

**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT
SCREENING REPORT
FOR
PROPOSED VARIATION No. 5
OF THE
MONAGHAN COUNTY DEVELOPMENT 2019-2025
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF
ARTICLE 6(3) OF THE EU HABITATS DIRECTIVE**



August 2023

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Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Background & Legislative Context

This screening report has been prepared in support of the Appropriate Assessment (AA) for Proposed Variation No. 5 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”) and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The Habitats Directive seeks to safeguard the long-term survival of Europe’s most valuable and threatened species and habitats and provides legal protection for these habitats and species. The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the “favourable conservation status” of habitats and species of European Community Interest and these habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives (Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds).

The geographical areas of particular importance to these species and habitats have been selected as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) which are collectively referred to (in Ireland) as European sites. SACs and SPAs have been designated in various locations to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. Together, these sites comprise the pan-European Natura 2000 network of protected areas.

One of the measures which protects these areas is the requirement that every plan or project must undergo an assessment of its implications for any European site before a plan is adopted or consent for a project is given. Adoption of a plan or consent for a project can only be given after determining that they will not adversely affect the integrity of the site(s) concerned in view of the conservation objectives of that site.¹

In order to determine if an AA is required, a screening process must be carried out for all land use plans or applications for planning permission. The Habitats Directive and the associated Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) are transposed into Irish legislation by Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011.² The legislative provisions for AA screening for land use plans and planning applications are set out in Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

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.

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 2000 (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 The Habitats Directive (and Irish legislation) does provide for very limited circumstances where, 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 proceed for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (Article 6(4)). This is referred to as IROPI and remains rare in Ireland although it is more common in other member states.

² S.I. No 477/2011 – European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations

1.2 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 source-pathway-receptor³ 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.

³ 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.

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 having regard to the aforementioned legislation and guidance including the following:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 revision)
- AA under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive; Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPW 1/10 and PSSP 2/10;
- 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: Methodical Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate General, 2021);
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provision of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate General, 2018);
- Guidance Document on Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission, 2007);
- Guidelines for Good Practice AA of Plans under Article 6(3) Habitats Directive (International Workshop on Assessment of Plans under the Habitats Directive, 2011);
- Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle. European Commission (2000);

Section 2 Background to and Description of the Proposed Variation

2.1 Context and Reasons for Proposed Variation No. 5

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) was introduced by the Finance Act 2021, which amended the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997, and was announced in Budget 2022. The provisions of the RZLT are intended to come into effect in February 2024. The purpose of the RZLT is to activate existing residential planning permissions, and development plan zonings where housing is permitted and where the land is connected to, or has access to services, but remains undeveloped.

As required by the above mentioned legislation, Monaghan County Council identified in its functional area lands that are in scope for the RZLT and published a Draft RZLT Map indicating these lands by 1st November 2022. A significant number of sites were identified in the five towns of Monaghan, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Clones and Ballybay and in nine of the ten Tier 4 Villages which are defined by a settlement limit in the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025.

A Draft RZLT Map was published on 1st November 2022 and submissions were invited from this date until 1st January 2023. Determinations on submission received were made by Monaghan County Council by 1st April 2023.

As the RZLT is a new taxation measure being applied to existing zoned and serviced lands, provision was made in the legislation for landowners to make submissions to the local authority requesting a change to the current zoning of their lands by way of variation of the development plan under Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). A final RZLT map, which takes account of any amendments made by a variation, must be published by 1st December 2023.

Any requests for changes in zoning through a variation process under Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) shall be considered by the local authority utilising the same criteria applied to zoning requests during the making of a development plan. The impact of the proposed requests for amended zoning must be assessed in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

The Planning Authority is also required to have regard to the provisions of Circular NRUP 07/2022. This circular recommends that the variation should be carried out as a single collective variation process after 1st June 2023. This date reflected the final date for submissions on the RZLT Supplemental Map which was required to be published on 1st May 2023. It should be noted that Monaghan County Council did not publish a RZLT Supplemental Map.

