

**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT
SCREENING REPORT
FOR
PROPOSED VARIATION No. 2
OF THE
MONAGHAN COUNTY DEVELOPMENT 2019-2025
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF
ARTICLE 6(3) OF THE EU HABITATS DIRECTIVE**



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Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This Screening report has been prepared in support of the Appropriate Assessment (AA) for Proposed Variation No.2 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (as amended) (hereafter referred to as the “Habitats Directive”).

This report is part of the ongoing AA process that is being undertaken alongside the preparation of the Proposed Variation. It will be considered, alongside other documentation prepared as part of this process, when Monaghan County Council finalises the AA at adoption of the Proposed Variation.

1.2 Legislative Context

The Habitats Directive provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the “favourable conservation status” of habitats and species of European Community Interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives (Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds) with Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. These two designations are collectively known as European sites and Natura 2000.

AA is required by the Habitats Directive, as transposed into Irish legislation by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Act (as amended). AA is an assessment of the potential for adverse or negative effects of a plan or project, in combination with other plans or projects, on the conservation objectives of a European site. These sites consist of SACs and SPAs and provide for the protection and long-term survival of Europe’s most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

1.3 Approach

The AA is based on best scientific knowledge and has utilised ecological and hydrological expertise. In addition, a detailed online review of published scientific literature and ‘grey’ literature was conducted. This included a detailed review of the National Parks and Wildlife (NPWS) website including mapping and available reports for relevant sites and in particular sensitive qualifying interests/special conservation interests described and their conservation objectives.

The ecological desktop study completed for the AA of the Proposed Variation comprised the following elements:

- Identification of European Sites within 15km of the Proposed Variation boundary with identification of potential pathways links for specific sites (if relevant) greater than 15km from the Proposed Variation boundary;
- Review of the NPWS site synopsis and conservation objectives for European Sites with identification of potential pathways from the Proposed Variation area; and
- Examination of available information on protected species.

There are four main stages in the AA process as follows:

Stage One: Screening

The process that identifies the likely impacts upon a European 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 European 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.

If adequate mitigation is proposed to ensure no significant adverse impacts on European sites, then the process may end at this stage. However, if the likelihood of significant impacts remains, then the process must proceed to Stage Three.

Stage Three: Assessment of Alternative Solutions

The process that examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoids adverse impacts on the integrity of the European 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.

The Habitats Directive promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensatory measures. This approach aims to avoid any impacts on European Sites by identifying possible impacts early in the plan making process and avoiding such impacts. Second, the approach involves the application of mitigation measures, if necessary, during the AA process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain. If potential impacts on European sites remain, the approach requires the consideration of alternative solutions. If no alternative solutions are identified and the plan/project is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, then compensation measures are required for any remaining adverse effect(s).

The assessment of potential effects on European Sites is conducted following a standard sourcepathway-receptor¹ model, where, in order for an effect to be established all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the model is sufficient to conclude that a potential effect is not of any relevance or significance.

In the interest of this report, receptors are the ecological features that are known to be utilised by the qualifying interests or special conservation interests of a European Site. A source is any identifiable element of the Proposed Variation provision that is known to interact with ecological processes. The pathways are any connections or links between the source and the receptor. This report provides information on whether direct, indirect and cumulative adverse effects could arise from the Proposed Variation.

The AA Screening exercise has been prepared taking into account legislation including the aforementioned legislation and guidance including the following:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009;
- "Commission Notice: Managing Natura 2000 sites - The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC", European Commission 2018;
- "Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC", European Commission Environment DG, 2002; and
- "Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC", European Commission, 2000.

¹ Source(s) – e.g. pollutant run-off from proposed works; Pathway(s) – e.g. groundwater connecting to nearby qualifying wetland habitats; and Receptor(s) – qualifying aquatic habitats and species of European Sites.

Section 2 Description of the Proposed Variation

The Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 (MCDP) provides for sustainable development and proper planning within the administrative area of Monaghan County Council.

As detailed in the Proposed Variation document, Section 11(1)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Northern & Western Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (NWRA RSES) to be incorporated into the development plan.

