ARUP

Monaghan County Council

Monaghan Town Local Transport Plan

Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Reference: Issue

02 | 27 January 2026

Job number 297873-00

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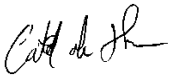
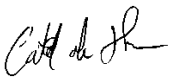
Document Verification

Project title	Monaghan Town Local Transport Plan
Document title	Screening for Appropriate Assessment
Job number	297873-00
Document ref	Issue
File reference	

Revision	**Date**	**Filename**	Draft Monaghan LTP AA Screening Issue 1		
Issue	10/06/2025	**Description**			
			Prepared by	**Checked by**	**Approved by**
		Name	Cathel de Lima Hutchison	Hannah Sheridan Thom Reid	Fraser Maxwell
		Signature			
Final Issue	27/01/2026	**Filename**	Monaghan LTP AA Screening		
		Description			
			Prepared by	**Checked by**	**Approved by**
		Name	Cathel de Lima Hutchison	Hannah Sheridan Thom Reid	Fraser Maxwell
		Signature			
		Filename			
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Issue Document Verification with Document ✓

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

This Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report has been prepared by Ove Arup and Partners Ireland Ltd (Arup) on behalf of Monaghan County Council (MCC) in connection with the Local Transport Plan for Monaghan Town (hereafter referred to as the 'Plan').

1.2 Report Aim

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires that any plan or project, which is not directly connected with, or necessary to the management of a European site, but would be likely to have a significant effect, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, should be subject to an Appropriate Assessment (AA).

This AA Screening Report provides information to MCC, as the competent authority, to make a determination as to whether likely significant effects on any European sites arising as a result of the transport proposals emanating from this Plan can be excluded or screened out. This report provides a documented record of the screening of the proposed Plan.

1.3 Basis for Appropriate Assessment

The Habitats Directive on the Conservation of Natural habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC) (the 'Habitats Directive') provides the legal protection for habitats and species, with Articles 3 to 9 providing legal protection to the EU wide network of sites known as the Natura 2000 sites. Natura 2000 is a network of protected sites which comprises Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and proposals for such sites (referred to as European sites within this report). The definitions of both SACs and SPAs are provided in Section 3.2.1.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect European sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for AA whilst Article 6(4) sets out the Alternative Solutions, Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) and Compensatory Measures where adverse effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded.

The Habitats Directive has been transposed in Ireland by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011) (as amended), and by Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). In the context of the proposed objectives associated with the Plan, the governing legislation is principally the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)

Under the Planning & Development Act 2000, prior to submitting for approval a project or plan that is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of either a candidate SAC, proposed SPA, SPA or SAC, competent authorities are required to consider whether the plan may have a significant effect on such a site; and where this is the case, that an AA of the implications of the project or plan must be carried out.

1.4 Relationship with SEA directive

In the preparation of this AA Screening report, the approach has been conducted in parallel with the requirements of the SEA process (2001/42/EC as transposed into Irish law). Article 3.2(b) of the SEA Directive expressly links to AA.

1.5 Statement of Competency

The statements of competencies for the contributing authors to this Screening for AA report are provided in Appendix A adjoining this report.

1.6 Layout of Report

The layout of the report is as follows:

- Section 2 outlines the Monaghan Town Local Transport Plan
- Section 3 provides the methodology
- Section 4 provides the screening assessment using the source-pathway-receptor methodology
- Section 5 outlines the conclusions of the report

2. The Plan

2.1 Overview

The Monaghan Town Local Transport Plan (referred to here as the 'Plan') aims to establish a strategic framework for the future development of transport infrastructure in the plan area (see Section 2.3). The plan sets out a series of principles and objectives whose implementation is intended to enhance and augment travel and transport within Monaghan town and surrounding areas.

2.2 Principles and Objectives

The principles driving the Plan are as follows:

- ***P1 – Protecting the vitality and viability*** of Monaghan Town and its Environs
  - With the subsequent Principles reflecting the desired transport planning lenses
- **P2 – *Support Housing*** through sustainable transport decisions
- **P3 – *Support Climate Change Resilience***
- **P4 – *Support Economic Activity*** to maximise street life in the town centre and maintain links to hinterland industries
- **P5 – *Support Community*** and a balanced transport system with great places for all users

Six objectives were developed to support these five principles, aiming to ensure an integrated and measurable strategy that promotes positive outcomes from a movement and place perspective, that will achieve the following:

Table 1 Monaghan Town LTP Objectives

Objective	Measurable Strategy
OB1 – Active Travel: - improve walking and cycling connections throughout the Study Area and all land uses.	Measured through modal shift and delivery of active travel schemes.
OB2 – Public Transport: - encourage the use of public transport by promoting the existing connections and improving the infrastructure.	Measured through increased bus patronage.
OB3 – Car Parking: - rationalise and manage the existing off and on street parking opportunities to improve the public realm, support travel by sustainable mode and provide other functions such as wider footpath, cycle parking, outdoor dining areas, etc.	Measured through a reduction in short duration/ short trip (<30min) car parking and delivery of active travel/ public realm schemes.
OB4 – Integration of Land Use and Transport: - integration of existing and future land use and transport networks.	Measured through active travel connections/ infrastructure within regeneration plans/ developments and new link roads.
OB5 – Safety: - improve and enhance safety for all, especially vulnerable roads users.	Measured through collision statistics, new pedestrian, and cycle priority interventions at junctions.
OB6 – National Road Network: - Provide, protect and maintain for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods whilst safeguarding the strategic function of the national road network .	Measured through traffic volumes and growth along the national road network and at key junctions within the Study Area.

The Plan adopts a modal hierarchy that seeks to promote active travel first, public transport second, and private vehicle use third. It also seeks to encourage a sustainable approach to transport improvement, through first prioritising maintaining existing infrastructure that is fit for purpose, next optimising existing infrastructural use, then improving existing infrastructure where needed, and finally providing new infrastructure where current options clearly fail to meet the aspirations of the Plan.

2.3 Plan Area

The Plan is for Monaghan town, the administrative centre of County Monaghan and an important employment, services, and shopping centre for the region. The town is strategically located at the intersection of three national routes:

- The N2 National Primary Road from Dublin to Derry
- The N12 National Primary Road to Armagh/Craigavon/Belfast
- The N54 National Secondary Road to Cavan

These National Roads are linked by an extensive network of Regional Roads to the Northern Ireland border counties and towns such as Clones, Cootehill, Cavan, Kingscourt, Castleblaney, and Emyvale. The R867 (Market Street) in the centre of Monaghan Town connects Market Square with the Diamond (An Diamant).

There is a 4.5km Greenway through the Town, which follows the path of the Ulster Canal. The Ulster Canal Greenway provides a pedestrian and cycle link from Coolshannagh Roundabout on the N2, northwest of the town centre to the R189 west of the town, adjacent to the N54. The Plan area is shown in Figure 1.

2.3.1 Characterisation of Plan Area

A variety of habitats are present within the Plan area, including dense urban fabric composed of roads and buildings enclosing fragmented areas of greenspace containing grassland, trees and shrubs, and ranging in size from small private gardens to formal parks such as Peter's Lake in the north of the town. Some connective greenspace is present along connective infrastructure such as roads, railway lines and the River Shambles and River Blackwater, which links to the Ulster Canal (mostly abandoned with only small sections restored). The town is surrounded by greenbelt agricultural land composed of a dense patchwork of arable and live grazed fields lined by hedgerows, with a larger area of woodland plantation entering into the southwest of the Plan area.

