

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

In Respect of the Preparation of the

**Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019
(Incorporating the Development Plans for the Towns
of Monaghan, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Clones
and Ballybay)**

**In accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of
the EU Habitats Directive**

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1. Introduction and Legislative Context

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, better known as “The Habitats Directive”, provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/42/EEC) set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites (usually referred to as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs including candidate cSACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs including proposed Special Protection Areas pSPAs).

Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment:

Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a 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 site’s conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

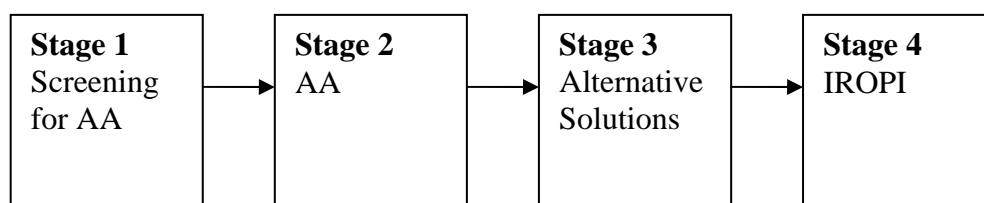
Article 6(4) goes on to discuss alternative solutions, the test of “imperative reasons of overriding public interest” (IROPI) and compensatory measures:

If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.

Where the site concerned hosts a priority nature habitat type and/or a priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

Section 177U of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 enshrines in legislation the necessity of the planning authority to consider the need for an appropriate assessment before any plan or variation to a plan is made. Where the planning authority is uncertain that there is a case for an appropriate assessment, the proposed variation must be screened to determine whether or not the objectives and policies of the proposed plan are likely to negatively affect the conservation objectives on any Natura 2000 site. This is done by examining the proposed plan and the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site that might potentially be affected.

Appropriate Assessment comprises 4 stages:



Stage One: Screening — the process which identifies the likely impacts upon a Natura 2000 site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant;

Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment — the consideration of the impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts;

Stage Three: Assessment of alternative solutions — the process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site;

Stage Four: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain — an assessment of compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report represents Stage 1 of the Appropriate Assessment Process – a Screening Report for the Review of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2007-2013 which is undertaken in line with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive.

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in association with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) published Guidance for Planning Authorities in December 2009 entitled 'Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities'. This Screening Report has regard to this guidance.

2. Description of the project or plan

Under Section 11(1) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010, Monaghan County Council must review the existing Monaghan County Development Plan 2007-2103 (incorporating the Development Plans for the Towns of Monaghan, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Clones and Ballybay) and prepare the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019 (incorporating the Development Plans for the Towns of Monaghan, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Clones and Ballybay).

The County Development Plan is the main public statement of planning policies for County Monaghan. It sets out the land use, infrastructure, amenity and development objectives and policies of the planning authority for a 6 year period and will underpin the economic and social progress of the County as a whole.

The 2000-2010 Planning and Development Acts specify that a development plan must include policies on a number of topics, and must also have regard to Government Guidelines and Regional policies for example the National Spatial Strategy (2002-2022) and the Border Regional Planning Guidelines (2010-2022).

The County Development Plan is made by the elected members of Monaghan County Council in partnership with, and having regard to, the advice of the council executive and taking account of submissions from the public, prescribed bodies (e.g. the National Roads Authority, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government) and other interested parties.

3. Natura 2000 sites

Natura 2000 sites are normally referred to as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

The legal basis which surrounds the selection and designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) is the EU Habitats Directive and this Directive was transposed into Irish law in the European Union (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997. Special Areas of Conservation are designated by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and are prime wildlife conservation areas in the county which are considered to be important on a European level as well as on an Irish level.

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are designated by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) requires the designation of SPAs for wild birds. These sites are areas of importance for wild birds and relate to their breeding, feeding, roosting and wintering areas.

The Document entitled - The Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government specifies that the following categories of Natura 2000 sites should be included when undertaking the screening process.

1. Any Natura 2000 sites within or adjacent to the plan or project area:-
2. Any Natura 2000 sites within the likely zone of impact of the plan or project. In this regard a distance of 15km is currently recommended in the case of plans.
3. Natura 2000 sites that are more than 15km from the plan or project area depending on the likely impacts of the plan or project and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors bearing in mind the precautionary principle.

Natura 2000 Sites within the Plan Area

The Natura 2000 sites located within County Monaghan are as follows:

Site Name	Site Type	Site Code
Slieve Beagh	SPA	004167
Kilroosky Lough Cluster	cSAC (candidate)	001786

The above sites are discussed in further detail below.

Maps of the above Natura 2000 sites can be found on the National Parks and Wildlife Service website at www.npws.ie

Kilroosky Lough Cluster Special Area of Conservation

Kilroosky Lough Cluster Special Area of Conservation (001786) straddles the border with Northern Ireland, and is located approximately 2km north-west of Clones, Co. Monaghan. The site consists of five separate areas which contain several calcium-rich, clean water (oligo-mesotrophic) lakes and their marginal fen vegetation.