In total thirty one requests for a change in zoning of lands were received during the public consultation period. Having assessed and considered the zoning amendment requests raised in these submissions, the planning authority has decided to proceed with twenty three zoning amendments, which are summarised as follows:

- Total number of sites proposed to be dezoned (no zoning) = 19
- Total number of sites proposed to be rezoned (i.e zoning objective changed from one land use zoning objective to another) = 4

For ease of reference these proposed changes in zoning of lands have been assigned Variation Sub References as set out in Tables 1.0, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4 overleaf.

Table 1.0 Summary of Proposed Changes in Zoning of Lands in Monaghan Town

MONAGHAN TOWN MAP MDP 1 of MCDP 2019-2025					
Variation Sub Reference	RZLT Parcel ID	RZLT DMS Reference	Existing Zoning	Proposed Zoning	Site Area
5a	MNLA MT11	DMS 60	Strategic Residential Reserve	None (Dezoned)	3.17 ha
5b	MNLA MT11	DMS 82	Strategic Residential Reserve	None (Dezoned)	8.60 ha
5c	MNLA MT11	DMS 56	Strategic Residential Reserve	Existing Residential	0.39 ha
5d	MNLA MT70	DMS 29	Strategic Residential Reserve	None (Dezoned)	13.07ha
Total					25.23ha

Table 1.1 Summary of Proposed Changes in Zoning of Lands in Carrickmacross

CARRICKMACROSS TOWN MAP CKDP1 of MCDP 2019-2025					
Variation Sub Reference	RZLT Parcel ID	RZLT DMS Reference	Existing Zoning	Proposed Zoning	Site Area
5e	MNLA CK10	DMS18	Strategic Residential Reserve	None (Dezoned)	3.19 ha
5f	MNLA CK25	DMS16	Proposed Residential A	Industry, Enterprise & Employment	0.71 ha
5g	MNLA CK58	DMS86	Strategic Residential Reserve	None (Dezoned)	1.84 ha
5h	MNLA CK60	DMS13	Strategic Residential Reserve	None (Dezoned)	0.95 ha
5i	MNLA CK63	DMS11	Strategic Residential Reserve	None (Dezoned)	1.23 ha
5j	MNLA CK63	DMS14	Strategic Residential Reserve	None (Dezoned)	0.83 ha
5k	MNLA CK63	DMS24	Strategic Residential Reserve	None (Dezoned)	0.83 ha
5l	MNLA CK65	DMS87	Strategic Residential Reserve	None (Dezoned)	2.32 ha
5m	MNLA CK66	DMS17	Strategic Residential Reserve	None (Dezoned)	3.71 ha
5n	MNLA CK69	DMS2	Strategic Residential Reserve	None (Dezoned)	2.90 ha
5o	MNLA ER532	DMS90	Existing Residential	None (Dezoned)	0.22 ha
Total					18.73ha

Table 1.2 Summary of Proposed Changes in Zoning of Lands in Castleblayney

CASTLEBLAYNEY TOWN PLAN CYDP1 of MCDP 2019-2025					
Variation Sub Reference	RZLT Parcel ID	RZLT DMS Reference	Existing Zoning	Proposed Zoning	Site Area
5p	MNLA CBY2	DMS 30	Strategic Residential Reserve	None (Dezoned)	6.74 ha
5q	MNLA CBY52	DMS 28	Proposed Residential B	None (Dezoned)	1.10 ha
Total					7.84 ha

Table 1.3 Summary of Proposed Changes in Zoning of Lands in Clones

CLONES TOWN MAP CDP1 of MCDP 2019-2025					
Variation Sub Reference	RZLT Parcel ID	RZLT DMS Reference	Existing Zoning	Proposed Zoning	Site Area
5r	MNLA CS19	DMS 61	Strategic Residential Reserve	None (Dezoned)	0.66 ha
5s	MNLA CS19	DMS 61	Proposed Residential A	None (Dezoned)	0.30 ha
5t	MNLA CS6	DMS 52	Proposed Residential B	None (Dezoned)	1.10 ha
5u	MNLA CS5	DMS 51	Strategic Residential Reserve	None (Dezoned)	4.10 ha
Total					6.16 ha