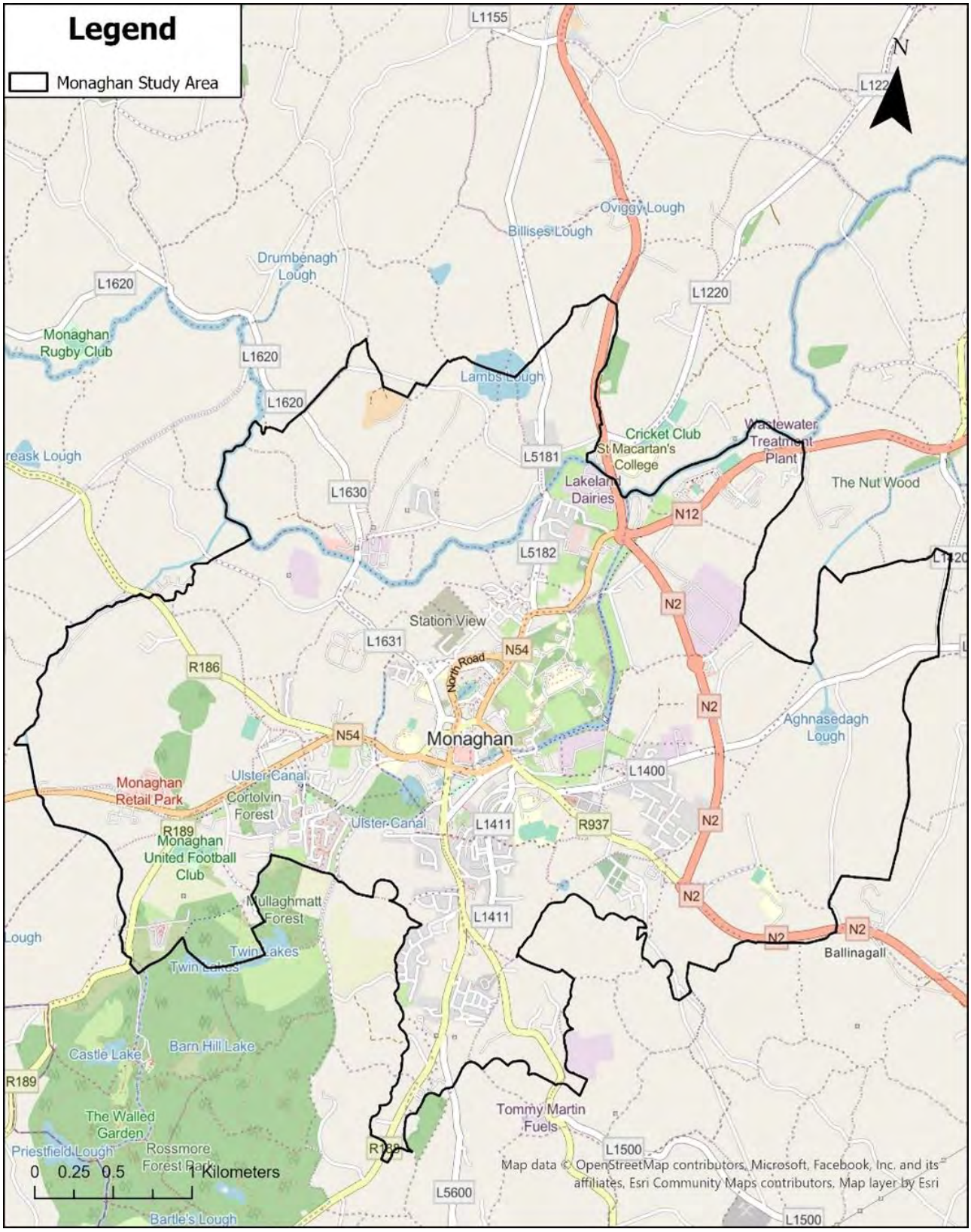

Figure 1 Map of area covered by the Monaghan Town LTP

2.4 Plan Process

In order to determine the preferred options for inclusion in the Plan, the long-list of options will be passed through the following process:

- **Stage 1 Options Screening**: The long list of options were screened against a set of criteria, such as cost, feasibility, environmental impact, and alignment with the overarching principles and objectives. This is to identify which ones should be discontinued, which could pass directly to the Draft Plan, and which require further assessment
- **Stage 2 Interim Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA)**: Options requiring further analysis are passed through a MCA with qualitative and quantitative indicators used to score each option against the Draft Plan objectives (see Section 2.4)
- **Stage 3 Emerging Preferred Strategy (EPS)**: Options passing Stage 1 and Stage 2 form the initial Draft Plan for public consultation
- **Stage 4 Final Preferred Strategy**: Feedback from key stakeholders and the public consultation process will be used to refine the Plan. The following sections provide a more detailed description of each of the stages outlined above

2.5 Active Travel Network

A number of active travel options were identified and assessed in the Plan:

- Six route options were initially developed as assessed in order to deliver a north-south (N-S) active travel route. Option 4 and 5 were screened out while the other three were considered as feasible and proceeded to assessment with regards to the six objectives of the project. N-S 1 scored highest on the MCA assessment with 33 out of a possible score of 43, followed by N-S 2 with 30 and N-S 3 and N-S 4with 29
- Five route options were developed as assessed in order to deliver an east-west (E-W) active travel route. E-W 3 and E-W 4 scored highest with 32 and were particularly strong on objectives OB4 and OB5, as well as OB1, and was followed by E-W 2 and E-5 with 30 and E-W 1 with 28

In addition, 15 permeability links were assessed, with 13 being incorporated into the Emerging Preferred Strategy.

Ultimately, the emerging preferred active travel network is planned to be comprised of:

- A north-south cycle route
- An east-west cycle route
- Localised improvements along N54 Clones Road for active travel users
- Several new active travel permeability links

The active travel network will also benefit from the complimentary measures such as new cycle parking and junction upgrades proposed as part of the emerging preferred road network

2.6 Road Network

Six options for the road network (and associated traffic management) were developed:

- TM 1 - Upgrade of junctions along the N54 to ensure strategic function of the national road is maintained. Town centre traffic management generally maintained as per existing situation
- TM 2 - Upgrade of junctions along the N54 to ensure strategic function of the national road is maintained. Reclassification of R937, N54 Dawson Street, N54 Glaslough Street and N54 North Road
- TM 3 - Upgrade of junctions along the N54 and mid-town link scheme. Allows for enhanced traffic management measures within town centre
- TM 4 - Long term objective to provide a northern link road (connecting the N54 with the N2)

- TM-5 - Long term objective to provide a southern link road (connecting the N54 Clones Road to R188 Cootehill Road and the R162 Ballybay Road to the N2 Corlat Roundabout)

However, given the Northern Link Road and Southern Link Roads are not anticipated to be delivered during the life of the Plan, TM 4 and TM 5 were not progressed to MCA analysis. TM 3 scored 37 out of 43 in the MCA analysis, and was particularly strong on OB1 and OB6, as well as also on OB3, OB4, OB5 and OB2. TM 2 scored 35 out of 43. TM 1, on the other hand scored 29, and scored lower against most objectives.