The lough cluster includes Kilroosky, Burdautien, Summerhill and Dummy's Loughs, which are of interest for their classic marl lake water chemistry and extensive calcicole plant communities - marl lakes are relatively low in nutrients, high in calcium and have good water quality. These types of lakes are rare due to their sensitivity to pollution, and have been recognised by the European Union as being of international importance; they are listed on Annex I of the Habitats Directive. Such hard water lakes are characteristically rich in stoneworts. Stonewort species recorded from Kilroosky include *Chara hispida*, *C. pedunculata*, *Nitella flexilis* and the regionally rare *Chara rudis*.

Kilroosky Lough is a marl lake surrounded by fen and species-rich, freshwater marsh. Of particular note is the occurrence of a fringe of Great Fen-Sedge (*Cladium mariscus*). Plant species of regional or local importance recorded here include Cowbane (*Cicuta virosa*), Fen Bedstraw (*Galium uliginosum*), Fen Pondweed (*Potamogeton coloratus*), Fen-flowered Spike-rush (*Eleocharis quinqueflora*), Tufted-sedge (*Carex elata*) and Grass- of- parnassus (*Parnassia palustris*). Eight species of orchid, including Marsh Helleborine (*Epipactis palustris*), have also been recorded.

In a small area of Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) and Goat Willow (*Salix caprea*) wet woodland on the western shore, Round-leaved Wintergreen (*Pyrola rotundifolia*) has been recorded amongst the wetland ground flora. This is a rare species in Ireland and one that is listed in the Red Data Book.

Kilroosky Lough also contains a population of White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), a species that is indicative of clean unpolluted water and one which is becoming increasingly rare throughout its geographical range. It is now protected under the Wildlife Act (1976) and is listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive.

Burdautien Lough, just to the north of Kilroosky, is a more enriched lake with a fringe of reedswamp and fen dominated by Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), with sedges (*Carex diandra*, *C. paniculata*, *C. flacca* and *C. disticha*), Cowbane, Bog Cotton (*Eriophorum* spp.) and Quaking Grass (*Briza media*). The fen vegetation includes a fringe of Saw Sedge.

Dummy's Lough is another marl lake which lies just to the west of Kilroosky and is surrounded by marsh and wet woodland. The lake supports a thick band of Lesser Bulrush (*Typha angustifolia*), a regionally rare species, and is fringed by fen communities comprised of Great Fen-Sedge, Common Reed, Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*), Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), Marsh Cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*), and occasional small sedge-rich areas.

A section of Summerhill Lough is included within the site. A large sedge-dominated fen occurs on the north-eastern side of this lake and includes such species as Marsh Arrowgrass (*Triglochin palustris*) and an abundance of stoneworts (*Chara* spp.). A zone of Great Fen-Sedge also occurs at this lake. Behind the fen is a zone of wet grassland and scrub comprised of Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*).

Ramages Lough, to the south-east of Kilroosky supports a good example of a freshwater swamp. Over half of this lake is colonised by Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*) and Common Reed, with frequent Bottle Sedge, Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*) and scattered willows (*Salix* spp.).

Kilroosky Lough Cluster is of ecological interest for its diversity of habitats and species. It is of particular conservation significance for its hard water lakes, areas of alkaline fen and of *Cladium mariscus* fen, all habitats that are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive, the last-named with priority status. Furthermore, the site supports a population of Whiteclawed Crayfish, a species that is listed on Annex II of this directive.

Slieve Beagh Special Protection Area

Slieve Beagh Special Protection Area (004167) comprises much of the eastern and south-eastern sectors of the Slieve Beagh upland area that extends from County Monaghan into Northern Ireland.

Mountain blanket bog is well developed at the higher altitudes and especially at Eshbrack (peak of 365 m). The vegetation is largely dominated by Deergrass, Ling Heather, Cross-leaved Heath, Hare's-tail Cottongrass, Common Cottongrass, Crowberry and a range of mosses. In places, Cranberry is an abundant component of the vegetation. Elsewhere the bog is mostly cutover and there are also wet and dry heaths present. In total, bog and heath occupies 43% of the site. The mid-slopes are afforested (40% of site), with plantations of various ages (open canopy, closed canopy, clear-fell). The remainder of the site is rough or marginal grassland (16%). Some of the old field systems support species-rich wet grassland vegetation dominated by Soft Rush. Several small dystrophic lakes are present within the site.

This SPA is one of the strongholds for Hen Harrier in the country. The mix of forestry and open areas provides optimum habitat conditions for this rare bird which is listed on Annex 1 of the Birds Directive.

The site also supports breeding Merlin, a species that is also listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Red Grouse is found in unplanted areas of bog and heath – this is a species that has declined in Ireland and is now of conservation concern and is Red - listed. Peregrine, another E.U. Birds Directive Annex I species, nests in the Northern Ireland sector of Slieve Beagh and can be seen over the site at times.

