biodiversity and flora and fauna	Natural Heritage Policy NH 07 – NH 15
Population and Human Health	- Spatially concentrated deterioration in Human Health	Development Plan Strategy DPS 3 / P16, DPS 3 / P17 DPS 3 / P18, DPS 3 / P06 Infrastructure Objective O/INF 03
Soil	- Adverse impacts upon the hydrological and ecological function of the soil resource	Environmental Policy ENV 06 ENV 07 ENV 08
Water	- Adverse impact upon the status and quality of water bodies	Infrastructure Policy INF 06- INF 17
Air and Climatic Factors	- Failure to contribute towards sustainable transport and associated impacts (energy usage and emissions to air including noise and greenhouse gases) - Increase in waste levels	Environmental Policy ENV 01 ENV 03 Infrastructure Policy INF 19 INF 21 INF 24
Cultural Heritage	- Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture	Built Heritage Policy BH 02 BH 05 BH14 BH10 Housing, Community and Social Issues: Policy HCSI 63
Material Assets	- Increase waste levels	Infrastructure Objective O/INF 02
Landscape	- Occurrence of adverse visual impacts	Infrastructure Policy INF 27 Natural Heritage Policy NH 16 - NH 18

## 2.4 Schedule 2A

### PART 1

**1. *The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: the degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources***

The changes proposed by the Variation relate to the provisions of the Laois County Development Plan which provides a framework for land use planning in County Laois.

Taking the above and the examination of the various parts of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3 into account, arising from the degree to which the Proposed Variation and existing 2011 County Development Plan set a framework for projects and other activities, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

**2. *The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: the degree to which the plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy***

The Proposed Variation is being made to the existing 2011 County Development Plan. The County Development Plan is influenced by higher level legislation, plans and programmes and influences lower tier plans including Local Area Plans.

Taking the above and the examination of the various parts of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3 into account, arising from the degree to which the Proposed Variation and existing 2011 County Development Plan influence other plans, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

**3. *The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: the relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development***

The 2011 County Development Plan to which the Proposed Variation relates has undergone SEA. This process integrated environmental considerations into the Plan and found that the Plan contributes to environmental protection and management and sustainable development.

Taking the above and the examination of the various parts of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3 into account, arising from the degree to which the Proposed Variation and existing 2011 County Development Plan are relevant for the integration of environmental considerations with a view to promoting sustainable development, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

**4. *The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: environmental problems relevant to the plan***

Environmental problems arise where there is a conflict between current environmental conditions and legislative targets.

Through its provisions relating to environmental protection and management, the 2011 County Development Plan contributes towards ensuring that environmental conditions do not get worse and, where possible, it contributes towards its amelioration.

Taking the above and the examination of the various parts of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3 into account, arising from environmental problems relevant to the Proposed

Variation and associated 2011 County Development Plan, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

**5. The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: the relevance of the plan for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste-management or water protection)**

The 2011 County Development Plan relates to the land use sector and has undergone SEA. This process integrated considerations with regard to EU and national legislation on the environment into the Plan, including those relating to the waste management and the Water Framework Directive.

Taking the above and the examination of the various parts of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3 into account, arising from the relevance of the Proposed Variation for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

**PART 2**

**1. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects**

The Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3).

**2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the cumulative nature of the effects**

The Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3).

**3. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the transboundary nature of the effects**

The Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3).

**4. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)**

The Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3).

**5. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)**

The Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3).

**6. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:**

**a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;**

The Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3).

**b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values, and;**

The Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3).

**c) intensive land-use.**

The Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3).

**7. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status**

The Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3).

## **Section 3 Conclusion**

Screening is the process for deciding whether a particular plan - or variation to a plan -, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant SEA. The purpose of the report is to provide the findings of the evaluation of the requirement for SEA to be undertaken on the Proposed Variation to the Laois County Development Plan 2011-2017.

The potential effects arising from the Proposed Variation are either present already (beneficial) and will be further contributed towards or will be mitigated by provisions already in force so as not to be significant (adverse). Therefore it is determined that SEA is not required to be undertaken on the Proposed Variation.

A one-page SEA determination accompanies this SEA Screening Report.

## Appendix I Plan/Variation Relationship with Legislation and Other Plans and Programmes

This appendix is not intended to be a full and comprehensive review of EU Directives, the transposing regulations or the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management. The information is not exhaustive and it is recommended to consult the Directive, Regulation, Plan or Programme to become familiar with the full details of each.

<b>European</b>				
<b>Directive/ Protocol/ Strategy/Programme</b>	<b>High Level Aim/ Purpose/ Objective</b>	<b>Lower level objectives, actions etc.</b>	<b>Relevant legislation in Ireland</b>	<b>Relevance to the Plan being varied</b>
UN Kyoto Protocol and the Second European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II)	The UN Kyoto Protocol set of policy measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions The Second European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II) aims to identify and develop all the necessary elements of an EU strategy to implement the Kyoto Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Kyoto Protocol is implemented through the European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II)</li> <li>EU member states implement measures to improve on or compliment the specified measures and policies arising from the ECCP</li> </ul>	National Policy Position and final Heads of the Climate Action and Low-Carbon Development Bill	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management
EU 2020 climate and energy package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Binding legislation which aims to ensure the European Union meets its climate and energy targets for 2020</li> <li>Aims to achieve a 20% reduction in EU greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels</li> <li>Aims to raise the share of EU energy consumption produced from renewable resources to 20%</li> <li>Achieve a 20% improvement in the EU's energy efficiency</li> </ul>	Four pieces of complimentary legislation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reform of the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) to include a cap on emission allowances in addition to existing system of national caps</li> <li>Member States have agreed national targets for non-EU ETS emissions from countries outside the EU</li> <li>Meet the national renewable energy targets of 16% for Ireland by 2020</li> <li>Preparing a legal framework for technologies in carbon capture and storage</li> </ul>	The Framework for Climate Change Bill  European Communities (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 147/2011)	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management
Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the preservation, protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, including the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora</li> <li>Contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora</li> <li>Maintain or restore to favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest</li> <li>Promote the maintenance of biodiversity, taking account of economic, social, cultural and regional requirements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Propose and protect sites of importance to habitats, plant and animal species</li> <li>Establish a network of Natura 2000 sites hosting the natural habitat types listed in Annex I and habitats of the species listed in Annex II, to enable the natural habitat types and the species' habitats concerned to be maintained or, where appropriate, restored at a favourable conservation status in their natural range</li> <li>Carry out comprehensive assessment of habitat types and species present</li> <li>Establish a system of strict protection for the animal species and plant species listed in Annex IV</li> </ul>	European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011)  The Wildlife Act 1976 and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000	The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of the Directive and transposing regulations