Section 1.12 of Chapter One of the MCDP sets out the Policy Context under which the development plan operates. Notwithstanding the fact that both the NPF and the NWRA RSES are specifically referenced in the MCDP and a significant amount of synergy was achieved between the provisions of the MCDP and the provisions of both the NPF and the NWRA RSES, to ensure full alignment with both the NPF and the NWRA RSES a variation of the MCDP is proposed. The proposed variation text to be inserted within Section 1.12 of Chapter One is as follows:-

“The Monaghan County Development Plan (MCDP) was prepared concurrently with both the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Northern & Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (NWRA RSES) and a significant amount of synergy was achieved between the provisions of the MCDP and the provisions of both the NPF and the NWRA RSES as a consequence. However, for the purposes of clarity the provisions of the NPF and the NWRA RSES will take precedence over the provisions of MCDP.”

Section 3 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

3.1 Introduction to screening

This stage of the process identifies any potential significant affects to European Sites from a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans.

An important element of the AA process is the identification of the “conservation objectives”, “Qualifying Interests” (QIs) and/ or “Special Conservation Interests” (SCIs) of European Sites requiring assessment. QIs are the habitat features and species listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive for which each European Site has been designated and afforded protection. SCIs are wetland habitats and bird species listed within Annexes I and II of the Birds Directive. It is also vital that the threats to the ecological / environmental conditions that are required to support QIs and SCIs are considered as part of the assessment.

The following NPWS Generic Conservation Objectives have been considered in the screening:

- For SACs, to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected; and
- For SPAs, to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.

Where available, Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) designed to define favourable conservation status for a particular habitat² or species³ at that site have been considered.

3.2 Identification of Relevant European Sites

This section of the screening process describes the European Sites which exist within the Zone of Influence of the site. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009) Guidance on AA recommends a 15 km buffer zone to be considered. A review of all sites within this zone has allowed a determination to be made that in the absence of significant hydrological links the characteristics of the Proposed Variation will not impose effects beyond the 15 km buffer. Details of European Sites that occur within 15 km of the Proposed Variation area are listed in Table 3.1 overleaf. European Sites and the EPA Rivers and Catchments are also mapped in Figure 3.1 below.

Information on QIs, SCIs and site-specific vulnerabilities and sensitivities (see Appendix I) and background information (such as that within Ireland’s Article 17 Report to the European Commission, site synopses and Natura 2000 standard data forms) has been considered.

The assessment considers available conservation objectives. Since conservation objectives focus on maintaining the favourable conservation condition of the QIs/SCIs of each site, the screening process concentrated on assessing the potential effects of the Plan against the QIs/SCIs of each site. The conservation objectives for each site were consulted throughout the assessment process.

² Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when: its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing; the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future; and the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

³ The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when: population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats; the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future; and there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Table 3.1 European Sites that occur within 15 km of the Proposed Variation area

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (Km)	Qualifying Features (Qualifying Interests & Special Conservation Interests)
004167	Slieve Beagh SPA	Within	Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) [A082]
001786	Kilroosky Lough Cluster SAC ²	Within	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. [3140] Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210] Alkaline fens [7230] <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]
UK0016621	Magheraveely Marl Loughs SAC ³	0.00	White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> [1092] Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> * [7210] Alkaline fens [7230] Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp [3140]
UK0016622	Slieve Beagh SAC ⁴	0.00	Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160] Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130] European dry heaths [4030]
UK9020071	Upper Lough Erne SPA ⁵	0.00	Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavifrons</i>) [A395]
UK9020091	Slieve Beagh-Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea SPA ⁶	0.00	Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) [A082]
000007	Lough Oughter And Associated Loughs SAC ⁷	0.88	Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150] Bog woodland [91D0] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]
UK0016614	Upper Lough Erne SAC ⁸	1.29	Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150] Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0] Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>)* [91E0] Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> [1355]
004049	Lough Oughter SPA ⁹	8.55	Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005] Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]
004091	Stabannan-Braganstown SPA ¹⁰	11.23	Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043]
UK0030277	Slieve Gullion SAC ¹¹	11.61	European dry heaths [4030]
UK0030212	Moninea Bog SAC ¹²	12.76	Active raised bogs * [7110]

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (Km)	Qualifying Features (Qualifying Interests & Special Conservation Interests)
004026	Dundalk Bay SPA ¹³	9.10	Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005] Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053] Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]
000455	Dundalk Bay SAC ¹⁴	10.37	Estuaries [1130] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410]