Table 1.4 Summary of Proposed Changes in Zoning of Lands in Tier 4 Villages

TIER 4 VILLAGES – BALLINODE & SCOTSTOWN					
Variation Sub Reference	RZLT Parcel ID	RZLT DMS Reference	Existing Zoning	Proposed Zoning	Site Area
5v	MNLA BE4	DMS 49	Mixed Use	Landscape Protection & Conservation	0.77 ha
5w	MNLA SN6	DMS 72	Mixed Use	Landscape Protection & Conservation	0.07 ha
Total					0.84ha

Table 1.5 – Area in Hectares of Zoning Changes by Settlement

Settlement Map Amendments	Area in ha
MDP1 Monaghan	25.23
CKDP1 Carrickmacross	18.73
CYPD1 Castleblayney	7.84
CDP1 Clones	6.16
Villages	0.84
Total	58.8

The area of the lands subject to proposed zoning amendments equates to a figure of 58.8 hectares. The total area of “zoned” land contained within the five towns and ten Tier 4 Villages in County Monaghan is 2,384 hectares. Therefore, the area of lands subject to the proposed zoning amendments represents a figure of 2.5% of the overall quantum of lands zoned in the County.

Within the proposed zoning amendments there are seven types of change of land zonings proposed, which are listed in Table 1.6 below.

Table 1.6 Types of Change of Land Zonings

Zoning Change Type	Existing Zoning	Proposed Zoning	Variation Sub Reference	CDP 2019-2025 Maps affected
Type 1	Strategic Residential Reserve	Dezone	5a, 5b, 5d, 5e, 5g, 5h, 5i, 5j, 5k, 5l, 5m, 5n, 5p, 5r, 5u	MDP1, CKDP1, CKDP1, CDP1
Type 2	Existing Residential	Dezone	5o	CKDP1
Type 3	Proposed Residential A	Dezone	5s	CDP1
Type 4	Proposed Residential B	Dezone	5q, 5t	CYPD1 CDP1
Type 5	Mixed Use	Landscape Protection & Conservation	5v, 5w	Ballinode Village Plan Scotstown Village Plan
Type 6	Strategic Residential Reserve	Existing Residential	5c	MDP1
Type 7	Proposed Residential A	Industry, Enterprise & Employment	5f	CKDP1

Monaghan County Council is proposing Variation No. 5 to the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 and intends to vary the Plan in accordance with Section 13(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Section 3 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

3.1 Introduction to screening

This stage of the process identifies any potential significant effects 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 habitat⁴ or species⁵ at that site have been considered.

3.2 Identification of Relevant European Sites

The Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities (2009, as revised in 2010) 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. All European sites within a 15km radius of the Variation area were examined to assess potential connectivity corridors on a landscape scale and assess potential interactions between the Proposed Variation and the conservation objectives of each of the sites. European Sites within or directly adjacent to the vantage point locations were examined for all potential localised effects that may occur such as visitor interactions. Details of European Sites that occur within 15 km of the Proposed Variation are listed in Table 1.7.

European Sites and the EPA Rivers and Catchments are also mapped in Figure 1. Information on QIs, SCIs and site-specific vulnerabilities and sensitivities (refer to 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. Conservation objectives that have been considered by the assessment are included in the following documents:

- (2015) Conservation objectives for Magheraveely marl loughs SAC [UK0016621]. Version 2. - Department of Environment Northern Ireland;
- (2022) Conservation objectives for Slieve Beagh SPA [004167] (23rd September 2022) - Department of Housing, Local Government and;
- (2015) Conservation objectives for Slieve Beagh Mullaghfad Lisnaskea SPA [UK9020302]. Version 3. – Department of Environment Northern Ireland.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

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.

Table 1.7 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 ¹	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 flavirons</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 maritima</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410]

* Priority Habitat

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

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-lisnaskea-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%29.%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