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<p>Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve all species of naturally occurring birds in the wild state including their eggs, nests and habitats</li> <li>• Protect, manage and control these species and comply with regulations relating to their exploitation</li> <li>• The species included in Annex I shall be the subject of special conservation measures concerning their habitat in order to ensure their survival and reproduction in their area of distribution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve, maintain or re-establish a sufficient diversity and area of habitats for all the species of birds referred to in Annex 1.</li> <li>• Preserve, maintain and establish biotopes and habitats to include the creation of protected areas (Special Protection Areas); ensure the upkeep and management in accordance with the ecological needs of habitats inside and outside the protected zones, re-establish destroyed biotopes and creation of biotopes</li> <li>• Measures for regularly occurring migratory species not listed in Annex I is required as regards their breeding, moulting and wintering areas and staging posts along their migration routes. The protection of wetlands and particularly wetlands of international importance.</li> </ul>	<p>European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011)</p>	<p>The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of the Directive and transposing regulations</p>
<p>European Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims to halt or reverse biodiversity loss and speed up the EU's transition towards a resource efficient and green economy</li> <li>• Halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, and restoring them in so far as feasible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outlines six targets and twenty actions to aid European in halting the loss to biodiversity and eco-system services</li> <li>• The six targets cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Full implementation of EU nature legislation to protect biodiversity</li> <li>○ Maintaining, enhancing and protecting for ecosystems, and green infrastructure</li> <li>○ Ensuring sustainable agriculture, and forestry</li> <li>○ Sustainable management of fish stocks</li> <li>○ Reducing invasive alien species</li> <li>○ Addressing the global need to contribute towards averting global biodiversity loss</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016 Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan, 2011</p>	<p>To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management</p>
<p>The Clean Air for Europe Directive (2008/50/EC)</p> <p>Fourth Daughter Directive (2004/107/EC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CAFE Directive merges existing legislation into a single directive (except for the fourth daughter directive)</li> <li>• Sets new air quality objectives for PM2.5 (fine particles) including the limit value and exposure related objectives</li> <li>• Accounts for the possibility to discount natural sources of pollution when assessing compliance against limit values</li> <li>• Allows the possibility for time extensions of three years (PM10) or up to five years (NO2, benzene) for complying with limit values, based on conditions and the assessment by the European Commission.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sets objectives for ambient air quality</li> <li>• designed to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole</li> <li>• Aims to assess the ambient air quality in Member States on the basis of common methods and criteria;</li> <li>• Obtains information on ambient air quality in order to help combat air pollution and nuisance and to monitor long-term</li> <li>• trends and improvements resulting from national and Community</li> <li>• measures;</li> <li>• Ensures that such information on ambient air quality is made available to the public;</li> </ul>	<p>Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 180 of 2011)</p> <p>Arsenic, Cadmium, Mercury, Nickel and Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons in Ambient Air Regulations 2009 (S.I. No. 58 of 2009)</p>	<p>The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of the Directive and transposing regulations</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Fourth Daughter Directive lists pollutants, target values and monitoring requirements for the following: arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in ambient air</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aims to maintain air quality where it is good and improving it in other cases;</li> <li>Aims to promote increased cooperation between the Member States in reducing air pollution.</li> </ul>		
Noise Directive 2002/49/EC	The Noise Directive - Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise - is part of an EU strategy setting out to reduce the number of people affected by noise in the longer term and to provide a framework for developing existing Community policy on noise reduction from source.	<p>The Directive requires competent authorities in Member States to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draw up strategic noise maps for major roads, railways, airports and agglomerations, using harmonised noise indicators and use these maps to assess the number of people which may be impacted upon as a result of excessive noise levels;</li> <li>Draw up action plans to reduce noise where necessary and maintain environmental noise quality where it is good; and</li> <li>Inform and consult the public about noise exposure, its effects, and the measures considered to address noise.</li> </ul> <p>The Directive does not set any limit value, nor does it prescribe the measures to be used in the action plans, which remain at the discretion of the competent authorities.</p>	Environmental Noise Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 140 of 2006)	The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of the Directive and transposing regulations
Floods Directive (2007/60/EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishes a framework for the assessment and management of flood risks</li> <li>Reduce adverse consequences for human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity associated with floods in the Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess all water courses and coast lines at risk from flooding through Flood Risk Assessment</li> <li>Prepare flood hazard maps and flood risk maps outlining the extent or potential of flooding and assets and humans at risk in these areas at River Basin District level (Article 3(2) (b)) and areas covered by Article 5(1) and Article 13(1) (b) in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3</li> <li>Implement flood risk management plans and take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce flood risk for the areas covered by the Articles listed above</li> <li>Inform the public and allow the public to participate in planning process</li> </ul>	<p>European Communities (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations (S.I. 122/2010)</p> <p>European Union (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Flood Risk) Regulations 2012 (S.I. No. 470/2012)</p>	The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of the Directive and transposing regulations
Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a framework for the protection of water bodies to include inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater and their dependent wildlife and habitats</li> <li>Preserve and prevent the deterioration of water status and where necessary improve and maintain "good status" of water bodies</li> <li>Promote sustainable water usage</li> <li>The Water Framework Directive repealed the following Directives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Drinking Water Abstraction Directive</li> <li>Sampling Drinking Water Directive</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect, enhance and restore all water bodies and meet the environmental objectives outlined in Article 4 of the Directive</li> <li>Achieve "good status" for all waters by December 2015</li> <li>Manage water bodies based on identifying and establishing river basins districts</li> <li>Involve the public and streamline legislation</li> <li>Prepare and implement a River Basin Management Plan for each river basin districts identified and a Register of Protected Areas</li> </ul>	European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 722 of 2003) (as amended)	The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of the Directive and transposing regulations