Ultimately, the emerging preferred road network consists of the following key measures as summarised below:

- Upgrade of key junctions along N54 including:
  - Margaret Skinnider roundabout
  - Dawson Street junction
  - N54 / Broad Rd with closure of connection from Canal St/ Castle Rd
  - Old Cross Square Roundabout Junction
- Junction upgrade at Market St/Dawson St junction in town centre to support the town centre traffic circulation strategy
- Implementation of the proposed mid-town link scheme (from Old Cross Square to Annahagh roundabout)
- Reclassification of town centre road network
- Corridor preservation for Southern and Northern Links (as detailed in the County Development Plan)

2.7 Public Transport Network

Several improvements for the public transport network have been assessed. These include converting North-Road to two-way for buses only (between Glaslough Street and bus station), and upgrading bus stops at Glend Road, Old Cross Square, North Road, and Dawson Street. It has been proposed to incorporate all of these measures into the Emerging Preferred Strategy.

2.8 Complementary Measures

In addition to the options outlines above, a series of complimentary measures are also proposed to support the principles and objectives of the Monaghan Town LTP. These include amongst other measures:

- Re-allocation of existing public on-street and off-street parking spaces for EV charging, dedicated senior citizen, accessible and cycling parking
- Introduction of a bike share scheme, cargo bike and a car share scheme
- Additional pedestrian and cyclist wayfinding signage
- Mobility hubs which support secure cycle parking and EV charging

2.9 Proposals Assessed in Other Plans/Strategies

Arup have reviewed AA Screenings and any Stage 2 mitigation associated with proposals that have originated from other plans and strategies relevant to the Plan area and that the Plan does not provide any further detail that would necessitate additional assessment. Therefore, this AA screening report has focused on the particular transport infrastructure proposals that have emanated directly from the formation of this Plan and not those resulting from previous plans or strategies.

Proposals referenced within the Plan that have been assessed as part of other plans and strategies include the following:

- The **Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031**[1] was subject to a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) and an Appropriate Assessment (AA) The implementation of CDP policies and objectives, which are supportive of various forms of development, have the potential to result in likely significant effects on European Sites from the following: 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. MCC therefore determined that AA of the CDP is required and that a Natura Impact Report (NIR) should be prepared for the CDP. An NIR was produced for the CDP. The NIR considered the potential for the CDP to adversely affect the integrity of European sites, with regard to their Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests. The CDP was informed by the NIR. Mitigation measures were integrated into the CDP that mitigate its potential effects on any European Site. The NIR concluded that the CDP would not give rise to any adverse effects on European Sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects. The key transport infrastructure proposals adopted from this Plan include the following:
  - Monaghan Town Northern Link Road, connecting the N54 Clones Road to N2/N12 National Primary Routes
  - Extension of Oriel Way Southern link road to provide transport connectivity between the N54 Clones Road and R188 Cootehill Road.
  - Development of a Southern link between the R162 Ballybay Road and the N2 Dublin Road.
  - Development of a link Road from the N12 Armagh Road to provide a connection to the N2 Monaghan Town Bypass.
  - Development of a link road from Roosky Vale to the rear of Dublin Street.
  - Development of a Mid-town transport connection between development lands at Annahagh and the town centre.
  - Widening of Annahagh Lane to facilitate residential development.
  - Upgrade of Black Lane to facilitate further development
- The **CycleConnects – Monaghan Cycle Network**[2] was subject to an Appropriate Assessment Screening which identified 'no likely significant effects…for European Sites in County Monaghan and therefore no AA NIS County Assessment was required to be undertaken'. It was also subject to a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) which laid out the baseline environment for the county and identified a number of sensitive nature sites in proximity to the network, none with a European designation, as well as a number of water bodies, some of which with WFD poor status. The key transport infrastructure proposals adopted from this Plan include the following:
  - The proposed CycleConnects urban network for Monaghan Town comprises primary and secondary routes. All of the proposed network is expected to be developed on existing road infrastructure
  - The proposed CycleConnects urban network for Monaghan Town is anticipated to comprise no river crossings requiring new infrastructure
  - Number of nature conservation designated sites (SACs, SPAs, Ramsar sites, NHAs, pNHAs, nature reserves) within the urban network area

[1]MCC (2025) Appropriate Assessment Conclusion Statement https://monaghan.ie/planning/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2025/06/Appropriate-Assessment-AA-Concluding-Statement.pdf Accessed May 2025

[2] AECOM (2019). 'Cycle Connects – Monaghan Cyle Network'. Available at CycleConnects - Monaghan Technical Note_0.pdf. Accessed April 2025.

2.10 Proposals Directly Associated with the Monaghan Town Local Transport Plan

The following section presents the proposals resulting directly from the preparation of the Monaghan Town Local Transport Plan.

- **Active Travel Network**
  - North-South Route: This route would utilise Glen Road, Dawson Street and North Road and intersect with the Greenway along Glen Road. This route would utilise the existing Greenway (accessible near the junction of the N54/R189) and the potential mid-town link road scheme (from Old Cross Square to Annahagh Roundabout). In addition, the N54 Clones Road (between the N54 and Park Street) would be enhanced for active travel users (i.e. widened footpaths and/or shared paths)
  - East-West Route: Active travel connection from North Road to Plantation Road, connecting the bus station, Peace Campus and the improved pedestrian link through to Glaslough Street and Peter's Lake
  - Active travel connection from Glaslough Street to Diamond Centre
  - Active travel connection from the Diamond Centre, through the Roosky Masterplan Area to Old St. Davnet's Hospital Complex
  - Active travel connection from Old St. Davnet's Hospital Complex to Glaslough Street
  - Walking connection from Mall Road to Dr McKenna Terrace
  - Active travel connection from St. Marys National School and Monaghan General Hospital
  - Active travel connection from N54 Clones Rd to Ulster Canal Greenway
  - Active travel connection from N54 Clones Rd to Ulster Canal Greenway
  - Active travel connection from Dublin Street to "Russel Row"
  - Active travel connection from Ulster Canal Greenway to St. Davnet's Campus
  - Active travel connection between Ashgrove Lawns and Latlorcan Way
  - Active travel connection from Latlurcan Cemetery Chapel to Glenview Heights
  - Active travel connection from Beechgrove Lawns and Cootehill Road (via The Corran residential estate)
  - Active travel connection from Drumbear Wood to Ballybay Road via Monaghan Elim Pentecostal Church (or adjacent lands)
  - Active travel connection from Knockmore Glen and Scotstown Road
- **Road Network**
  - Upgrade of junctions along the N54 and mid-town link scheme. Allows for enhanced traffic management measures within town centre
- **Public Transport Network**
  - Convert North-Road to two-way for buses only (between Glaslough Street and bus station)
  - Upgrade the following bus stops: Glen Road, Old Cross Square, North Road, Dawson Street
- **Complementary Measures**
  - Re-allocation of existing public on-street and off-street parking spaces for:
    - EV charging (EV charging strategy currently being developed separate to this plan)

    - Dedicated Senior Citizen Parking
    - Dedicated Accessible Parking
    - Cycle Parking
- Introduction of a Bike Share Scheme on Monaghan Town (e.g. similar to Lime bikes in Westport and Castlebar)
- Cargo Bike Rental Scheme (e.g. similar to scheme in Fingal County Council)
- Bike Parking (provision of mix on on-street and secure facilities in the town centre and at other key destinations particularly schools)
- Car Share Scheme
    - Support the provision of a private car share scheme (e.g. such as Go Car) through the provision of dedicated on-street or off-street parking spaces)
- Additional pedestrian and cyclist wayfinding signage throughout the town
- Active Travel Plans for Schools and Workplaces
- Review of transition zones and gateway locations on approach roads into Monaghan Town, given the buildup of development along particular routes (eg. N54 Clones Road). These gateways can influence diver behaviour, signalling an entrance into an urban area
- Review of speed limits within the town centre, including introduction of 30kph zones where appropriate
- Mobility hubs which support secure cycle parking and EV charging

2.11 Implementation

Section 7 of the Plan details the various proposals that will be implemented over short-, medium- and long-term timeframes. These are listed in below. Some aspects of the plan relate to the development of further designs and plans as well as schemes to support active travel and car sharing. Since these activities do not involve undertaking any physical works in and of themselves within the span of this Plan, they have been scoped out of further consideration (measures highlighted in grey). Other proposed activities such as junction upgrades which involve changes to signalling or use patterns were also scoped out due to being optimisation that are of very small scale and potential for impact.