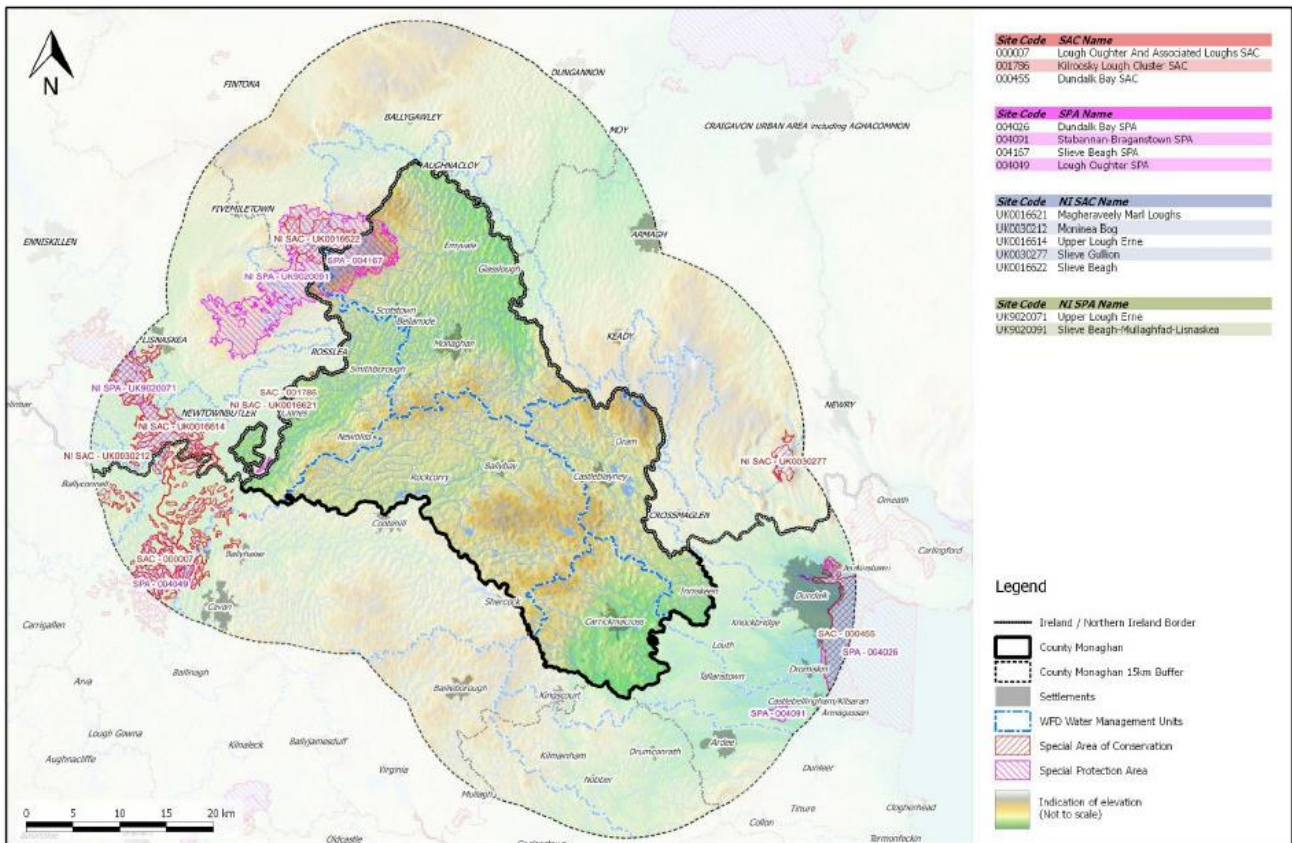


Figure 1 European Sites within 15 km of the Proposed Variation boundary⁶

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 changes to land use zonings in six settlements within County Monaghan. 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 does not introduce any additional objectives, policies, or texts into the current Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025. The sole purpose of the proposed variation is to change certain existing land use zoning of a limited number of land parcels in the four main settlements and two villages.

Zoning Change Type 1 - For the majority of the land parcels (15 land parcels within Monaghan Town, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney and Clones) it is proposed to change the current land use zoning from Strategic Residential Reserve to no zoning (ie. de-zone). Strategic Residential Reserve lands are primarily zoned for residential uses, on the basis that these lands are considered strategic in location for future residential development but would only be permitted for comprehensive residential development in instances whereby 75% of both the Proposed Residential A and Proposed Residential B zoned lands are developed. There is also a limited range of uses open for consideration within this zoning class as set out in Table 9.1 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025. These are Allotments, B&B/Guesthouse, Cemetery, Church/Place of Worship, Community Facility, Creche/Nursery, Cultural/Library/Museum/Gallery, Doctor/Dentist/Health Practitioner, Education/Training/Schools, Health Centre, Hotel, Park/Playground, Playing Fields, Public Infrastructure, Recreational Facilities, Residential, Retail (Convenience), Residential Home/Retirement/Nursing Home, Telecommunications and Wind Turbines. Strategic Residential Reserve does not permit