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Exchange of Information on Quality of Surface Freshwater Directive</li> <li>○ Shellfish Directive</li> <li>○ Freshwater Fish Directive</li> <li>○ Groundwater (Dangerous Substances) Directive</li> <li>○ Dangerous Substances Directive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a programme of monitoring for surface water status, ground water status and protected areas</li> <li>• Recover costs for water services</li> </ul>		
Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect, control and conserve groundwater</li> <li>• Prevent the deterioration of the status of all bodies of groundwater</li> <li>• Implements measures to prevent and control groundwater pollution, including criteria for assessing good groundwater chemical status and criteria for the identification of significant and sustained upward trends and for the definition of starting points for trend reversals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet minimum groundwater standards listed in Annex 1 of Directive</li> <li>• Meet threshold values adopted by national legislation for the pollutants, groups of pollutants and indicators of pollution which have been identified as contributing to the characterisation of bodies or groups of bodies of groundwater as being at risk, also taking into account Part B of Annex II</li> </ul>	European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 9/2010) (as amended)	The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of the Directive and transposing regulations
Drinking Water Directive (98/83/EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve and maintain the quality of water intended for human consumption</li> <li>• Protect human health from the adverse effects of any contamination of water intended for human consumption by ensuring that it is wholesome and clean</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set values applicable to water intended for human consumption for the parameters set out in Annex I</li> <li>• Set values for additional parameters not included in Annex I, where the protection of human health within national territory or part of it so requires. The values set should, as a minimum, satisfy the requirements of Article 4(1) (a)</li> <li>• Implement all measures necessary to ensure that regular monitoring of the quality of water intended for human consumption is carried out, in order to check that the water available to consumers meets the requirements of this Directive and in particular the parametric values set in accordance with Article 5</li> <li>• Ensure that any failure to meet the parametric values set in accordance with Article 5 is immediately investigated in order to identify the cause</li> <li>• Ensure that the necessary remedial action is taken as soon as possible to restore its quality and shall give priority to their enforcement action</li> <li>• Undertake remedial action to restore the quality of the water where necessary to protect human health</li> <li>• Notify consumers when remedial action is being undertaken except where the competent authorities consider the non-compliance with the parametric value to be trivial</li> </ul>	European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014 (S.I. No. 106 of 2007) (as amended)  European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 722 of 2003)	The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of the Directive and transposing regulations

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<p>Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This Directive concerns the collection, treatment and discharge of urban waste water and the treatment and discharge of waste water from certain industrial sectors</li> <li>The objective of the Directive is to protect the environment from the adverse effects of waste water discharges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urban waste water entering collecting systems shall before discharge, be subject to secondary treatment</li> <li>Annex II requires the designation of areas sensitive to eutrophication which receive water discharges</li> <li>Establishes minimum requirements for urban waste water collection and treatment systems in specified agglomerations to include special requirements for sensitive areas and certain industrial sectors</li> </ul>	<p>European Communities (Urban Waste Water Treatment) Regulations 2001 (S.I. No. 254/2001)</p>	<p>The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of the Directive and transposing regulations</p>
<p>Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a framework of environmental liability based on the 'polluter-pays' principle, to prevent and remedy environmental damage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relates to environmental damage caused by any of the occupational activities listed in Annex III, and to any imminent threat of such damage occurring by reason of any of those activities; damage to protected species and natural habitats caused by any occupational activities other than those listed in Annex III, and to any imminent threat of such damage occurring by reason of any of those activities, whenever the operator has been at fault or negligent</li> <li>Where environmental damage has not yet occurred but there is an imminent threat of such damage occurring, the operator shall, without delay, take the necessary preventive measures</li> <li>Where environmental damage has occurred the operator shall, without delay, inform the competent authority of all relevant aspects of the situation and take all practicable steps to immediately control, contain, remove or otherwise manage the relevant contaminants and/or any other damage factors in order to limit or to prevent further environmental damage and adverse effects on human health or further impairment of services and the necessary remedial measures, in accordance with Article 7.</li> <li>The operator shall bear the costs for the preventive and remedial actions taken pursuant to this Directive</li> <li>The competent authority shall be entitled to initiate cost recovery proceedings against the operator</li> <li>The operator may be required to provide financial security guarantees to ensure their responsibilities under the directive are met</li> </ul>	<p>European Communities (Environmental Liability) Regulations, 2008</p>	<p>The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of the Directive and transposing regulations</p>