Overall, the site provides excellent nesting and foraging habitat for breeding Hen Harrier and is one of the top sites in the country for the species. It may also be of national importance for breeding Merlin.

Natura 2000 Sites outside the Plan Area.

Screening also requires a review of all Natura 2000 sites that could potentially be subject to the impacts that have been identified. Clearly a key variable that will determine whether or not a particular Natura 2000 site is likely to be negatively affected by the development plan is its physical distance from the project or plan area, and it will generally, but not necessarily, be the case that the greater the distance the lower the possibility of impacts. Having regard to the criteria set out in Guidance issued by DEHLG to Planning Authorities in 2009, a total of twelve Natura 2000 sites have been identified and are listed in the table below:-

Site Name	Site Type	Site Code
Dundalk Bay	SPA	004026
Stabannan/Braganstown	SPA	004091
Dundalk Bay	cSAC (candidate)	000455
Lough Oughter	SPA	004049
Lough Oughter	cSAC (candidate)	000007
Slieve Gullion	SAC	UK0030277
Slieve Beagh	SAC	UK0016622
Moninea Bog	SAC	UK0030212
Magheravelly Marl Lough	SAC	UK0016621
Lough Neagh	SPA	UK9020091
Upper Lough Erne	SPA	UK9020071
Upper Lough Erne	SAC	UK0016614

Each site listed above is further examined within the screening matrix which is contained within Section 4.

Maps of the above Natura 2000 sites can be found on the National Parks and Wildlife Service website at www.npws.ie and on the Northern Ireland Environment Agency website at www.ni-environment.gov.uk

4. Screening Matrix

The matrix overleaf assesses the possible threats to the integrity of the specific sites and the possible ‘in combination’ impacts from other plans/projects on the selected Natura 2000 sites. The matrix also identifies the key features for which the SAC’s and SPA’s are designated, and the environmental factors on which those features depend.

Kilroosky Lough Cluster, 001786 – Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)			
Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Possible threats to site integrity	Possible ‘in combination’ impacts from other Plans and Projects
<p>3140 - Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of chara species. 7230 - Alkaline fens Calcareous fens with cladium mariscus and Carcicion davalliance. 1092 - Autropotamobius pallipes freshwater white-clawed crayfish. Extensive calcicole plant communities. Calcium rich habitats. Inter drumlin marl lakes fed by lime rich water.</p>	<p>To maintain the Annex I habitat for which this cSAC has been selected at favourable conservation status: 3140 hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara species 7230 Alkaline fens.</p> <p>To maintain the Annex II species for which the cSAC has been selected at favourable conservation status: White-clawed crayfish.</p>	<p>Agricultural improvements/reclamation, drainage/changes in local hydrology including water abstraction, erosion (natural and anthropogenic), water quality/pollution, agricultural abandonment, overgrazing/undergrazing, direct loss of habitat to development, bracken & scrub encroachment, amenity/recreation use, tourism-related development for example marinas, peat extraction, forestry, burning, arterial drainage/water abstraction/lowering of the regional water table, illegal dumping, crayfish fishing, changes in flow rate, siltation, loss of fringe vegetation, changes in seasonal water levels/fluctuations, loading from effluents (WWTP), turf/peat extraction in fens.</p>	<p>There are many plans and projects which have the potential to produce ‘in combination’ impacts. These include, for example The National Development Plan, National Spatial Strategy, Border Regional Planning Guidelines, National Climate Change Strategy, the Neagh Bann and the North Western River Basin Management Plans, the Regional Development Strategy, various Area Plans and A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland. Many of these plans make positive statements and set policies which ensure the co-ordinated development of the regions.</p> <p>At this stage of the review of the development plan, it is not possible to fully assess the ‘in combination’ effects of these other plans and projects.</p>

<i>Slieve Beagh, 004167 – Special Protection Area (SPA)</i>			
Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Possible threats to site integrity	Possible ‘in combination’ impacts from other Plans and Projects
<p>Hen Harrier. Falco columbarius (Merlin). Red Grouse. 10144 - Blanket Bog. 3160 - Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds. 4030 - European dry heaths.</p>	<p>To maintain the special conservation interests of this SPA: Hen Harrier Merlin Red Grouse.</p> <p>To maintain the Annex I habitats for which the SPA has been selected: Hen Harrier, Blanket Bog, dystrophic lakes, European dry heaths.</p>	<p>Changes in local hydrology including drainage, peat extraction, overgrazing, forestry, burning, direct loss of habitat to development, arterial drainage/water abstraction/lowering of the regional water table, agricultural reclamation, direct and indirect impacts to the habitats of the bird species of conservation interests, water quality/pollution, changes in flow rates, siltation, loss of fringe vegetation, loading from effluents (WWTP), disturbance from recreation/amenity use, introduction of alien invasive species, illegal dumping, increased poisoning, inappropriate land management, potential erection of communication antennae and wind farms.</p>	<p>There are many plans and projects which have the potential to produce ‘in combination’ impacts. These include, for example The National Development Plan, National Spatial Strategy, Border Regional Planning Guidelines, National Climate Change Strategy, the Neagh Bann and the North Western River Basin Management Plans, the Regional Development Strategy, various Area Plans and A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland. Many of these plans make positive statements and set policies which ensure the co-ordinated development of the regions.</p> <p>At this stage of the review of the development plan, it is not possible to fully assess the ‘in combination’ effects of these other plans and projects.</p>