* Priority Habitat

2 https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO001786.pdf

3 <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/land-information-magheraveely-marl-loughs-conservation-objectives-2015.pdf>

4 https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004167.pdf

5 <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/upper-lough-erne-spa-conservation-objectives-2015.pdf>

6 <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/slieve-beagh-mullaghfad-lisnaska-SPA-conservation-objectives-2015.pdf>

7 https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000007.pdf

8 <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/land-information-upper-lough-erne-conservation-objectives-2015.pdf>

9 https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004049.pdf

10 https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004091.pdf

11 <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/Conservation%20Objectives%20%282017%20-%20Slieve%20Gullion%20SAC.%20%20Version%202.1%20-%20amendment%2013.10.2017.%20PDF..PDF>

12 <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/land-information-moninea-bog-conservation-objectives-2015.pdf>

13 https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004026.pdf

14 https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000455.pdf

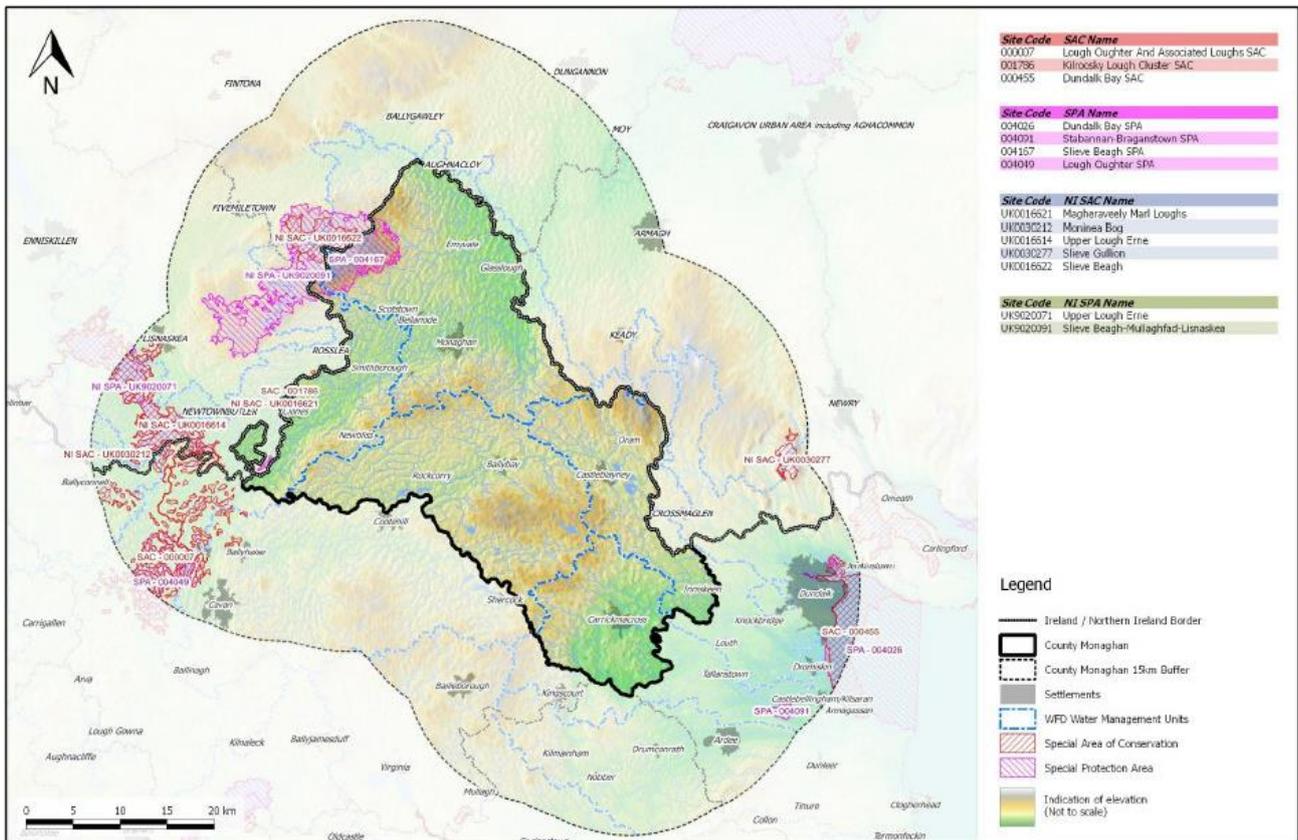


Figure 3.1 European Sites within 15 km of the Proposed Variation boundary⁴
⁴ Source: NPWS (datasets downloaded October 2019)