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<p>SEA Directive (2001/42/EC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development</li> <li>Provide for a high level of protection of the environment by carrying out an environmental assessment of plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry out an environmental assessment for plans or programmes referred to in Articles 2 to 4 of the Directive</li> <li>Prepare an environmental report which identifies, describes and evaluates the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme and reasonable alternatives that consider the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme</li> <li>Consult with relevant authorities, stakeholders and public allowing sufficient time to make a submission</li> <li>Consult other Member States where the implementation of a plan or programme is likely to have transboundary environmental effects</li> <li>Inform relevant authorities and stakeholders on the decision to implement the plan or programme</li> <li>Issue a statement to include requirements detailed in Article 9 of the Directive</li> <li>Monitor and mitigate significant environmental effects identified by the assessment</li> </ul>	<p>European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 435/ 2004) (as amended)</p> <p>Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436/2004) (as amended)</p>	<p>The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of the Directive and transposing regulations</p>
<p>EIA Directive (2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires the assessment of the environmental effects of public and private projects which are likely to have significant effects on the environment</li> <li>Aims to assess and implement avoidance or mitigation measures to eliminate environmental effects, before consent is given of projects likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue, inter alia, of their nature, size or location are made subject to a requirement for development consent and an assessment with regard to their effects. Those projects are defined in Article 4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All projects listed in Annex I are considered as having significant effects on the environment and require an EIA</li> <li>For projects listed in Annex II, a "screening procedure" is required to determine the effects of projects on the basis of thresholds/criteria or a case by case examination. This should take into account Annex III.</li> <li>The environmental impact assessment shall identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, in the light of each individual case and in accordance with Articles 4 to 12, the direct and indirect effects of a project on the following factors: human beings, fauna and flora, soil, water, air, climate and the landscape, material assets and the cultural heritage, the interaction between each factor</li> <li>Consult with relevant authorities, stakeholders and public allowing sufficient time to make a submission before a decision is made</li> <li>The information to be provided by the developer in accordance with paragraph 1 shall include at least:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a description of the project comprising information on the site, design and size of the project;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989 (S.I. No. 349/1989) (as amended)</p> <p>European Union (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Flood Risk) Regulations 2012 (S.I. No. 470/2012)</p>	<p>The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of the Directive and transposing regulations</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a description of the measures envisaged in order to avoid, reduce and, if possible, remedy significant adverse effects;</li> <li>○ the data required to identify and assess the main effects which the project is likely to have on the environment;</li> <li>○ an outline of the main alternatives studied by the developer and an indication of the main reasons for his choice, taking into account the environmental effects;</li> <li>○ a non-technical summary of the information referred to each of the above</li> </ul>		
<b>National</b>				
<b>Policy/ Framework / Initiative / Strategy</b>	<b>High Level Aim/ Purpose/ Objective</b>	<b>Lower level relevant objectives , actions etc.</b>	<b>Relevant legislation</b>	<b>Relevance to the Plan being varied</b>
Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2012-16: Medium Term Exchequer Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviews infrastructure and capital spending over a medium timeframe to ensure investment is made in the best areas</li> <li>• Identifies gaps in existing infrastructure that require addressing to aid economic recovery, social cohesion and environmental sustainability</li> </ul>	<p>The approach identifies four main components of the investment strategy as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic infrastructure – encompassing transport networks, energy provision and telecommunications capacity</li> <li>• Investment in the productive sector and human capital – such as direct supports for enterprise development; science, technology and innovation advancement; supports for tourism, agriculture, fisheries and forestry; and capital investment in education infrastructure</li> <li>• Environmental infrastructure – including our waste and water systems and investment for environmental sustainability</li> <li>• Critical social investment – such as the health service and social housing programmes</li> </ul>	not applicable	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management
Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future – A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020 (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outlines a policy for how a sustainable travel and transport system can be achieved</li> <li>• Sets out five key goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To reduce overall travel demand.</li> <li>○ To maximise the efficiency of the transport network.</li> <li>○ To reduce reliance on fossil fuels.</li> <li>○ To reduce transport emissions.</li> <li>○ To improve accessibility to transport.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Others lower level aims include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ reduce distance travelled by private car and encourage smarter travel, including focusing population growth in areas of employment and to encourage people to live in close proximity to places of employment ensuring that alternatives to the car are more widely available, mainly through a radically improved public transport service and through investment in cycling and walking</li> <li>○ improving the fuel efficiency of motorised transport through improved fleet structure, energy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	not applicable	In combination with this Policy the Plan as varied will contribute towards smarter travel and associated positive environmental effects.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ efficient driving and alternative technologies</li> <li>○ strengthening institutional arrangements to deliver the targets</li> </ul>		
Ireland's First National Cycle Policy Framework (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outlines objectives and actions aimed at developing a strong cycle network in Ireland</li> <li>• Sets out 19 specific objectives, and details the 109 actions, aimed at ensuring that a cycling culture is developed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sets a target where 10% of all journeys will be made by bike by 2020</li> <li>• Proposes the planning, infrastructure, communication, education and stakeholder participations measures required to implement the initiative</li> </ul>	not applicable	In combination with this Framework the Plan as varied will contribute towards smarter travel and associated positive environmental effects.
Scoping Study for a National Cycle Network (NCN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigated the feasibility of developing a National Cycle Network for recreational routes in rural areas, urban areas and connecting larger urban areas</li> <li>• The scoping study and subsequent workshops resulted in a recommended National Cycle Network</li> </ul>	not applicable	not applicable	In combination with this Study the Plan as varied will contribute towards smarter travel and associated positive environmental effects.
Strategic Framework for Integrated Land use and Transport (SFILT) – Department of Transport, Tourism And Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents the findings and conclusions of a steering group which was convened and tasked with overseeing the preparation of an integrated, evidence-based framework that would guide key land transport investment decisions.</li> </ul>	Key features of the framework policy include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on economic growth</li> <li>• Principles to frame future investment</li> </ul>	not applicable	In combination with this Study the Plan as varied will contribute towards smarter travel and associated positive environmental effects.
National Climate Change Strategy 2007 – 2012 (2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outlines measures to be undertaken to meet greenhouse gas emission commitments</li> </ul>	not applicable	not applicable	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management
Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland – The Energy Policy Framework 2007 – 2020 (2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White paper setting out a framework for delivering a sustainable energy future in Ireland</li> <li>• Outlines strategic Goals for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Security of Supply</li> <li>○ Sustainability of Energy</li> <li>○ Competitiveness of Energy Supply</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	The underpinning Strategic Goals are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that electricity supply consistently meets demand</li> <li>• Ensuring the physical security and reliability of gas supplies to Ireland</li> <li>• Enhancing the diversity of fuels used for power generation</li> <li>• Delivering electricity and gas to homes and businesses over efficient, reliable and secure networks</li> <li>• Creating a stable attractive environment for hydrocarbon exploration and production</li> <li>• Being prepared for energy supply disruptions</li> </ul>	not applicable	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management
National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (DECLG, 2012)	The National Climate Change Adaptation Framework provides a strategic policy focus to ensure adaptation measures are taken across different sectors and levels of government to reduce Ireland's vulnerability to the negative impacts of climate change.	Actions include those relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and Knowledge Base</li> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Local Plans</li> <li>• Stakeholder Consultation</li> </ul>	not applicable	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for