Moninea Bog, UK0030212 – Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)			
Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Possible threats to site integrity	Possible ‘in combination’ impacts from other Plans and Projects
<p>7110 – Active Raised Bog. Supports a high cover of bog mosses including hummock-forming species and all 3 native British sundew species.</p> <p>Broad leaved deciduous woodland.</p> <p>One of the best examples of raised bog in the UK.</p>	<p>To maintain the Annex I habitat for which the SAC has been selected for conservation status: Active Raised Bog – hydrology/soil type.</p>	<p>Changes in local hydrology including drainage, climate change (increased/reduced rainfall); erosion, fires, scrub encroachment in the areas of active bog, landslips, peat extraction, overgrazing/under grazing, forestry, burning, direct loss of habitat to development, arterial drainage/water abstraction/lowering of the regional water table, agricultural reclamation/improvement, recreational/amenity use (walking, horse riding, cycling, quads and motorbikes), introduction of alien invasive species, illegal dumping.</p>	<p>There are many plans and projects which have the potential to produce ‘in combination’ impacts. These include, for example The Regional Development Strategy, various Area Plans and A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland. Many of these plans make positive statements and set policies which ensure the co-ordinated development of the region.</p> <p>At this stage of the review of the development plan, it is not possible to fully assess the ‘in combination’ effects of these other plans and projects.</p>

Magheraveely Marl Loughs, UK0016621 – Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)			
Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Possible threats to site integrity	Possible ‘in combination’ impacts from other Plans and Projects
<p>3140 - Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp. 7230 - Alkaline fens. 7210 - Calcareous fens with cladium mariscus and species of the caricion davalliana. 1092 - Autropotamobius pallipes freshwater white clawed (or Atlantic Stream) crayfish.</p>	<p>To maintain the Annex I habitat for which the SAC has been selected for conservation status: Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters; Alkaline fens; Calcareous fens; Freshwater white clawed crayfish.</p>	<p>Nutrient enrichment poses a threat to the good water quality found all 10 lakes included in the site, agricultural improvements/reclamation, changes in flow rates, arterial drainage/water abstraction/lowering of the regional water table, siltation, loss of fringe vegetation, changes in seasonal water levels/fluctuations, direct loss of habitat to development, loading from effluents (WWTP), recreation/amenity use, loss of habitat to developments for example marinas, agricultural improvements/reclamation, water quality/pollution (including groundwater), agricultural abandonment, overgrazing/undergrazing, bracken and scrub encroachment, turf/peat extraction in fens, tourism related development; forestry, burning, introduction of alien invasive species, illegal dumping, crayfish fishing.</p>	<p>There are many plans and projects which have the potential to produce ‘in combination’ impacts. These include, for example The National Development Plan, National Spatial Strategy, Border Regional Planning Guidelines, National Climate Change Strategy, the Neagh Bann and the North Western River Basin Management Plans, the Regional Development Strategy, various Area Plans and the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland. Many of these plans make positive statements and set policies which ensure the co-ordinated development of the regions.</p> <p>At this stage of the review of the development plan, it is not possible to fully assess the ‘in combination’ effects of these other plans and projects.</p>

<i>Slieve Gullion, UK0030277 – Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)</i>			
Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Possible threats to site integrity	Possible ‘in combination’ impacts from other Plans and Projects
4030 - European dry heaths. Contains a number of plants which are scarce in Northern Ireland.	To maintain the Annex I habitat for which the SAC has been selected for conservation status: European dry heaths – Geology, soil type.	Changes in local hydrology including drainage, climate change (increased/reduced rainfall), erosion, landslips, peat extraction, overgrazing/under grazing, burning, forestry, burning, direct loss of habitat to development, arterial drainage/water abstraction/ lowering of the regional water table, agricultural reclamation/improvement, recreational/amenity use (walking, horse riding, cycling, quads and motorbikes), introduction of alien invasive species, illegal dumping.	There are many plans and projects which have the potential to produce ‘in combination’ impacts. These include, for example, the Regional Development Strategy, various Area Plans and the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland. Many of these plans make positive statements and set policies which ensure the co-ordinated development of the region. At this stage of the review of the development plan, it is not possible to fully assess the ‘in combination’ effects of these other plans and projects.