3.3 Assessment Criteria

3.3.1 Is the Proposed Variation Necessary to the Management of European Sites?

The overarching objective of the Proposed Variation is not the nature conservation management of the sites, but to provide for the explicit alignment of Section 1 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 (MCDP), which provides an introduction and sets out Policy Context, with the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Northern & Western Regional Assembly Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (NWRAS). Therefore, the Proposed Variation is not considered to be directly connected with or necessary to the management of European Sites.

3.3.2 Elements of the Proposed Variation with Potential to Give Rise to Effects

The Proposed Variation introduces additional text to be inserted within Section 1.12 of Chapter One of the MCDP as follows:-

“The Monaghan County Development Plan (MCDP) was prepared concurrently with both the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Northern & Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (NWRAS) and a significant amount of synergy was achieved between the provisions of the MCDP and the provisions of both the NPF and the NWRAS as a consequence. However, for the purposes of clarity the provisions of the NPF and the NWRAS will take precedence over the provisions of MCDP.”

The Proposed Variation does not introduce new policy, rather it reiterates the precedence that the NPF and the NWRAS take over the provisions of MCDP. The provisions of both the NPF and NWRAS have been subject to SEA and AA as relevant and appropriate, with mitigation measures integrated into the relevant plans. The existing County Development Plan provisions have also been subject to AA as relevant and appropriate, with mitigation measures integrated into it.

The proposed variation will form part of the Plan but does not introduce any new policies or sources for effects that were not already considered by the existing: MCDP and associated AA; and the wider planning and environmental assessment framework, including the NPF, NWRAS and associated AAs.

3.4 Screening of Sites

It has been examined whether there is potential for effects on European Sites considering information provided above, including Appendix I. Sites are screened out based on one or a combination of the following criteria:

- Where it can be shown that there are significant pathways such as hydrological links to the Proposed Variation area and the site to be screened;
- Where the site is located at such a distance from that area to which the Proposed Variation relates that effects are not foreseen; and
- Where it is that known threats or vulnerabilities at a site cannot be linked to potential impacts that may arise from the Proposed Variation.

3.4.1 Types of Potential Effects and Changes

The European Commission Environment DG document “Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC” outlines the types of effects that may affect European Sites.

These include effects from the following activities:

- Land take
- Resource Requirements (Drinking Water Abstraction Etc.)
- Emissions (Disposal to Land, Water or Air)
- Excavation Requirements
- Transportation Requirements
- Duration of Construction, Operation, Decommissioning

In addition, the guidance document outlines the following likely changes that may occur at a designated site, which may result in effects on the integrity and function of that site:

- Loss/reduction of habitat area
- Habitat or species fragmentation
- Disturbance to key species
- Reduction in species density
- Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.)
- Climate change

Assessment of potential impacts on European Sites is conducted utilising a standard source-pathway model (see approach referred to under Section 1 and Section 3). The proposed variation is considered against each of the sites overleaf (Table 3.1 provides the QIs/SCIs of all of the European Sites identified):