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				environmental protection and management
National Renewable Energy Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A strategic approach for Ireland including measures to meet European targets for 2020 including Ireland's 16% target of gross final consumption to come from renewables by 2020</li> </ul>	not applicable	Renewable Energy Directive 2009/28/EC	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management
National Energy Efficiency Action Plan for Ireland 2007 – 2020 (2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is the second National Energy Efficiency Action Plan for Ireland</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Plan reviews the original 90 actions outlined in the first Plan and updates/renews/removes them as appropriate</li> </ul>	not applicable	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management
Sustainable Development – A Strategy for Ireland (1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides an analysis and a strategic framework for sustainable development in Ireland</li> <li>Identifies the approaches required to support sustainable development</li> </ul>	not applicable	not applicable	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management
Wildlife Act of 1976 Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The act provides protection and conservation of wild flora and fauna</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides protection for certain species, their habitats and important ecosystems</li> <li>Give statutory protection to NHAs</li> <li>Enhances wildlife species and their habitats</li> <li>Includes more species for protection</li> </ul>	not applicable	The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of this legislation
Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016 Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sets out strategic objectives, targets and actions to conserve and restore Ireland's biodiversity and to prevent and reduce the loss of biodiversity in Ireland and globally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To mainstream biodiversity in the decision making process across all sectors</li> <li>To substantially strengthen the knowledge base for conservation, management and sustainable use of biodiversity</li> <li>To increase awareness and appreciation of biodiversity and ecosystem services</li> <li>To conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside</li> <li>To conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the marine environment</li> <li>To expand and improve on the management of protected areas and legally protected species</li> <li>To substantially strengthen the effectiveness of international governance for biodiversity and ecosystem services</li> </ul>	not applicable	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management

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<p>The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sets out comprehensive mechanisms for the incorporation of flood risk identification, assessment and management into the planning process</li> <li>• Ensures flood risk is a key consideration in preparing development plans and local area plans and in the assessment of planning applications</li> <li>• Implementation of the Guidelines is through actions at national, regional, local authority and site-specific levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding</li> <li>• Avoid new developments increasing flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water run-off</li> <li>• Ensure effective management of residual risks for development permitted in floodplains</li> <li>• Avoid unnecessary restriction of national, regional or local economic and social growth</li> <li>• Improve the understanding of flood risk among relevant stakeholders</li> <li>• Ensure that the requirements of EU and national law in relation to the natural environment and nature conservation are complied with at all stages of flood risk management.</li> </ul>	<p>Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)</p> <p>S.I. No. 122/2010 EC (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations 2010</p> <p>S.I. No. 470/2012 European Union (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Flood Risk) Regulations 2012.</p>	<p>The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of these Guidelines</p>
<p>European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations of 2003 (SI 722 of 2003)</p> <p>European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations of 2003 (SI 350 of 2014)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transpose the Water Framework Directive into legislation</li> <li>• Outlines the general duty of public authorities in relation to water</li> <li>• Identifies the competent authorities in charge of water policy (amended to Irish Water in 2013) and gives EPA and the CER the authority to regulate and supervise their actions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implements River basin districts and characterisation of RBDs and River Basin Management Plans</li> <li>• Requires the public to be informed and consulted on the Plan and for progress reports to be published on RBDs</li> <li>• Implements a Register of protected areas, Classification systems and Monitoring programmes for water bodies</li> <li>• Allows the competent authority to recover the cost of damage/destruction of status of water body</li> <li>• Outlines environmental objectives and programme of measures and environmental quality standards for priority substances</li> <li>• Outlines criteria for assessment of groundwater</li> </ul>	<p>Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC</p>	<p>The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of this legislation</p>
<p>European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface waters) Regulations of 2009 (SI 272 of 2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transpose the requirements of the Water Framework Directive into Irish Legislation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outlines environmental objectives to be achieved for surface water bodies</li> <li>• Outlines surface water quality standards</li> <li>• Establishes threshold values for the classification and protection of surface waters against pollution and deterioration in quality</li> </ul>	<p>Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC</p>	<p>The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of this legislation</p>
<p>European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations of 2010 (SI 9 of 2010)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transpose the requirements of the Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC into Irish Legislation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outlines environmental objectives to be achieved for groundwater bodies of groundwater against pollution and deterioration in quality</li> <li>• Sets groundwater quality standards</li> <li>• Outlines threshold values for the classification and protection of groundwater</li> </ul>	<p>Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC</p> <p>Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC)</p> <p>European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 9/2010) (as amended)</p>	<p>The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of this legislation</p>