Slieve Beagh, UK0016622 – Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)			
Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Possible threats to site integrity	Possible ‘in combination’ impacts from other Plans and Projects
<p>3160 – Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds. 7130 – Mountain Blanket Bogs. 4030 – European dry heaths.</p> <p>Hen Harriers habitat Supports Merlin breeding Red Grouse habitat</p>	<p>To maintain the Annex I habitat for which the SAC has been selected for conservation status: 3160 Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds; 7130 Blanket Bogs; and 4030 European dry heaths.</p>	<p>Changes in local hydrology, peat extraction, overgrazing, forestry, burning, direct loss of habitat to development, arterial drainage/ water abstraction/lowering of the regional water table, agricultural reclamation, water quality/pollution, siltation, loss of fringe vegetation, changes in seasonal water levels/fluctuations, loading from effluents (WWTP), recreation/amenity use, introduction of alien invasive species, illegal dumping, poisoning.</p>	<p>There are many plans and projects which have the potential to produce ‘in combination’ impacts. These include, for example The National Development Plan, National Spatial Strategy, Border Regional Planning Guidelines, National Climate Change Strategy, the Neagh Bann and the North Western River Basin Management Plans, the Regional Development Strategy, various Area Plans and the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland. Many of these plans make positive statements and set policies which ensure the co-ordinated development of the regions.</p> <p>At this stage of the review of the development plan, it is not possible to fully assess the ‘in combination’ effects of these other plans and projects.</p>

Dundalk Bay,004026– Special Protection Area (SPA)			
Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Possible threats to site integrity	Possible ‘in combination’ impacts from other Plans and Projects
<p>Contains 5 habitats listed under the EU Habitats Directive: Perennial vegetation of stony banks; Tidal mudflats; Salt marshes and Salicornia mudflats & estuaries.</p> <p>This SPA has a rich fauna of bivalves, molluscs, marine worms, crustaceans and waterfowl.</p>	<p>To maintain the special conservation interests of this SPA: Perennial vegetation of stony banks Tidal mudflats Salt marshes Salicornia mudflats & estuaries.</p>	<p>Water quality/ pollution/quantity, development/expansion of marinas and ports, dredging, disturbance to marine mammals, dumping at sea, loss of habitat to development, shellfisheries (including collection of spawn), winkle picking, cockle and mussel collecting and bait digging, sea level rise/erosion, coastal defences, introduction of alien invasive species, illegal dumping, inappropriate land management, direct and indirect impacts to the habitats of bird species, recreation/amenity use, agricultural improvements /reclamation /abandonment, drainage/changes in local hydrology, overgrazing/undergrazing</p>	<p>There are many plans and projects which have the potential to produce ‘in combination’ impacts. These include, for example The National Development Plan, National Spatial Strategy, Border Regional Planning Guidelines, National Climate Change Strategy, Neagh Bann and the North Western River Basin Management Plans. Many of these plans make positive statements and set policies which ensure the co-ordinated development of the region.</p> <p>At this stage of the review of the development plan, it is not possible to fully assess the ‘in combination’ effects of these other plans and projects.</p>

Stabannan-Braganstown,004091– Special Protection Area (SPA)			
Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Possible threats to site integrity	Possible ‘in combination’ impacts from other Plans and Projects
<p>Largest Greylag Goose site in the country.</p> <p>Also regularly supports three other species of bird which are listed on Annex I of the E.U Birds Directive: Greenland White fronted Goose; Whooper Swan; and Golden Plover.</p>	<p>To maintain the special conservation interests for this SPA at favourable conservation status:</p> <p>Greylag Goose Greenland White fronted Goose Whooper Swan Golden Plover.</p>	<p>None – Although this site is privately owned and actively farmed it is not under threat as there is a management agreement in place to benefit the waterfowl.</p>	<p>There are many plans and projects which have the potential to produce ‘in combination’ impacts. These include, for example The National Development Plan, National Spatial Strategy, Border Regional Planning Guidelines, National Climate Change Strategy, Neagh Bann and the North Western River Basin Management Plans. Many of these plans make positive statements and set policies which ensure the co-ordinated development of the region.</p> <p>At this stage of the review of the development plan, it is not possible to fully assess the ‘in combination’ effects of these other plans and projects.</p>

Lough Oughter ,004049– Special Protection Area (SPA)			
Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Possible threats to site integrity	Possible ‘in combination’ impacts from other Plans and Projects
<p>Important for wintering and breeding birds especially the Whooper Swan population.</p> <p>Supports nationally important wintering populations of four species: Great Crested Grebe; Mute Swan; Wigeon; Goldeneye.</p> <p>Especial importance for one of the highest breeding concentrations of Great Crested Grebe.</p> <p>Site is important for three species of bird which are listed on Annex I of the E.U Birds Directive: Whooper Swan, Greenland White-fronted Goose; Common Tern.</p>	<p>To maintain the special conservation interests for this SPA at favourable conservation status</p>	<p>Forestry, loss of habitat to development, water quality/pollution, disturbance including recreation/amenity use, introduction of alien invasive species, illegal dumping, inappropriate land management, direct and indirect impacts to the habitats of bird species of conservation interests.</p>	<p>There are many plans and projects which have the potential to produce ‘in combination’ impacts. These include, for example The National Development Plan, National Spatial Strategy, Border Regional Planning Guidelines, National Climate Change Strategy, Neagh Bann and the North Western River Basin Management Plans. Many of these plans make positive statements and set policies which ensure the co-ordinated development of the region.</p> <p>At this stage of the review of the development plan, it is not possible to fully assess the ‘in combination’ effects of these other plans and projects.</p>