Table 2 Plan areas and temporal objectives of the Monaghan Town LTP

Plan Area	Short-Medium Term	Longer Term
Walking	New crossings and traffic calming measures	Ongoing maintenance and renewal of footpaths, public realm and full realisation of the Walking Network proposals.
	New permeability links	
	Key junction upgrades along N54 and within the town centre	
Cycling	Design, planning and construction of strategic east-west cycle routes	Ongoing maintenance of cycle infrastructure and provision of cycle infrastructure to serve new development areas.
	Design, planning and construction of strategic north-south cycle routes	
	Provision of cycle parking facilities	
Public Transport	Ongoing operation and optimisation of the bus network and priority measures	Ongoing operation and optimisation of the bus network and priority measures.
	Accommodate two-way movement for buses along North Road (between Glaslough Street and the bus station)	
	Improving the infrastructure at the following bus stops • Glen Road • Old Cross Square • North Road • Dawson Street.	
Road Network	Design and planning of mid-town link route	Construction of mid-town link route
	Reclassification of roads in town centre	Ongoing review, monitoring and implementation of the future road network including routes which by-pass the town centre.
	Protection of corridors for long-term road schemes	
Traffic Management	Upgrade of junctions along N54	-
	Reallocation of road space to support walking and cycling priority measures	
Complementary Measures	Re-allocation of existing public on-street and off-street parking spaces for: • EV charging (EV charging strategy currently being developed separate to this plan) • Dedicated Senior Citizen Parking • Dedicated Accessible Parking • Cycle Parking	N/A
	Introduction of a Bike Share Scheme on Monaghan Town (e.g. similar to Bolt in Sligo)	
	Cargo Bike Rental Scheme (e.g. similar to scheme in Fingal County Council)	
	Bike Parking (provision of mix on on-street and secure facilities in the town centre and at other key destinations particularly schools)	

Plan Area	Short-Medium Term	Longer Term
	Support the provision of a private car share scheme (e.g. such as Go Car) through the provision of dedicated on-street or off-street parking spaces)	
	Additional pedestrian and cyclist wayfinding signage throughout the town	
	Active Travel Plans for Schools and Workplaces	
	Review of transition zones and gateway locations on approach roads into Monaghan Town, given the buildup of development along particular routes (eg. N54 Clones Road). These gateways can influence diver behaviour, signalling an entrance into an urban area.	
	Review of speed limits within the town centre, including introduction of 30kph zones where appropriate.	
	Mobility hubs which support secure cycle parking and EV charging.	

3. Methodology, Guidance and Data Sources

3.1 Appropriate Assessment Stages

The AA process involves a number of steps and tests that need to be applied in sequential order.

An important aspect of the process is that the outcome at each successive stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required. First, a plan or project must be screened to identify whether the potential for likely significant effects on a European site(s) exists. If that possibility cannot be excluded, an Appropriate Assessment is to be undertaken prior to any consent being granted. Consent shall not be granted if it cannot be concluded that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites. Article 6(4) allows for consent to be granted in particular and exceptional circumstances, even if adverse effects may arise.

Screening for AA, for which this report provides the relevant information, is the first step in this process. This is required to establish, on the basis of objective information, whether the Plan, individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, has the potential for likely significant effect on a European site.

The Screening for AA must include a final determination by the public authority as to whether or not a proposed project would adversely affect the integrity of a European site. In order to reach a final determination, the public authority must undertake examination, analysis and evaluation, followed by findings, conclusions and a final determination.

3.2 Definitions

3.2.1 European Sites

European sites, as defined under Part XAB of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) include those designated as SACs, candidate SACs (cSACs), SPAs or proposed SPAs (pSPAs).

SACs are selected for the conservation of Annex I habitats[3] (including priority types which are in danger of disappearance) and Annex II species[4] as defined by the respective annexes of the Habitats Directive.

SPAs are selected for the conservation of Annex I birds and all migratory birds, and their habitats as defined by the respective annexes of the Birds Directive.

The Annex habitats and species, for which each site is selected, are termed the Qualifying Interests (QI) for SACs and termed Special Conservation Interests (SCI) for SPAs. Sites are considered within Section 4.3 of this report.

3.2.2 Conservation Objectives

Conservation Objectives (COs) for European sites are defined for the relevant QIs and SCIs. In its most general sense, a CO is the specification of the overall target for the species and/or habitat types for which a site is designated in order for it to contribute to maintaining or reaching favourable conservation status[5].

The COs for a given site are underpinned by a list of attributes and targets for each QI/SCI, with those targets needing to be reached to maintain or restore favourable conservation condition of each QI/SCI.

[3] Annex I habitats are habitats whose conservation requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation.
[4] Annex II species are animal and plant species whose conservation requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation.
[5] Commission Note on Setting Conservation Objectives for Natura 2000 Sites (November 2012) European Commission, Doc. Hab.12-04/06. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/commission_note/commission_note2_EN.pdf. Accessed May 2025.

3.2.3 Source-Pathway-Receptor Model

The Source-Pathway-Receptor (SPR) model is used to assess where a potential effect may result by examining the source, its pathway and the receptor. As per guidance from the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR)[6] these can be defined as follows:

- **Source**: The origin of a potential effect which may include characteristics of a plan or project that have the potential to result in effects e.g. direct impacts such as loss of habitat
- **Pathway**: How the potential effect may occur on the receptor. These are identifiable through linkages that may occur through the plan or project and European sites e.g. direct pathways such as physical proximity, hydrological connections or indirect pathways such as disturbance to migrating species
- **Receptor**: The European site network and respective QIs/SCIs, their ecological condition and sensitivities e.g. freshwater pearl mussel is sensitive to siltation in water

3.2.4 Zone of Influence

A Zone of Influence (ZoI) within any assessment of projects or plans considers the area over which ecological features may be affected by biophysical changes as a result of the proposed plan/project and associated activities. The ZoI is established using the SPR method.

3.2.5 Screening vs Scoping

For the purposes of this Screening for AA the terms screening and scoping are described as:

- **Screening –** Screening shall refer to the screening of the project only
- **Scoping –** Scoping shall refer to the activity of identifying European sites and their respective QI/SCIs that are being considered for assessment within the report

3.3 Guidance

The following guidance was used in carrying out the assessment:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 revision)
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive; Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) 1/10 and PSSP 2/10
- Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 Sites: Methodical guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, 20214)
- Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle. European Commission (2000)
- Guidance Document on Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission, 2007)
- Guidance for Public authorities on the Application of Articles 12 and 16 of the EU Habitats Directive to development/works undertaken by or on behalf of a Public authority (NPWS 2021)
- Guidelines for Good Practice Appropriate Assessment of Plans under Article 6(3) Habitats Directive (International Workshop on Assessment of Plans under the Habitats Directive, 2011)
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provision of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC Environment Directorate-General, 2019)

[6] OPR (2021) Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management. OPR Practice Note PN01. Available at .ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/9729-Office-of-the-Planning-Regulator-Appropriate-Assessment-Screening-booklet-15.pdf. Accessed April 2025.