Table 3.2 Screening of Relevant European Sites

European Sites	Screening
Slieve Beagh SPA	The Proposed Variation does not introduce any sources for effects therefore Stage 2 AA is not required.
Kilroosky Lough Cluster SAC	The Proposed Variation does not introduce any sources for effects therefore Stage 2 AA is not required.
Magheraveely Marl Loughs SAC	The Proposed Variation does not introduce any sources for effects therefore Stage 2 AA is not required.
Slieve Beagh SAC	The Proposed Variation does not introduce any sources for effects therefore Stage 2 AA is not required.
Upper Lough Erne SPA	The Proposed Variation does not introduce any sources for effects therefore Stage 2 AA is not required.
Slieve Beagh- Mullaghfad- Lisnaskea SPA	The Proposed Variation does not introduce any sources for effects therefore Stage 2 AA is not required.
Lough Oughter And Associated Loughs SAC	The Proposed Variation does not introduce any sources for effects therefore Stage 2 AA is not required.
Upper Lough Erne SAC	The Proposed Variation does not introduce any sources for effects therefore Stage 2 AA is not required.
Lough Oughter Stabannan-Braganstown SPA	The Proposed Variation does not introduce any sources for effects therefore Stage 2 AA is not required.
Slieve Gullion SAC	The Proposed Variation does not introduce any sources for effects therefore Stage 2 AA is not required.
Moninea Bog SAC	The Proposed Variation does not introduce any sources for effects therefore Stage 2 AA is not required.
Dundalk Bay SPA	The Proposed Variation does not introduce any sources for effects therefore Stage 2 AA is not required.
Dundalk Bay SAC	The Proposed Variation does not introduce any sources for effects therefore Stage 2 AA is not required.

3.5 Other Plans and Programmes

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires an assessment of a plan or project to consider other plans or programmes that might, in combination with the plan or project, have the potential to adversely impact upon European Sites. There are no provisions in the Proposed Variation that introduce any sources for effects. Therefore, there are no in combination effects identified.

Section 4 AA Screening Conclusion

This report to inform the AA Screening of Proposed Variation No.2 of the Monaghan CDP 2019-2025 demonstrates that the implementation of the Proposed Variation will not result in adverse effects to the ecological integrity of any European Sites.

Following the source-pathway-receptor model, the relevant attributes of European Sites were assessed. No sources for effects to any European Site would arise from the Proposed Variation.

It is concluded that Proposed Variation No. 2 will not give rise to any effect on the ecological integrity of any European Sites, alone or in combination with any other plans, programmes, and projects etc.

Appendix I Background information on European Sites

List of European Sites within 15 km of County Monaghan including the Qualifying features (Qualifying Interests or Special Conservation Interests) and Site Vulnerability/Sensitivity

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (Km)	Qualifying Features (Qualifying Interests & Special Conservation Interests)	Site Specific Threats or Vulnerability ^{1,2}
004167	Slieve Beagh SPA	Within	Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) [A082]	Paths/trails and peat extraction are the known pressures within the SPA. The species are sensitive to direct land use management activities and succession processes.
001786	Kilroosky Lough Cluster SAC	Within	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. [3140] Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210] Alkaline fens [7230] <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]	No site-specific threats have been identified by the NPWS
UK0016621	Magheraveely Marl Loughs SAC	0.00	White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> [1092] Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> * [7210] Alkaline fens [7230] Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp [3140]	Grazing, forest exploitation without replanting or natural regrowth. Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities. Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish). Pollution to groundwater (point sources and diffuse sources). Air pollution, air-borne pollutants invasive non-native species. Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions. Biocenotic evolution, succession. Threats and pressures from outside the Member State.
UK0016622	Slieve Beagh SAC	0.00	Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160] Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130] European dry heaths [4030]	Grazing, Mining and quarrying. Air pollution, air-borne pollutants. Invasive non-native species, fire and fire suppression. Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions.
UK9020091	Slieve Beagh-Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea SPA	0.00	Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) [A082]	Modification of cultivation practices, grazing, Mining and quarrying. Utility and service lines, airports, flightpaths. Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities. Interpretative centres. Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish). Invasive non-native species. Other ecosystem modifications; Changes in biotic and abiotic conditions.