⁶ Source: NPWS (datasets downloaded October 2019)

agricultural development (notwithstanding exempt development provisions). As such rezoning Strategic Reserve lands effectively means that agricultural development and certain other types of development such as one off residential (subject to rural housing needs criteria), tourism, and small scale industrial/commercial development could be considered subject to the more restrictive objectives and policies pertaining to development in the rural area (as set out in the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025). The existing objectives and policies pertaining to rural development in the current Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 were considered under the associated Appropriate Assessment. Furthermore, any future applications shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment as part of the Development Management process.

Zoning Change Type 2 - It is proposed to change the land use zoning of one land parcel in Carrickmacross town measuring 0.22 hectares from Existing Residential to no zoning (ie. de-zone). In accordance with the provisions of Table 9.1 of Chapter 9 Strategic Objectives for Settlements, the principal permitted land uses on Existing Residential is residential with Allotments, B&B/Guest House, and Parks/Playgrounds also permissible. Other uses open for consideration include Church/Place of Worship, Community Facility, Creche/Nursery, Cultural/Library/Museum/Gallery, Doctor/Dentist/Health Practitioner, Education/Training/Schools, Health Centres, Hot Food Takeaways, Playing Fields, Public Infrastructure, Recreational Facility, Restaurant/Café, Retail (Convenience), Residential Home/Retirement/Nursing Home, Telecommunications and Wind Turbines provided all such proposals are in keeping with the established built character of the area and do not adversely impact upon the amenity residential properties. As such rezoning Existing Residential lands effectively means that agricultural development and certain other types of development such as one off residential (subject to rural housing needs criteria), tourism, and small scale industrial/commercial development could be considered subject to the more restrictive objectives and policies pertaining to development in the rural area as set out in the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025. The existing objectives and policies pertaining to rural development in the current Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 were considered under the associated Appropriate Assessment. Furthermore, any future applications shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment as part of the Development Management process.

Zoning Change Types 3 & 4 - It is proposed to change the land use zoning of one land parcel in Castleblayney and two land parcels in Clones Town from Proposed Residential A and Residential B to no zoning (ie. de-zone). The total area of these three land parcels is 2.1 hectares. In accordance with the provisions of Table 9.1 of Chapter 9 Strategic Objectives for Settlements, the principal permitted land uses on Proposed Residential (both A and B) is residential with allotments, B&B/Guest House, and Parks/Playgrounds also permissible. Other uses open for consideration include Church/Place of Worship, Community Facility, Creche/Nursery, Cultural/Library/Museum/Gallery, Doctor/Dentist/Health Practitioner, Education/Training/Schools, Health Centres, Hot Food Takeaways, Playing Fields, Public Infrastructure, Recreational Facility, Retail (Convenience), Residential, Residential Home/Retirement/Nursing Home, Telecommunications and Wind Turbines provided all such proposals are in keeping with the established built character of the area and do not adversely impact upon the amenity residential properties. Rezoning these lands would mean that the applicable development management policies for rural areas would apply and agricultural development and certain other types of development such as one off residential (subject to rural housing needs criteria), tourism, and small scale industrial/commercial development could be considered subject to the more restrictive objectives and policies pertaining to development in the rural area as set out in the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025.

Zoning Change Type 5 - It is proposed to change the land use zoning of two land parcels totalling 0.84 hectares in two Tier 4 Settlements (Scotstown & Ballinode) from "mixed use" zoning to Landscape Protection and Conservation. The village envelopes identified in the MCDP 2019-2025 are based on the existing established footprint with the aim to consolidate existing development and promote the regeneration of existing derelict and/or vacant sites. Lands are not zoned for specific uses within the village plans in order to provide for a less restrictive approach to the suitable expansion and growth of the villages. Notwithstanding this, development constraints may exist which include protected structures, protected monuments and flood