- Office of the Planning Regulator Practice Note PN01 - Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (OPR, 2021)

The requirements for Screening for AA, and AA, for European sites, are set out in Part 6, Chapter 3 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), with numerous relevant rulings and opinions in both Irish and EU courts.

3.4 Data Sources

Ecological data was reviewed from various sources from Republic of Ireland (RoI) and Northern Ireland (NI). Given the location of Monaghan in proximity to NI, the potential for transboundary effects is considered as part of this AA Screening report. Ecological data was reviewed to gather information on the European sites within the ZoI of the Plan.

3.4.1 Habitats Directive Assessment Process from the Implementation of the Monaghan Town Local Transport Plan

In the preparation of this report to inform AA by the competent authority the following documents have been reviewed:

- Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) Circular letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08 dated 15 February 2008
- 'Managing European sites- The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC' (EC Environment Directorate-General, 2018)
- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting European sites: Methodical Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, 2001)
- Guidance Document on Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. (European Commission, 2007)
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 revision)
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPW 1/10 and PSSP 2/10
- Guidelines for Good Practice Appropriate Assessment of Plans under Article 6(3) Habitats Directive (International Workshop on Assessment of Plans under the Habitats Directive, 2011)
- Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland, Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Version 1.1, updated September 2019

3.4.2 Sources to Inform NI Data

- DAERA digital datasets download[7]
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) Natural Environment web viewer[8]
- Open Data NI[9]

[7] DAERA (2024) Digital datasets download. Available at Download Digital Datasets | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (daera-ni.gov.uk). Accessed April 2025.
[8] DAERA (2024) Natural Environment map viewer. Available at Natural Environment Map Viewer | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (daera-ni.gov.uk). Accessed October 2024
[9] OpenDataNI (2024) Available at Portal | Search (opendatani.gov.uk). Accessed October 2024

3.4.3 Sources to Inform Republic of Ireland (RoI) Data

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Maps[10]
- National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Designations Map Viewer[11]
- NPWS Conservation Objectives Series[12]
- NPWS SAC and SPA Datasheets[13]

3.5 Methodology

In line with the relevant guidance and case law, the Screening for AA consists of the following steps, which are iterative in nature:

1. **Impact Prediction:** Identify the aspects of the Plan likely to affect the COs of European Sites. The more general classification of impacts can include direct and indirect effects; short and long-term effects; construction, operational and decommissioning effects; and isolated, interactive and cumulative effects. A SPR model has been used to identify the zone of influence
2. **Assessment of Potential Likely Significant Effects:** The potential impacts of the Plan assessed as to whether they are likely to result in potential likely significant effects thereby undermining the COs for a European site. This requires understanding of relevant QIs/SCIs and associated COs. Where likely significant affects cannot be excluded, those effects are subject to full AA

3.5.1 Impact Prediction: Identifying the Zone of Influence

The ZoI is established using the SPR method and takes into consideration the scale of the elements of the Plan There is no overarching recommended ZoI, and guidance from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) recommends that the distance should be evaluated on a case-by- case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the plan, the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in-combination effects (cumulative). For an effect to occur there must be a risk enabled by having a source (e.g. implementation of a proposed scheme in the Plan), a 'receptor' (e.g. QI or SCI of a European site), and a pathway between the source and the receptor (e.g. a watercourse which connects a plan area to an SAC, ex situ foraging habitat for SCI birds). The identification of the European sites within the ZoI has been carried out by utilising GIS datasets from NPWS and from DAERA. The potential receptor sites have been determined through the identification of the potential sources of the impacts of the Plan objectives and their pathways for impact to European sites

3.5.2 Assessment of Effects

3.5.2.1 Understanding the Conservation Objectives of European Sites

The COs of European sites are focused primarily on maintaining or restoring the favourable conservation status of the habitats and species of interest (i.e. the QIs and SCIs). European sites have Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (COs), which focus on the specific qualifying habitat or populations of species at each site by setting targets for appropriate attributes. The detailed COs area available from the respective NPWS and DAERA websites[14] and outline the attributes and targets for respective QIs and SCIs of European sites. Consideration of the implications of the Plan against the COs (where relevant) of European sites supports the assessment of whether the Plan would have a likely significant effect or an adverse effect upon the integrity of such sites. For example, where it can be demonstrated that the Plan would not impede any achievement of any COs for a particular site, it would support a conclusion that the Plan would not have a significant or adverse effect on the integrity of the relevant site.

[10] EPA (2024) EPA Maps. Available at EPA Maps. Accessed October 2024
[11] NPWS (2024) Designations map viewer. Available at NPWS Designations Viewer - Experience Builder (arcgis.com). Accessed May 2025.
[12] NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives. Available at Conservation Objectives | National Parks & Wildlife Service (npws.ie). Accessed April 2024
[13] NPWS (2024) SAC and SPA Datasheets. Available at SAC and SPA Datasheets Downloads | National Parks & Wildlife Service (npws.ie). Accessed May 2025
[14] NPWS Conservation Objectives. Available at https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/conservation-management-planning/conservation-objectives January 2025. Accessed April 2025.

3.5.2.2 Assessment of Effects of the Plan

Guidance documents (see Section 3.3) provide proposed criteria to determine if a proposal is likely to have adverse effects. These criteria are particularly suited to AA Screening of individual projects, as detail on the receiving environment will be available for analysis when project locations are known.

3.5.2.3 In-Combination Assessment of Effects

The consideration of in-combination effects discusses the potential for other projects and/or plans that may spatially or temporally overlap with the Plan. The in-combination assessment occurs when the potential for LSE as a result of the Plan alone cannot be excluded, and these potential LSE are examined against other projects and/or plans. Where the Screening assessment concludes that there is no potential for likely significant effects as a result of the Plan alone then an in-combination assessment is not required.

4. Screening for Appropriate Assessment

4.1 Overview

This section of the report establishes the ZoI of the Plan and using the SPR Method, identifies and assess the potential effects of its implementation with respect to relevant European sites and their QIs/SCIs, considering the CO.

4.2 Source-Pathway-Receptor

As per the methodology stated provided in Section 3.4, potential connectivity between the implementation of the Plan and European sites and their respective QIs/SCIs is identified via the S-P-R Model which highlights the potential impact pathways such as land, air, hydrological pathways etc which may support direct or indirect connectivity. Where connectivity exists between the Plan and receptors, these receptors are taken forward to the assessment of likely significant effects.

4.3 Identification of European Sites using S-P-R Model

The European sites which are identified for consideration within the screening assessment have been identified following the below criteria:

- Projects within, or within 15 km of a European site or functionally linked land i.e. land that is used by mobile QI/SCI species[6] – <2km is considered to be in 'proximity'
- Hydrological linkage - crosses or lies adjacent to, upstream of, or downstream of, a watercourse which is designated in part or wholly as a European site
- Air Quality - any European sites within 200m of the Plan with relevant QIs/SCIs which may be impacted by changes in air quality

Following the above criteria, while no European sites were identified within the Plan area, seven were identified within the ZoI and are presented in Table 3 and shown in Figure 2 in Appendix A2. The SPR method is utilised to assess whether the potential for likely significant effects[6] upon those European sites exists. The SPR method establishes the ZoI for the Plan objectives and focuses the assessment to identify those relevant QIs and/or SCIs which are at risk of likely significant effects following the screening assessment.