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<p>Water Pollution Acts 1977 to 1990</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Water Pollution Acts allow Local Authorities the authority regulate and supervise actions relating to water in their division</li> </ul>	<p>The Water Pollution Acts enable local authorities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>prosecute for water pollution offences;</li> <li>attach appropriate pollution control conditions in the licensing of effluent discharges from industry, etc., made to waters;</li> <li>issue notices ("section 12 notices") to farmers, etc., specifying measures to be taken within a prescribed period to prevent water pollution;</li> <li>issue notices requiring a person to cease the pollution of waters and requiring the mitigation or remedying of any effects of the pollution in the manner and within the period specified in such notices;</li> <li>seek court orders, including High Court injunctions, to prevent, terminate, mitigate or remedy pollution/its effects;</li> <li>prepare water quality management plans for any waters in or adjoining their functional areas</li> </ul>	<p>Water Services Act 2013</p>	<p>The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of this legislation</p>
<p>European Communities (Urban Waste Water Treatment) Regulations 2001 (S.I. No. 254/2001)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transpose the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive into Irish Legislation</li> <li>Aims to protect receiving waters from environmental damage arising from Urban Wastewater</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sets out the legislative requirements for urban waste water collection and treatment systems</li> <li>Provides for monitoring programmes of discharges</li> <li>Specifies threshold values and minimum standards for water quality</li> </ul>	<p>Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC)</p>	<p>The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of this legislation</p>
<p>Water Services Act 2007  Water Services (Amendment) Act 2012  Water Services Act (No. 2) 2013</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides the water services infrastructure</li> <li>Outlines the responsibilities involved in delivering and managing water services</li> <li>Identifies the authority in charge of provision of water and waste water supply</li> <li>Irish Water was given the responsibility of the provision of water and wastewater services in the amendment act during 2013, therefore these services are no longer the responsibility of the 34 Local Authorities in Ireland</li> </ul>	<p>Key strategic objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring Irish Water delivers infrastructural projects that meet key public health, environmental and economic objectives in the water services sector.</li> <li>Ensuring the provision of adequate water and sewerage services in the gateways and hubs listed in the National Spatial Strategy, and in other locations where services need to be enhanced.</li> <li>Ensuring good quality drinking water is available to all consumers of public and group water supplies, in compliance with national and EU drinking water standards</li> <li>Ensuring the provision of the remaining infrastructure needed to provide secondary wastewater treatment, for compliance with the requirements of the EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive.</li> <li>Promoting water conservation through Irish Water's Capital Investment Plan, the Rural Water Programme and other measures.</li> <li>Monitoring the on-going implementation of septic tanks inspection regime and the National</li> </ul>	<p>not applicable</p>	<p>The Council is obliged to comply with, as relevant and appropriate, the requirements of this legislation</p>

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		<p>Inspection Plan for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring a fair funding model to deliver water services.</li> <li>Overseeing the establishment of an economic regulation function under the CER.</li> </ul>		
Irish Water's Water Services Strategic Plan 2015 and associated Proposed Capital Investment Plan 2014-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This Water Services Strategic Plan sets out strategic objectives for the delivery of water services over the next 25 years up to 2040. It details current and future challenges which affect the provision of water services and identifies the priorities to be tackled in the short and medium term.</li> </ul>	<p>Six strategic objectives as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet Customer Expectations.</li> <li>Ensure a Safe and Reliable Water Supply.</li> <li>Provide Effective Management of Wastewater.</li> <li>Protect and Enhance the Environment.</li> <li>Support Social and Economic Growth.</li> <li>Invest in Our Future.</li> </ul>	The Water Services (No. 2) Act (2013)	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management
National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning framework for Ireland</li> <li>Aims to achieve a better balance of social, economic and physical development across Ireland, supported by effective planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposes that areas of sufficient scale and critical mass will be built up through a network of gateways, hubs and key town</li> </ul>	Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management
Grid25 Implementation Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Framework for the development of the electricity transmission grid in the short, medium and long terms, to support a long-term sustainable and reliable electricity supply</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeks to implement the provisions of the 2007 Government White Paper on Energy - "Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland" in terms of development of electricity transmission infrastructure</li> </ul>	not applicable	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management
Food Harvest 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food Harvest 2020 is a roadmap for the Irish food industry, as it seeks to innovate and expand in response to increased global demand for quality foods. It sets out a vision for the potential growth in agricultural output after the removal of milk quotas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeks for the improvement of all agricultural sectors at all levels in terms of sustainability, environmental consideration and marketing development.</li> </ul>	not applicable	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management
National Landscape Strategy 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aims to implement the European Landscape Convention in Ireland by providing for specific measures to promote the protection, management and planning of the landscape.</li> </ul>	<p>The objectives of the National Landscape Strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise landscapes in law</li> <li>Develop a National Landscape Character Assessment;</li> <li>Develop Landscape Policies;</li> <li>Increase Landscape Awareness;</li> <li>Identity Education, Research and Training Needs; and</li> <li>Strengthen Public Participation.</li> </ul>	not applicable	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management