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (Km)	Qualifying Features (Qualifying Interests & Special Conservation Interests)	Site Specific Threats or Vulnerability ^{1,2}
UK9020071	Upper Lough Erne SPA	0.00	Greenland White-fronted Goose (Anser albifrons flavifrons) [A395]	Modification of cultivation practices and grazing.
000007	Lough Oughter And Associated Loughs SAC	0.88	Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150] Bog woodland [91D0] Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]	The main threats to the quality of the site are water polluting activities (such as runoff from fertiliser and slurry application, and sewage discharge) which have raised the nutrient status of some lakes to hypertrophic. Housing and boating developments are on the increase, both adjacent to and within the site. There is also significant fishing and shooting pressure on and around the lakes. Increased afforestation has resulted in some loss of wetland habitat and also loss of feeding ground for wintering birds such as Greenland White-fronted Goose.
UK0016614	Upper Lough Erne SAC	1.29	Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150] Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0] Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)* [91E0] Otter Lutra lutra [1355]	Forest and Plantation management & use. Grazing in forests/ woodland.
004049	Lough Oughter SPA	8.55	Great Crested Grebe (Podiceps cristatus) [A005] Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038] Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A050] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	No site-specific threats have been identified by the NPWS
004091	Stabannan-Braganstown SPA	11.23	Greylag Goose (Anser anser) [A043]	No site-specific threats have been identified by the NPWS
UK0030277	Slieve Gullion SAC	11.61	European dry heaths [4030]	Modification of cultivation practices, grazing, forest exploitation without replanting or natural regrowth. Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities. Air pollution, air-borne pollutants. Invasive non-native species. Fire and fire suppression.

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (Km)	Qualifying Features (Qualifying Interests & Special Conservation Interests)	Site Specific Threats or Vulnerability ^{1,2}
UK0030212	Moninea Bog SAC	12.76	Active raised bogs * [7110]	Grazing, Air pollution, air-borne pollutants fire and fire suppression. Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions. Biocenotic evolution, succession.
004026	Dundalk Bay SPA	9.10	Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005] Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053] Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	No site-specific threats have been identified by the NPWS

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (Km)	Qualifying Features (Qualifying Interests & Special Conservation Interests)	Site Specific Threats or Vulnerability ^{1,2}
000455	Dundalk Bay SAC	10.37	Estuaries [1130] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410]	No site-specific threats have been identified by the NPWS

1 DEFRA (2017) <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1527>

2 NPWS (2017) <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites>

* Priority Habitat

List of all Qualifying Interests of SACs that have undergone Assessment including Summaries of Current Threats and Sensitivity to Effects

Qualifying Interests	Current threats to Qualifying Interests	Sensitivity of Qualifying Interests
Alkaline fens	Peat mining activities, land drainage; infilling; fertiliser pollution and eutrophication	Groundwater dependant. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in nutrient or base status
Blanket bog (active only)	Land reclamation, peat extraction; afforestation; erosion and landslides triggered by human activity; drainage; burning and infrastructural development.	Surface and groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Inappropriate management
Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i>	Peat or turf cutting, arterial drainage, local drainage and agricultural reclamation, infilling of sites with building waste, dumping of household refuse, afforestation, water pollution and urban expansion.	Groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in nutrient or base status.
European dry heaths	Afforestation, overburning, over-grazing, under-grazing and bracken invasion.	Moderately sensitive to hydrological change. Changes in management. Changes in nutrient status.
Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp	Nutrient enrichment arising from intensification of agriculture and urban developments.	Surface and groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Highly sensitive to pollution
Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds	Peat cutting, overgrazing and afforestation of peatland habitats.	Surface and groundwater dependant. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Highly sensitive to pollution.
White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> [1092]	Crayfish plague, fishing/angling, water quality and habitat availability/condition.	Surface water dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Inappropriate management

List of all Special Conservation Interests of SPAs that have undergone Screening including Summaries of Current Threats and Sensitivity to Effects

Special Conservation Interests	Vulnerabilities of Special Conservation Interests
<p>Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) [A082] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005] Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043] Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) [A082] Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bird species are particularly vulnerable to direct disturbance due to noise and/or vibration. These effects are localised, and disturbance effects are foreseen to be low at distances beyond 2km. • Direct habitat loss is a serious concern for bird species, as well as the reduction in habitat quality. Habitat degradation could occur through effects such as local enrichment due to agricultural practices or damage to habitat through activities such as trampling. • Prey species diversity and availability is a key element of species conservation. Community dynamics and ecosystem functionality are complex concepts and require site specific information. The site synopsis and conservation objectives for the SPAs identified within the ZOI were used to identify any specific prey sensitivities. • Availability of nesting/roosting habitat. • Vegetation composition, structure and functionality. • Roost availability and protection. • Prey availability and hunting/foraging habitat area.
<p>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p>	<p>Direct land take is a common vulnerability to all sites; as well as significant water quality effects. The conservation objective of all SPAs designated for Wetland and Waterbirds is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat as a resource for the regularly-occurring migratory waterbirds using it.</p>