Table 3 Table of European sites scoped in or out through the SPR Model

Site	Distance	NI/RoI	Qualifying Interests (QIs)	Conservation Objectives (Cos)	S-P-R Connections	Considered Further (Y/N)
Slieve Beagh SPA 8,936.11 ha Conservation Objectives	9km, West	RoI	Designated for breeding hen harrier (Circus cyaneus) but also supports breeding merlin (Falco columbarius).	To restore the favourable conservation condition of hen harrier.	Functionally-linked habitat	Y
Magheraveely Marl Loughs SAC 58.89 ha Conservation Objectives	9.4km, South-west	NI	Presence of important wetland flora and fauna including: • Calcareous fens with great-fen sedge (Cladium mariscus) and species of the Caricion davallianae fen habitat considered rare in the UK and for which the area is supports a significant presence • White-clawed crayfish (Austropotamobius pallipes), for which it is considered to be one of the best areas in the UK • Alkaline, calcium-rich spring water-fed fens, considered to be one of the best areas in the UK • Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp., considered one of the best areas in the UK	To maintain (or restore where appropriate) the following to favourable condition: • Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara formations • White-clawed crayfish • Alkaline fens • Calcareous fens with great-fen sedge and species of the Caricion davallianae	None	N
Magheraveely Marl Loughs Ramsar 58.78 ha Conservation Objectives	9.4km, South-west	NI	Presence of important wetland habitats including: • Six loughs charactered by presence of calcium carbonate deposits or marl, which support the presence of vegetation reflective of calcaraeous conditions, including rich and extensive stonewort (Charophyte) communities with rare and local species such as Chara aspera, C. curta, C. hispida and C. pedunculata • Loughs exhibit natural succession of open water to terrestrial vegetation types including rare and unusual vegetation communities such as white water lily (Nymphaea alba), yellow water lily (Nupher lutea) and pondweeds such as Potamageton natans • Stands of alkaline fen vegetation in the surrounding inundation zones of the loughs • Clean unpolluted waters of the loughs supporting populations of white-clawed crayfish	To maintain (or restore where appropriate) the following to favourable condition: • Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara formations • White-clawed crayfish • Alkaline fens Calcareous fens with great-fen sedge and species of the Caricion davallianae.	None	N

Site	Distance	NI/RoI	Qualifying Interests (QIs)	Conservation Objectives (Cos)	S-P-R Connections	Considered Further (Y/N)
Slieve Beagh SAC 1888.18 ha Conservation Objectives	13.3km, North-west	NI	Designated for the following habitats: • One of the most extensive areas of active blanket bog in Northern Ireland, containing large expanse of generally sphagnum-rich mire mixed with cross leave heath (Erica tetralix) and deergrass (Tricophorum germanicum) • The largest concentration of medium- to large-sized natural dystrophic lakes and pools in Northern Ireland, that range in size from 5.5 ha to less than 0.5 ha • European Dry Heaths	Conservation objectives include: • Maintaining the extent of intact blanket bog, restoring vegetation, maintaining habitats and species populations within blanket bog • Maintaining the open water area, and nutrient status of the lakes and ponds • Enhancing the extent of European dry heath, and European dry heath community types, and maintaining diversity and quality of other habitats of conservation interest	Hydrological connection via River Blackwater. (flows West to East, and therefore draflt plant area downstream)	Y
Slieve Beagh-Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea SPA 8,936.11 ha Conservation Objectives	13.3km, North-west	NI	Breeding hen harrier.	To maintain breeding hen harrier population in favourable condition.	Functionally-linked habitat	Y
Slieve Beagh Ramsar 1888.68 ha	13.3 km, North-west	NI	Designated as a Ramsar site due to: • Qualifying under Criterion 1a of Ramsar Convention by being a good representative of blanket bog, the third largest intact peatland in Northern Ireland • Includes a number of oligotrophic water bodies in conjunction with raised and soligenous bog units which supports a range of associated flora and fauna • Several upland base-poor lakes, most common types characterised by Spagnum cuspidatum, S. auriculatum, Drepanocladus spp. And liverwort (Jungermannia spp.) • Area supports breeding populations of red grouse (Lagopus lagopus), in addition to be used throughout the year by golden plover (Pluvialis apicaria) and hen harrier • Upland lakes support species-poor but notable insect fauna	Conservation objectives include: • Maintaining the extent of intact blanket bog, restoring vegetation, maintaining habitats and species populations within blanket bog; • Maintaining the open water area, and nutrient status of the lakes and ponds; and • Enhancing the extent of European dry heath, and European dry heath community types, and maintaining diversity and quality of other habitats of conservation interest	Hydrological connection via River Blackwater (downstream) Functionally-linked habitat	Y

Site	Distance	NI/RoI	Qualifying Interests (QIs)	Conservation Objectives (Cos)	S-P-R Connections	Considered Further (Y/N)
Kilroosky Lough Cluster SAC Conservation Objectives	15km, South-west	RoI	Presence of important wetland flora and fauna including: • Hard Water or Marl lakes that are relatively low in nutrients, high in calcium and have good water quality. These types of lakes are rare due to their sensitivity to pollution, and have been recognised as being of international importance through their listing on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive • Great fen-sedge – Cladium fen is a habitat type listed with priority status on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive • Alkaline Fens with plant species of regional or local importance recorded including Cowbane (Cicuta virosa), Fen bedstraw (Galium uliginosum), and Fen Pondweed (Potamogeton coloratus) • White-clawed crayfish, a species that is indicative of clean unpolluted water and one which is becoming increasingly rare throughout its geographical range	To restore: • The favourable conservation condition of Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp • The favourable conservation condition of Calcareous fens with great-fen sedge and species of the Caricion davallianae • The favourable conservation condition of Alkaline fens To maintain: • The favourable conservation condition of White-clawed crayfish	Aerial connection due to potential changes in traffic flow N54 road in vicinity of SAC	Y

4.4 Potential Sources of Impact

In identifying the potential sources of impacts of the implementation of the Plan, it is important to note that this risk is an estimation based on scientific evidence and best practice. It does not constitute that an impact will occur or that it will result in ecological or environmental damage resulting in significant effects on European sites within the ZoI. The significance of the effect is dependent upon factors such as duration, magnitude and intensity of the project/plan in question and the existence of a credible SPR link. It is also determined by the extent of the exposure to the risk and the characteristics of the receptor.

By establishing a credible source and pathway, the receptors, i.e., the QI habitats and QI/SCI species are only considered where links are identified to be credible. Factors including distance between receptors and sources and the means by which the pathway through air, water, ground etc., occur.

All objectives of the Plan have been reviewed for potential impacts. In instances where objectives have been determined to potentially give rise to construction level activities or impacts arising from the operation of sectors (recreation, water treatment etc) a variety of potential impacts have been identified. Future infrastructure development, related construction works, and the operation of services will likely occur within the Plan period; however, as the Plan is designed to guide the development of the Plan area through a series of projects, exact details regarding construction and operation remain undecided.

4.4.1 Construction Sources of Impact

Many of the objectives within the Plan relate to optimising and improving existing transport infrastructure. For instance, upgrading key junctions along the N54 highway through signalling improvements. While the majority of the material interventions outlined in the objectives of the Plan are not of substantial scale, their implementation will involve the use of heavy machinery to prepare terrain and construct them, with the potential to impact qualifying interests of European sites should viable pathways of impact exist. There are a number of new construction proposals within the Plan with the potential to be a source of air, noise and hydrological pollution along the River Blackwater which runs through the Plan area. These include in the short to medium term the construction of north-south and east-west cycle routes, and in the longer term the construction of the mid-town link route between the N54 and the N2 highways.