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National Rural Development Programme (draft/in preparation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The National Rural Development Programme, prepared by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, sets out a national programme based on the EU framework for rural development and prioritises improving the competitiveness of agriculture, improving the environment and improving the quality of life in rural areas</li> </ul>	<p>At a more detailed level, the programme also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports structural change at farm level including training young farmers and encouraging early retirement, support for restructuring, development and innovation;</li> <li>Aims to improve the environment, biodiversity and the amenity value of the countryside by support for land management through funds such as Natura 2000 payments etc.; and</li> <li>Aims to improve quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity through the implementation of local development strategies such as non-agricultural activities</li> </ul>	not applicable	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management
National Forestry Programme 2014-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Represents Ireland’s proposals for 100% State aid funding for a new Forestry Programme for the period 2014 – 2020.</li> </ul>	<p>Measures include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Afforestation and Creation of Woodland</li> <li>NeighbourWood Scheme</li> <li>Forest Roads</li> <li>Reconstitution Scheme</li> <li>Woodland Improvement Scheme</li> <li>Native Woodland Conservation Scheme</li> <li>Knowledge Transfer and Information Actions</li> <li>Producer Groups</li> <li>Innovative Forest Technology</li> <li>Forest Genetic Reproductive Material</li> <li>Forest Management Plans</li> </ul>	not applicable	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management
National Peatlands Strategy (draft/in preparation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This Draft Strategy, prepared by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, will, when finalised, establish principles in relation to Irish peatlands in order to guide Government policy. The Draft Strategy aims to provide a framework for which all of the peatlands within the State can be managed responsibly in order to optimise their social, environmental and economic contribution.</li> </ul>	not applicable	not applicable	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management
National Biodiversity Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This Action Plan sets out an integrated strategy for collective delivery of the potential benefits of bioenergy resources across the agriculture, enterprise, transport, environment and energy sectors.</li> </ul>	Includes detailed actions for the electricity sector, transport fuel sector, heat sector, research and development sector.	not applicable	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management

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<p>Flood Risk Management Plans arising from National Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Programme (draft/in preparation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The national Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) programme commenced in Ireland in 2011 and is being overseen by the Office of Public Works. The CFRAM Programme is intended to deliver on core components of the National Flood Policy, adopted in 2004, and on the requirements of the EU Floods Directive.</li> </ul>	<p>CFRAM Studies are being undertaken for all River Basin Districts.</p> <p>The studies are focusing on areas known to have experienced flooding in the past and areas that may be subject to flooding in the future either due to development pressures or climate change. In 2014, draft Flood Maps will be published. The final output from the studies will be CFRAM Plans, to be published in December 2016. The Plans will define the current and future flood risk in the River Basin Districts and set out how this risk can be managed.</p>	<p>not applicable</p>	<p>To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management</p>
<p><b>Regional and Inter-County</b></p>				
<p><b>Plan / Programme / Guidelines</b></p>	<p><b>High Level Aim/ Purpose/ Objective</b></p>	<p><b>Lower level relevant objectives , actions etc.</b></p>	<p><b>Relevant legislation in Ireland</b></p>	<p><b>Relevance to the Plan being varied</b></p>
<p>Regional Planning Guidelines for the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midland Region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a long-term strategic planning framework for the development of Midland Region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aim to give regional effect to the National Spatial Strategy</li> <li>Guide the Development Plans and lower tier plans of planning authorities</li> </ul>	<p>Requirement of the Planning and Development Act (2000), as amended</p>	<p>To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management</p>
<p>South Eastern and Shannon River Basin Management Plans and associated Programmes of Measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a framework for the protection of water bodies at River Basin District (RBD) level</li> <li>Preserve, prevent the deterioration of water status and where necessary improve and maintain “good status” of water bodies in that RBD before 2015</li> <li>Promote sustainable water usage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aim to protect and enhance all water bodies in the RBD and meet the environmental objectives outlined in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive</li> <li>Identify and manages water bodies in the RBD</li> <li>Establish a programme of measures for monitoring and improving water quality in the RBD</li> <li>Involve the public through consultations</li> </ul>	<p>Requirement of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)</p> <p>European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations, 2003 (SI No. 722) (as amended)</p> <p>Guidelines for the Establishment of River Basin District Advisory Councils (RBDAC)</p>	<p>To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management</p>
<p>Water Quality Management Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the quality of waters covered by the plan is maintained</li> <li>Maintain and improve the quantity and quality of water included in the Plan scope</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring of water bodies against quality standards</li> <li>Outlines management programmes for water catchments</li> <li>Purpose is to maintain and improve the quantity and quality of groundwater</li> </ul>	<p>Water Pollution Acts 1977 to 1990</p>	<p>To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management</p>
<p>Management Plans for Natura 2000 sites</p>	<p>Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive requires that Member States establish the necessary conservation measures for Special Area of Conservation involving, if need be, appropriate management plans specifically designed for the sites or integrated into other development plans.</p>	<p>Integrated Management Plans can be practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations and with special regard to local communities.</p>	<p>Habitats Directive</p>	<p>To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for</p>