Lough Oughter ,000007– Candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC)			
Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Possible threats to site integrity	Possible ‘in combination’ impacts from other Plans and Projects
<p>Natural eutrophic lakes.</p> <p>Bog woodland.</p> <p>Two habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U Habitats Directive</p> <p>Otter – species listed on Annex II of the E.U Habitats Directive.</p>	<p>To maintain the Annex I habitats for which the cSAC has been selected at favourable conservation status.</p> <p>To maintain the Annex II species for which the cSAC has been selected at favourable conservation</p>	<p>Water quality/ pollution, changes in flow rates, agricultural development/activities, arterial drainage/ abstraction/ lowering of the regional water table, siltation, loss of fringe vegetation, changes in seasonal water levels, loading from effluents (WWTP), recreation/ amenity use, forestry, direct loss of habitat to development, marina development, invasive species, lack of/inappropriate woodland management, overgrazing/undergrazing, fishing, shooting.</p>	<p>There are many plans and projects which have the potential to produce ‘in combination’ impacts. These include, for example The National Development Plan, National Spatial Strategy, Border Regional Planning Guidelines, National Climate Change Strategy, Neagh Bann and the North Western River Basin Management Plans. Many of these plans make positive statements and set policies which ensure the co-ordinated development of the region.</p> <p>At this stage of the review of the development plan, it is not possible to fully assess the ‘in combination’ effects of these other plans and projects.</p>

Dundalk Bay, 000455– Candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC)			
Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Possible threats to site integrity	Possible ‘in combination’ impacts from other Plans and Projects
<p>Contains 5 habitats listed under the E.U Habitats Directive: Perennial vegetation of stony banks; Tidal mudflats; Salt marshes and Salicornia mudflats & estuaries.</p> <p>This cSAC has a rich fauna of bivalves, molluscs, marine worms, crustaceans and is internationally important for waterfowl.</p>	<p>To maintain the Annex I habitats for which the cSAC has been selected at favourable conservation status: Tidal mudflats Salt marshes Salicornia mudflats & estuaries.</p>	<p>Water quality/pollution /quantity, development/expansion of marinas and ports, dredging, disturbance to marine mammals, dumping at sea, direct loss of habitat to development, recreational/amenity/tourism use, sea level rise, coastal defences, introduction of alien invasive species, illegal dumping, burning, quarrying/removal of sand, aquaculture, agricultural improvements, drainage/changes in local hydrology including water abstraction.</p>	<p>There are many plans and projects which have the potential to produce ‘in combination’ impacts. These include, for example The National Development Plan, National Spatial Strategy, Border Regional Planning Guidelines, National Climate Change Strategy, Neagh Bann and the North Western River Basin Management Plans. Many of these plans make positive statements and set policies which ensure the co-ordinated development of the region.</p> <p>At this stage of the review of the development plan, it is not possible to fully assess the ‘in combination’ effects of these other plans and projects.</p>

Upper Lough Erne,0016614 – Special Area of Conservation (SAC)			
Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Possible threats to site integrity	Possible ‘in combination’ impacts from other Plans and Projects
<p>3150 - Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i>-type vegetation.</p> <p>91A0 - Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles.</p> <p>91E0 - Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>)</p> <p>1355 - Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i></p>	<p>To maintain the Annex I habitats for which the SAC has been selected at favourable conservation status:</p> <p>Natural eutrophic lakes Old sessile oak woods Alluvial forests</p> <p>To maintain the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected at favourable conservation status:</p> <p>Otter</p>	<p>Water quality/pollution, changes in flow rates, arterial drainage/water abstraction/ lowering of the regional water table, siltation, loss of fringe vegetation, changes in seasonal water levels/fluctuations, direct loss of habitat to development, loading from effluents (WWTP), recreation/amenity/tourism use, marina development, fishing, introduction of alien invasive species, illegal dumping, felling/removal of trees</p>	<p>There are many plans and projects which have the potential to produce ‘in combination’ impacts. These include, for example, the Regional Development Strategy, various Area Plans and the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland. Many of these plans make positive statements and set policies which ensure the co-ordinated development of the region.</p> <p>At this stage of the review of the development plan, it is not possible to fully assess the ‘in combination’ effects of these other plans and projects.</p>