4.4.2 Operation Sources of Impact

The Plan proposes several objectives designed to shift the operational use of transport infrastructure. These include reallocating road space for cycling and pedestrian priority use, which may induce shifts in patterns of vehicular use. For instance, without careful consideration, vehicular traffic could be shifted to areas where they could have a potential negative impact on European sites and associated qualifying interests.

4.5 Potential Pathways

Establishing potential pathways for impacts of the objectives associated with the Plan involves considering the geographical, topographical and hydrological elements of the ZoI. This includes in in-situ features which may act as a pathway or barrier to European sites and their QIs/SCIs. Given no European sites are located within or in close proximity (<2km) to the Plan area, direct habitat loss on European sites and proximity effects can be ruled out for potential LSE.

4.5.1 Pathway: Hydrological Linkage – Instream flow

The Plan area for Monaghan Town LTP shares a hydrological linkage via the River Blackwater with Slieve Beagh SPA in the Republic of Ireland, which adjoins corresponding Slieve Beagh SAC and Ramsar and Slieve Beagh-Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea SPA in Northern Ireland. Sleagh Beagh SAC is designated for habitats and species sensitive to water quality, while Sleagh Beagh Ramsar is designated for habitats sensitive to water quality as well as breeding populations of red grouse, golden plover and hen harrier. Due to the fact that the Plan area lies downstream of these European sites, it is not anticipated that implementation of any of the objectives due to take place within the life of Plan will negatively impact on these qualifying interests through any potential discharge of pollution along hydrological pathways.

Instream flow is not anticipated to be a pathway for effect from objectives proposed within the Plan.

4.5.2 Pathway: Aerial Connectivity

The Plan proposes several objectives which could shift vehicular patterns travelling within Monaghan Town and potentially the wider region. Kilroosky Lough Cluster SAC, designated for wetland flora and fauna, is located 15km south-west of Monaghan along the N54 highway. A Natural England report[15] on the ecological effects of air pollution from road transport found evidence for negative 'impacts on individual species from exposure to nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) associated with vehicle emissions', with greatest impacts between 5-100m from roads, while impacts may be present at greater distances. However, given Kilroosky Lough Cluster SAC is located >200m from the N54 on the other side of the town of Clones, no viable pathway of impact has been identified.

Aerial pathway is not anticipated to be a pathway for effect from objectives proposed within the Plan.

4.5.3 Pathway: Functionally-Linked Habitat

Hen harrier constitute the qualifying species for the Slieve Beagh SPA, which is located approximately 9km from the western boundary of the Plan area, with CO focused on maintaining their favourable quality. Studies in Scotland have indicated that hen harrier generally have a home range of <8km^2 for males and <4km^2 for females, although they may forage as far as 10km from their nest sites[16]. Hen harrier are a ground nesting species found in upland moorland, however, they can descend to the lowlands over the winter hunting in areas of farmland and in the vicinity of conifer plantation. While the majority of the Plan area is urban and entirely unsuitable for hen harrier, there are areas of farmland and stands of conifer plantation in the west located within 10km distance of Slieve Beagh SPA.

Given the distance of the Plan area from the SPA is at the extreme limit of the territorial range of hen harrier and the absence of identified records of this species within the area, no evidence has been identified that there is functionally-linked habitat present within the Plan area for hen harrier.

Functionally-linked habitat is not anticipated to be a pathway for effect from objectives proposed within the Plan.

[15] Natural England (2016). *The ecological effects of air pollution from road transport: an updated review*. Available at The ecological effects of air pollution from road transport: an updated review - NECR199. Accessed June 2025.

[16] Hardey, J., Crick, H., Wernham, C., Riley, H., Etheridge, B. & Thompson, D. (2013). 'Hen Harrier'. *Raptors: a field guide to survey and monitoring (3rd Edition)*. The Stationery Office, Edinburgh. Available at https://raptormonitoring.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Raptors-2014-Hen-Harrier.pdf. Accessed May 2025.

4.6 Assessment of LSE on European Sites arising from the Plan

Table 4 presents the screening assessment of retained objectives from the Plan and their potential for LSEs on European sites. Following presentation of potential receptors (European sites) within the Zone of Interest in Section 4.3 and subsequent consideration of sources (Section 4.4) and pathways (Section 4.5) of impact, the retained Plan objectives are assessed on their potential for LSEs on the qualifying interests of the following European sites (format: European site (distance from Plan area), qualifying interest):

- Slieve Beagh SPA (9km west), breeding hen harrier
- Slieve Beagh SAC (13.3 km west), blanket bog, dystrophic lakes, European dry heath
- Sleieve Beagh Ramsar (13.3 km west), blanket bog, oligotrophic water bodies and associated habitats, base poor lakes, breeding populations of red grouse, golden plover and hen harrier
- Slieve Beagh-Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea SPA (13.3 km west), breeding hen harrier
- Kilroosky Lough Cluster SAC (15km southwest), marl lakes, freat fen-sedge – Cladium fen

Table 4 Assessment of potential for LSEs arising from proposals of the Monaghan Town LTP

Plan Area	Objectives	Identification of Potential Impacts	Potential for likely significant effects	Screening Outcome
Walking	Construction of new crossings and traffic calming measures	The construction of new crossings and traffic calming measures may result in some air and noise pollution.	The scale of construction implied in these objectives is not expected to be large, and the measures are being proposed to reduce traffic congestion, and therefore potentially reduce traffic flow, air pollution and noise. Given this and are planned to take place in areas where no qualifying interests for European sites are likely to be located, no pathways of impact on European sites have been identified. **No potential for likely significant effects identified.**	Screened out
	New permeability links	The creation of new permeability links may require vegetation clearance, landscaping and some construction.	The urban context of these proposals, their scale, and lack of pathways of impact mean LSE to qualifying interests of European sites can be ruled out. **No potential for likely significant effects identified.**	Screened out
Cycling	Design, planning and construction of strategic north-south cycle routes	The majority of proposals for north-south cycle involve reallocating road space for cycles along existing roads, although some are routed to use car parks. Construction work may result in noise and air pollution.	All proposals are located within an urban context. No pathways of impact on European sites were identified for this activity, and therefore potential for likely significant effects can be ruled out.	Screened out

Plan Area	Objectives	Identification of Potential Impacts	Potential for likely significant effects	Screening Outcome
			Notwithstanding the above, any works which take place either through planning submission or subject to Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended), will be subject to AA screening and therefore will further scrutinise specific projects for the potential to give rise to likely significant effects. **No potential for likely significant effects identified.**	
	Design, planning and construction of strategic east-west cycle routes	While E-W1 relies on the reallocation of road space, E-W2 and E-W3 would utilise follow the proposed mid-town link road – which will involve significant construction work. Construction work may result in noise and air pollution.	The proposed east-west cycle routes in the west will pass through farmland but will follow existing roads. Construction work in these areas could result in noise and air pollution on potentially functionally-linked habitat for hen harrier associated with Slieve Beagh SPA. Given the proximity to the town, intensity of farmland and therefore suboptimal foraging habitat, however, hen harrier are unlikely to be present and foraging in this area. Furthermore, no previous records of hen harrier within the Plan were recorded. Therefore, any likely significant effects are ruled out. Notwithstanding as stated above, any works which take place either through planning submission or subject to Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended), will be subject to AA screening and therefore will further scrutinise specific projects for the potential to give rise to likely significant effects. **No potential for likely significant effects identified.**	Screened out
	Provision of cycle parking facilities	The urban location of this proposed activity, as well as its' scale has meant no sources of impact nor pathways of effect on European sites has been identified for this activity.	No sources for impact identified. **No potential for likely significant effects identified.**	Screened out
	Provision of cycle infrastructure to serve new development areas.	No details of this proposal were provided in the LTP, and therefore no potential sources of impact can be identified.	N/A Notwithstanding as stated above, any works which take place either through planning submission or subject to Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended), will be subject to AA screening and therefore will further scrutinise specific projects for the potential to give rise to likely significant effects.	Screened out