risk areas. The proposed change to a Landscape Protection/Conservation zoning reflects the fact that the lands within Ballinode village are located along a riparian corridor, are heavily vegetated, and partly in a flood risk area subject to Fluvial and Pluvial Flood Risk as indicated by OPW flood risk mapping. The proposed change to a Landscape Protection/Conservation zoning also reflects the fact the lands within Scotstown village are located along a riparian corridor and in a flood risk area subject to Fluvial and Pluvial Flood Risk as indicated by OPW flood risk mapping. The lands in Scotstown are currently indicated on the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 map for the village as being within a Flood Risk Area. As set out in Table 9.1 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 only a Golf Course and Park/Playground are permitted, while a very limited number of uses are “Open for Consideration” on this zoning namely Allotments, Playing Fields, Public Infrastructure, and Recreational Facilities. This land use zoning is more restrictive in terms of permitting development, and the prevailing policies for Flood Risk Management are also more restrictive in terms of permitting development. The existing objectives and policies pertaining to rural development in the current Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 were considered under the associated Appropriate Assessment. Furthermore, any future applications shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment as part of the Development Management process.

Zoning Change Type 6 - It is proposed to change the land use zoning of one land parcel measuring 0.39 hectares from Strategic Reserve to Existing Residential in Monaghan Town. This change reflects the actual current use of the site as a single residential dwelling and associated curtilage/out buildings and as such no additional impacts are likely. Strategic Residential Reserve lands are primarily zoned for residential uses, which are deemed suitable for such a use, but are not needed presently. There is also a limited range of uses open for consideration within this zoning class as set out in Table 9.1 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025. These are Allotments, B&B/Guesthouse, Cemetery, Church/Place of Worship, Community Facility, Creche/Nursery, Cultural/Library/Museum/Gallery, Doctor/Dentist/Health Practitioner, Education/Training/Schools, Health Centre, Hotel, Park/Playground, Playing Fields, Public Infrastructure, Recreational Facilities, Residential, Retail (Convenience), Residential Home/Retirement/Nursing Home, Telecommunications and Wind Turbines. In accordance with the provisions of Table 9.1 of Chapter 9 Strategic Objectives for Settlements, the principal permitted land uses on Existing Residential is residential with Allotments, B&B/Guest House, and Parks/Playgrounds also permissible. Other uses open for consideration include Church/Place of Worship, Community Facility, Creche/Nursery, Cultural/Library/Museum/Gallery, Doctor/Dentist/Health Practitioner, Education/Training/Schools, Health Centres, Hot Food Takeaways, Playing Fields, Public Infrastructure, Recreational Facility, Restaurant/Café, Retail (Convenience), Residential Home/Retirement/Nursing Home, Telecommunications and Wind Turbines provided all such proposals are in keeping with the established built character of the area and do not adversely impact upon the amenity residential properties. The principal permitted uses are almost the same for both zonings with the exception of the additional uses of Cemetery, Hotel, Park/Playground which are “Open for Consideration” on lands zoned Strategic Residential Reserve, and Hot Food Takeaway and Restaurant/Café which are “Open for Consideration” on lands zoned Existing Residential. In respect of Hot Food Takeaway and Restaurant/Café which would result in additional types of development “Open for Consideration” on the proposed zoning, it is considered that these uses are similar uses to Hotel and thus there is no potential for significant impacts on the environment as a result of the proposed variation. The existing objectives and policies in the current Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 were considered under the associated Appropriate Assessment. Furthermore, any future applications shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment as part of the Development Management process. Having regard to the small size of the parcel there is limited scope for comprehensive redevelopment and such any potential impacts would be negligible.

Zoning Change Type 7 - It is proposed to change the land use zoning of one land parcel in Carrickmacross town measuring 0.7 hectares from Proposed Residential A to Industry Enterprise and Employment. In accordance with the provisions of Table 9.1 of Chapter 9 Strategic Objectives for Settlements, the principal permitted land uses on Proposed Residential is residential with allotments, B&B/Guest House, and Parks/Playgrounds also permissible. Other uses open for consideration include Church/Place of Worship, Community Facility, Creche/Nursery, Cultural/Library/Museum/Gallery, Doctor/Dentist/Health Practitioner, Education/Training/Schools, Health Centres, Hot Food Takeaways, Playing Fields, Public Infrastructure,