Upper Lough Erne, 9020071 – Special Protection Area (SPA)			
Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Possible threats to site integrity	Possible ‘in combination’ impacts from other Plans and Projects
<p>Site regularly supports internationally important numbers of wintering whooper swans and contributes to the maintenance of geographic range of the Annex 1 Greenland white fronted goose.</p> <p>Other migratory birds breeding on the site include great crested grebe and important concentration of 3 species of waders which are declining elsewhere curlew, snipe and redshank.</p> <p>Nationally important wintering wildfowl species, many of which are migratory include great crested grebe, cormorant, mute swan, tufted duck, wigeon, teal, goldeneye, coot, mallard, snipe, curlew and redshank.</p>	<p>To maintain the Annex I habitats for which the SPA has been selected at favourable conservation status:</p> <p>Whooper Swan Greenland White-fronted Goose Common Tern Corncrake</p>	<p>water quality/pollution, changes in flow rates, arterial drainage/water abstraction/ lowering of the regional water table, siltation, loss of fringe vegetation, changes in seasonal water levels/fluctuations, direct loss of habitat to development, loading from effluents (WWTP), recreation/amenity use, marina development, fishing, introduction of alien invasive species, illegal dumping, felling/removal of trees, direct and indirect impacts to the habitats of the bird species of conservation interest.</p>	<p>There are many plans and projects which have the potential to produce ‘in combination’ impacts. These include, for example, the Regional Development Strategy, various Area Plans and the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland. Many of these plans make positive statements and set policies which ensure the co-ordinated development of the region.</p> <p>At this stage of the review of the development plan, it is not possible to fully assess the ‘in combination’ effects of these other plans and projects.</p>

Lough Neagh, 9020091 – Special Protection Area (SPA)			
Qualifying Features	Conservation Objectives	Possible threats to site integrity	Possible ‘in combination’ impacts from other Plans and Projects
<p>Qualifies by regularly supporting internationally important numbers of wintering Bewick's and whooper swans and also regularly supporting nationally important numbers of breeding common tern.</p> <p>It is a wetland of international importance by regularly supporting over 20,000 varieties of species of waterfowl in winter.</p>	<p>To maintain the habitats for which the SPA has been selected at favourable conservation status:</p> <p>Wintering Bewick's Whooper Swans Common Tern</p>	<p>water quality/pollution, changes in flow rates, arterial drainage/water abstraction/ lowering of the regional water table, siltation, loss of fringe vegetation, changes in seasonal water levels/fluctuations, direct loss of habitat to development, loading from effluents (WWTP), recreation/amenity use, marina development, fishing, introduction of alien invasive species, illegal dumping, felling/removal of trees, direct and indirect impacts to the habitats of the bird species of conservation interest.</p>	<p>There are many plans and projects which have the potential to produce ‘in combination’ impacts. These include, for example, the Regional Development Strategy, various Area Plans and the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland. Many of these plans make positive statements and set policies which ensure the co-ordinated development of the region.</p> <p>At this stage of the review of the development plan, it is not possible to fully assess the ‘in combination’ effects of these other plans and projects.</p>

5. Consultation Process

Appropriate Assessment Screening Letters stating that a submission or observation in relation to whether or not the development plan would be likely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites may be made to the Local Authority were sent to the following on the 16th February 2011:

- National Parks and Wildlife Service/Development Applications Unit, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
- Conservation Designations and Protection, Northern Ireland Environment Agency

A summary of the responses received (See Appendix 1) are summarised below:

National Parks and Wildlife Service/Development Applications Unit, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government:-

- Important nature conservation sites in County Monaghan include Natura 2000 sites Sliabh Beagh SPA, Kilroosky Lough Cluster SAC and the Eshbrack NHA.
- Any plan/project alone or in combination with other plans/projects will need to consider the long term protection of nature conservation/natural heritage components of the Natura 2000 sites.
- Both Sliabh Beagh SPA and Kilroosky Lough Cluster SAC are trans-boundary and plans/projects in Northern Ireland may also have impact on these sites.
- The Department has a concern regarding the number and location of communication antennae and wind farms in the immediate area of Sliabh Beagh – given its importance for breeding and foraging of Hen Harriers.
- Water quality issues including one off housing applications, type, location and operation of waste/waste water treatment facilities and land use in and around Kilroosky Lough Cluster is of concern. It is important to protect the hydrological regime and water quality at this site to maintain its favourable conservation status.
- Eshbrack Bog is designated an NHA for its blanket bog habitat. It is not a Natura 2000 sites but it overlaps with the Sliabh Beagh SPA. Commercial peat cutting is impacting on its conservation status and on the water quality in a number of upland lakes.
- County Monaghan has approximately 40 pNHAs in addition to the aforementioned sites and other designated and undesignated sites.
- Annexed species of conservation concerns within the County include lamprey species, white-clawed crayfish, otter, kingfisher, Greenland white-fronted goose, whooper swan, bat species etc.

Response of the Planning Authority and Heritage Officer in respect to the above:-

- Sliabh Beagh SPA and Kilroosky Lough Cluster SAC are acknowledged as Natura 2000 sites which lie within County Monaghan.
- Given the transboundary nature of Sliabh Beagh SPA and Kilroosky Lough Cluster SAC, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency was consulted as part of this Screening Process.