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				environmental protection and management
<p>Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2016</p> <p>Investing in our Transport Future – A Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport</p> <p>Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future – A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020 (2009)</p> <p>Ireland’s First National Cycle Policy Framework (2009)</p>	<p>Outlines policies for how a sustainable travel and transport systems can be achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Others lower level aims include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ reduce distance travelled by private car and encourage smarter travel, including focusing population growth in areas of employment and to encourage people to live in close proximity to places of employment ensuring that alternatives to the car are more widely available, mainly through a radically improved public transport service and through investment in cycling and walking</li> <li>○ improving the fuel efficiency of motorised transport through improved fleet structure, energy efficient driving and alternative technologies</li> <li>○ strengthening institutional arrangements to deliver the targets</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	not applicable	<p>In combination with this Policy the Plan as varied will contribute towards smarter travel and associated positive environmental effects.</p>
<p>Outputs from the South Eastern and Shannon Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The national Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) programme commenced in Ireland in 2011 and is being overseen by the Office of Public Works. The CFRAM Programme is intended to deliver on core components of the National Flood Policy, adopted in 2004, and on the requirements of the EU Floods Directive. The Programme is being implemented through CFRAM Studies which are being undertaken for each of the six river basin districts in Ireland.</li> </ul>	<p>CFRAM Studies are being undertaken for all River Basin Districts. The studies are focusing on areas known to have experienced flooding in the past and areas that may be subject to flooding in the future either due to development pressures or climate change. In 2014, draft Flood Maps will be published. The final output from the studies will be CFRAM Plans, to be published in December 2016. The Plans will define the current and future flood risk in the River Basin Districts and set out how this risk can be managed.</p>	not applicable	<p>To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management</p>
<p>Eastern-Midlands Regional Waste Management Plan 2015</p>	<p>The regional plan provides the framework for waste management for a period of six years and sets out a range of policies and actions in order to meet specified mandatory and performance targets. The strategic vision of the regional waste plan is to rethink our approach to managing waste, by viewing our waste streams as valuable material resources, leading to a healthier environment and sustainable commercial opportunities for our economy.</p>	<p>Strategic objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy &amp; Legislation</li> <li>• Prevention</li> <li>• Resource Efficiency</li> <li>• Coordination</li> <li>• Infrastructure Planning</li> <li>• Enforcement &amp; Regulations</li> <li>• Protection</li> <li>• Other Wastes</li> </ul>	<p>European Directive (2008/98/EC) on Waste (Waste Framework Directive); Council Decision (200/532/EC) establishing a list of wastes; and Regulation (1013/2006) on the shipments of waste</p>	<p>To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management</p>
<p>Freshwater Pearl Mussel Basin Management Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies the current status of the species and the reason for loss or decline</li> <li>• Identifies measure required to improve or restore current status</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies pressures on Freshwater Pearl Mussels for each of the designated populations in Ireland</li> <li>• Outlines restoration measures required to ensure favourable conservation status</li> </ul>	<p>Requirement of Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 722 of 2003) European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats)</p>	<p>To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management</p>

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			Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011) The Wildlife Act 1976 and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000	
<b>County and Local</b>				
<b>Plan / Programme / Guidelines</b>	<b>High Level Aim/ Purpose/ Objective</b>	<b>Lower level relevant objectives , actions etc.</b>	<b>Relevant legislation in Ireland</b>	<b>Relevance to the Plan being varied</b>
Local Biodiversity Action Plans for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attanagh</li> <li>• Clonaslee</li> <li>• Mountrath</li> <li>• Portlaoise</li> <li>• Shanahoe</li> </ul> and the Laois Heritage Plan	<p>The County Laois Heritage Plan provides one framework through which the Council works actively with other partner organisations on initiatives to further our understanding, protection and appreciation of Laois' natural heritage resource.</p> <p>There are currently five local Biodiversity Action Plans for Laois. These set out a strategy for increasing our understanding and appreciation of biodiversity in the County along with measures for enhancing the protection of this valuable resource.</p>	The County Laois Local Biodiversity Action Plans, an action of the County Laois Heritage Plan, contains 26 actions that ensure the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.	not applicable	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management
County, Town and Village Development Plans including: Offaly County Development Plan; Tipperary County Development Plan; Kilkenny County Development Plan; Carlow County Development Plan; Portlaoise and Environs Local Area Plan; Portarlinton and Environs Local Area Plan; Mountmellick Local Area Plan; Joint Spatial Plan for the Greater Carlow Graiguecullen Urban Area; Athy Town Development Plan; Monasterevin Local Area Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory documents which provide detailed planning policies to ensure proper planning and sustainable development of towns/County's</li> <li>• Set out objectives for future planning and development</li> <li>• The County Development Plans provide the key parameters for lower tier plans such the future population and housing targets and sets out the broad strategy for the future economic and social development of these towns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify issues of relevance to the town/country and outlines principles for future development</li> <li>• Is consistent with relevant County/Town Development Plans, National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines</li> </ul>	Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management
Groundwater Protection Scheme for Laois	Undertaken jointly between the GSI and Laois County Council, the purpose of the scheme is to preserve the quality of groundwater, particularly for drinking water purposes, for the benefit of present and future generations.	The scheme identifies the vulnerability of areas within the County and Groundwater protection responses for existing and new potentially polluting activities.	Groundwater Protection Schemes Guidelines document (DELG/EPA/GSI, 1999).	To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management

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<p>Laois Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022</p>	<p>The LECP is to set out, for a six year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the local authority area, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.</p> <p>The LECP and development plan are closely linked. The LECP must be consistent with the Core Strategy of the development plan and the development plan will need to underpin the aims of the LECP where there are 'land use' or 'development' related objectives contained in the LECP. The development plan gives effect to the objectives of the LECP.</p>	<p>The twelve draft goals are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population</li> <li>• Urban/Rural County in the Greater Dublin Area</li> <li>• Economic and Employment</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• A commuting county</li> <li>• Health and Wellbeing</li> <li>• Safe Communities</li> <li>• Children and young people</li> <li>• Community, Recreation, Arts &amp; Culture</li> <li>• Environmental Quality</li> <li>• Economically Sustainable County</li> </ul>	<p>Local Government Reform Act 2014</p>	<p>To cumulatively contribute towards – in combination with other users and bodies – the achievement of the objectives of the regulatory framework for environmental protection and management</p>
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