Recreational Facility, Retail (Convenience), Residential, Residential Home/Retirement/Nursing Home, Telecommunications and Wind Turbines provided all such proposals are in keeping with the established built character of the area and do not adversely impact upon the amenity residential properties. In accordance with Table 9.1 of the MCDP 2019-2025 principal permitted land uses on Industry Enterprise and Employment zoning will be Advertising Structures, Business/Technology Park, Builders Providers, Call Centre , Car Wash, Cash & Carry/Wholesale unit, Enterprise Centre, Fire/Ambulance Station , Fuel Depot/Distributor, HGV Park/Transport Depot, Heavy/Light Industry , Public Transport Depot, Recycling/Waste Transfer Site, Science Technology Enterprise, Vehicle Servicing & Repair/Vehicle Sales, Equipment Hire, Warehousing , Wind Turbine, and Workshop. There is also a broad range of uses that are open for consideration on this zoning namely, Abattoir, Allotments, Boarding Kennels, Car Park/Park & Ride, Creche/Nursery, Drive Through, Education/Training/Schools, Factory Outlet, Farm Shop, Fuel Filling Station, Funeral Home/Mortuary, Garden Centre, Offices (non-ancillary), Public Infrastructure, Recreational Facility, Restaurant/Café, Retail Warehouse, Telecommunications, Tourist Facilities, Vehicle Breakers Yard, and Veterinary Surgery. In the case of this parcel, permission has already been granted for an Industrial Storage Building (Frozen Food Storage and Distribution) and this permission is extant until October 2025. A Material Contravention of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 was made to facilitate this development. The Material Contravention was subject to Appropriate Assessment screening and a determination was made that a Natura Impact Statement was not required.

In conclusion, the Proposed Variation does not introduce new policy, rather it seeks to change the land use zoning of just under 59 hectares of zoned land, (which represents 2.5% of the total of 2,384 hectares of lands zoned within the County Monaghan Development Plan 2019-2025) either from zoned land to unzoned land, or from one zoning to another. Significantly, no additional lands are being zoned for development and the proposed variation will result in a reduction in the amount of lands zoned for development.

Having regard to the above, it is considered that the proposed variation does not introduce any sources for effects that were not already considered by the existing Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 were considered under the associated Appropriate Assessment. Furthermore, any future applications on these zoned lands shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment as part of the Development Management process.

3.4 AA Screening Consultations

As part of the screening process, relevant environmental authorities were notified of the proposed Variation and submissions or observation were requested in relation to whether or not the implementation of Proposed Variation No. 5 would be likely to have any potential significant affects on European Sites, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans. The following bodies were notified:-

- National Parks & Wildlife Service
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Northern Ireland)

No comments were received from any of the bodies consulted.

3.5 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 no significant pathways such as hydrological links Proposed Variation proposals 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.); and
- Climate change.

Assessment of potential impacts on European Sites is conducted utilising a standard source-pathway model (refer to approach referred to under Section 1 and Section 3). Each of these potential changes are considered in Table 1.8 overleaf and in Table 1.7 with reference to the QIs/SCIs of all of the European Sites identified.

Table 1.8 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	The Proposed Variation does not introduce any sources for effects therefore Stage 2 AA is not required.
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 is to inform the AA Screening of Proposed Variation No.5 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 and 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.

The risks to the safeguarding and integrity of the qualifying interests, special conservation interests and conservation objectives of the European sites have been addressed through existing, already in force policies and objectives within the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 which was subject to Stage 2 AA, and with which the Proposed Variation and all lower tier plans/projects must comply. In addition, any future plans or projects that may arise will themselves be subject to AA Screening when precise details of policies or design and location are known.

Therefore, it is concluded that Proposed Variation No. 5 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.

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 &

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (Km)	Qualifying Features (Qualifying Interests & Special Conservation Interests)	Site Specific Threats or Vulnerability ^{1,2}
				terrestrial, marine & brackish). Invasive non-native species. Other ecosystem modifications; Changes in biotic and abiotic conditions.
UK9020071	Upper Lough Erne SPA	0.00	Greenland White-fronted Goose (Anser albifrons flavirons) [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 [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]	No site-specific threats have been identified by the NPWS

			Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	
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 maritimae</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, over burning, 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>