- Communication antennae and wind farms have been included as possible threats to the integrity of Sliabh Beagh SPA and Kilroosky Lough Cluster SAC.
- Issues relating to water quality, water pollution and peat cutting have been listed as possible threats to Natura 2000 sites, where relevant.
- The number of pNHAs located within the County is noted. This Screening Report is concerned with Natura 2000 sites.

6. Conclusion

As already illustrated, there are a number of Natura 2000 sites that could potentially be affected by policies and objectives in the new Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019. Whilst it is noted that the current Monaghan County Development Plan 2007-2013 includes policies and objectives which seek to protect, conserve and manage designated sites including cSAC's and SPAs, the policies and objectives of the County Monaghan Development Plan 2013-2019 have not yet been determined.

It is therefore considered that at this stage of the development plan process it is not possible to determine for certain whether the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019 will, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, be likely to have significant effects on the Natura 2000 sites in view of their conservation objectives.

Given this level of uncertainty, it is considered that the assessment should proceed towards Stage 2.

APPENDIX 1

Consultation Responses

Mr Adrian Hughes
Monaghan County Council
Council Offices
The Glen
Monaghan
Ireland



Direct Tel No: 028 9056 9523

23 February 2011

Dear Mr Hughes

MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2007 - 2013

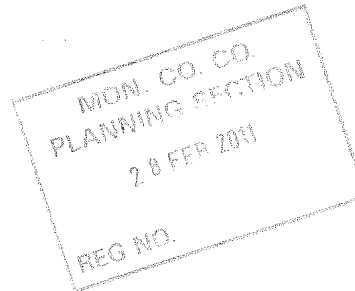
I refer to your Correspondence received in this office on 21 February 2011 regarding the review of Monaghan County Council Development Plan 2007-2013.

I would like to advise you that your consultation is being considered by the Department and a response shall be issued to you as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Orr".

DAVID ORR
Conservation Designations & Protection





Comhshaoil, Oidhreacht agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Heritage and Local Government



3rd March 2011

Our Ref: G2011/62

Director of Services – Planning,
c/o Adrian Hughes,
Senior Planner,
Monaghan County Council,
Council Offices,
The Glen,
Monaghan

Re: Review of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2007 – 2013 (incorporating Development Plans for Towns of Monaghan, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Clones and Ballybay)

A Chara,

I refer to your recent notification with respect to the above (dated 16th February 2011). Outlined below are the nature conservation observations and recommendations of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Important nature conservation sites in County Monaghan include the Natura 2000 sites; Sliabh Beagh SPA, the Killoosky Lough Cluster SAC, as identified in the Council's referral, and the designated Eshbrack Bog NHA.

Any plan or project either on its own or in combination with other plans or projects will need to consider the long term protection of nature conservation/natural heritage components of the Natura 2000 sites (i.e. their habitats and species).

Both Natura 2000 sites mentioned above are also trans-boundary sites and plans or projects in Northern Ireland may also have impact on these sites.

The Department has a particular concern for the number and location of communication antennae and wind farms (in existence and in planning stages) in the immediate area of the Sliabh Beagh SPA. Hen Harrier in particular, while primarily breeding in the SPA, also utilise suitable areas in the surrounding area as part of their foraging range. The likely impacts on the qualifying interests for this SPA needs to be given careful consideration in so far as plans and projects may either in their own right or in combination with other plans or projects, result in adverse impacts.

Water quality issues including one off housing applications, type, location and operation of waste /waste water treatment facilities and land use in and around the Killoosky Lough Cluster is a further concern for the Department. The long term protection of the hydrological regime and water quality at this site is of considerable importance in order to maintain the site at a favourable conservation status.

Eshbrack Bog is designated an NHA for its blanket bog habitat. Commercial peat cutting is impacting on the conservation status of the bog and on water quality in a number of upland lakes - including water sourced for domestic usage. While the NHA is not a Natura 2000 site it overlaps to some extent with the Sliabh Beagh SPA. The habitat of the NHA -upland blanket bog- is an Annex habitat.

County Monaghan has circa 40 pNHAs, in addition to the above sites and other designated and undesignated sites. Annexed species of conservation concerns, within the County, includes - lamprey species, white -clawed crayfish, otter, kingfisher, Greenland white- fronted goose, whooper swan, bat species etc. Any plan or project where relevant must take into consideration likely impacts on these species.

Kindly forward any future referrals, with respect to the above, to the following address

The Manager,
Development Applications Unit,
Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government,
Newtown Road,
Wexford

Alternatively, documentation associated with the above can be referred electronically to the DAU at the following address:

manager.dau@environ.ie

In addition, please acknowledge receipt of these observations by return.

Is mise le meas,



Paul McMahon,
Development Applications Unit
Tel: (053) 911 7381
E-mail: paul.mcmahon@environ.ie