Plan Area	Objectives	Identification of Potential Impacts	Potential for likely significant effects	Screening Outcome
Public Transport	Improving the infrastructure at the following bus stops • Glen Road • Old Cross Square • North Road • Dawson Street	The urban location of these proposed works, as well as their scale has meant no sources of impact nor pathways of effect on European sites has been identified for this activity.	No sources for impact identified. **No potential for likely significant effects identified.**	Screened out
Road Network	Construction of mid-town link route.	The development of a mid-town link will involve a significant amount of construction work, which will result in noise and air pollution.	Given proposed routing of this new road, which is located in an urban area with no identified pathways of impact, potential for LSE on qualifying interests of European sites can ruled out. Notwithstanding as stated above, any works which take place either through planning submission or subject to Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended), will be subject to AA screening and therefore will further scrutinise specific projects for the potential to give rise to likely significant effects. **No potential for likely significant effects identified.**	Screened out
	Ongoing review, monitoring and implementation of the future road network including routes which by-pass the town centre	The implementation of proposals to develop road routes which by-pass the town centre are unlikely to be carried out during the lifespan of the LTP. The construction of these roads would involve significant construction work.	The proposals suggest these new roads could be routed through farmland in the west of the Plan area, they could negatively impact on potential functionally-linked habitat for hen harrier QI of Slieve Beagh SPA. While likely significant effects to QIs of European sites under this perspective cannot be ruled out, the LTP indicates these proposals are unlikely to be implemented during the Plans lifespan and therefore analysis of its' potential for LSE when more details emerge, should be carried out in the next LTP. N/A	Screened out
Complementary Measures	Re-allocation of existing public on-street and off-street parking spaces for: • EV charging • Dedicated Senior Citizen Parking • Dedicated Accessible Parking • Cycle Parking	The urban location of these proposed activities, as well as their scale has meant no sources of impact nor pathways of effect on European sites has been identified for this activity.	No sources for impact identified. **No potential for likely significant effects identified.**	Screened out

4.7 In-Combination Effects

In-combination effects refer to a series of individual effects that may, in combination, produce a potential likely significant effect. The underlying intention of this in-combination assessment is to take account of in-combination effects from existing or proposed plans and projects and these will often only occur over time.

Plans have been identified, which have the potential to interact with the implementation objectives for the Plan and thereby result in in-combination effects. Projects have not been considered here as these are more appropriately considered at assessment for each individual project. Relevant plans include:

- Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (NPF) and National Development Plan (NDP)
- National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI)
- Climate Action Plan 2024
- National Sustainable Mobility Policy
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032
- Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025
- Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031
- Roosky Masterplan (2022)
- Monaghan County Council Climate Change Adaption Strategy 2019-2024
- Monaghan Land Use and Transportation Study
- County Walking and Cycling Strategy 2021-2026
- Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan
- CycleConnects – Monaghan Cycle Network
- National Cycle Network (NCN)

As this assessment identified no LSEs arising from the objectives set out in the Plan on qualifying interests of European sites, the potential for in-combination effects with the above plans can be ruled out.

Notwithstanding as stated above, any works which take place either through planning submission or subject to Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended), will be subject to AA screening and therefore will further scrutinise specific projects for the potential to give rise to likely significant effects in combination with existing projects and plans.

4.8 Summary

This document adopted the SPR framework to assess the potential for objectives relating to the Plan to have likely significant effects (LSEs) on European sites. Of the seven European sites initially identified within the ZoI, three were screened out while five were retained for further assessment. From examining the various proposed activities related to the objectives, construction and operational sources of impact were identified, while some activities were screened out due to not entailing physical works or of a very minor scale. Three potential pathways of effect were then examined – hydrological connection, aerial connection and functionally-linked habitat. After careful analysis, all three were ruled out as viable pathways of impact. Following AA screening, no objectives proposed and due to be implemented in the lifespan of the Plan, were considered to potentially result in LSEs on European sites.

The long-term objectives for the creation of new roads that would bypass the town centre could be routed through farmland in the west of the Plan area where there was limited potential for Functionally-Linked Habitat for hen harrier originating in Sleagh Beagh SPA. However, the scale of this proposal would necessitate additional assessment on potential impact on European sites.

Furthermore, any specific works which take place either through planning submission or subject to Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended), will be subject to AA screening and therefore further scrutiny for the potential to give rise to likely significant effects.

In consideration of the localised nature and scale of the objectives set out within the Plan and following review of the COs of European sites within the ZoI, the potential for LSEs on European sites arising from the Plan has been ruled out.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

The Plan presents a comprehensive analysis of the current transport situation in Monaghan Town identifying opportunities and constraints associated with the transport network, used to inform potential solutions to improve the transport network for all users. A Screening for AA has been carried out in line with Part XAB of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Source-Pathway-Receptor (SPR) method has been used to carry out the screening assessment.

Following an examination, analysis and evaluation of the best available information, and applying the precautionary principle, it can be concluded that the possibility of any significant effects on any European sites, whether arising from the Plan objectives alone or in combination with other plans and projects, can be excluded for the reasons set out in Section 4. In reaching this conclusion, the nature of the objectives and their potential relationship with all European sites within the ZoI, and their conservation objectives, have been fully considered. It must be noted that projects associated with the implementation of the objectives of the Plan may themselves be required to be subject to AA when further details of the projects arise.

Appendix A

Statement of Competency

A.1 Statement of Competency

Fraser Maxwell (BSc, MSc, MCIEEM, CEnv) approved this report as a competent expert. Fraser is an Associate Director consultant at Arup, leading the Ecology team for Arup's North and North-West Yorkshire Region (Belfast, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Leeds, Manchester, York and Newcastle offices) with over 24 years' experience conducting EcIAs and over 20 years of undertaking AAs. He is an experienced leader of technical projects including high profile projects and has provided expertise internationally. Fraser is a member of the Scottish CIEEM Committee.

Thom Reid has an academic background in freshwater ecology (MRes). He specialises in the survey and assessment of aquatic environments including electrofishing, fish habitat surveying, freshwater pearl mussel and MoRPh 5 River Condition Assessment Survey. He also has depth of experience in completing Habitats Regulations Appraisals (HRA) and providing fisheries related advice to a wide range of clients.

Cathel de Lima Hutchison has a BSc (Hons) in Natural and Physical Sciences, an MSc in Ecology, Evolution and Conservation, and a PhD in Urban Ecology and Design. He has five years of experience working as an ecologist in public and private sectors, and in contributing to Preliminary Ecological Appraisals, Habitat Regulation Appraisals and Ecological Impact Assessments across a variety of projects in Scotland, England and Northern Ireland.

Hannah Sheridan has a BSc (Hons) in Marine Science and an MSc in Marine Planning for Sustainable Development and is a Qualifying Member of CIEEM. Hannah has four years of experience working as an ecologist in public and private sectors and has prepared Screening for Appropriate Assessments, European Impact Statements/Reports and biodiversity chapters for EIARs across a number of projects and plans in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

A.2 Maps

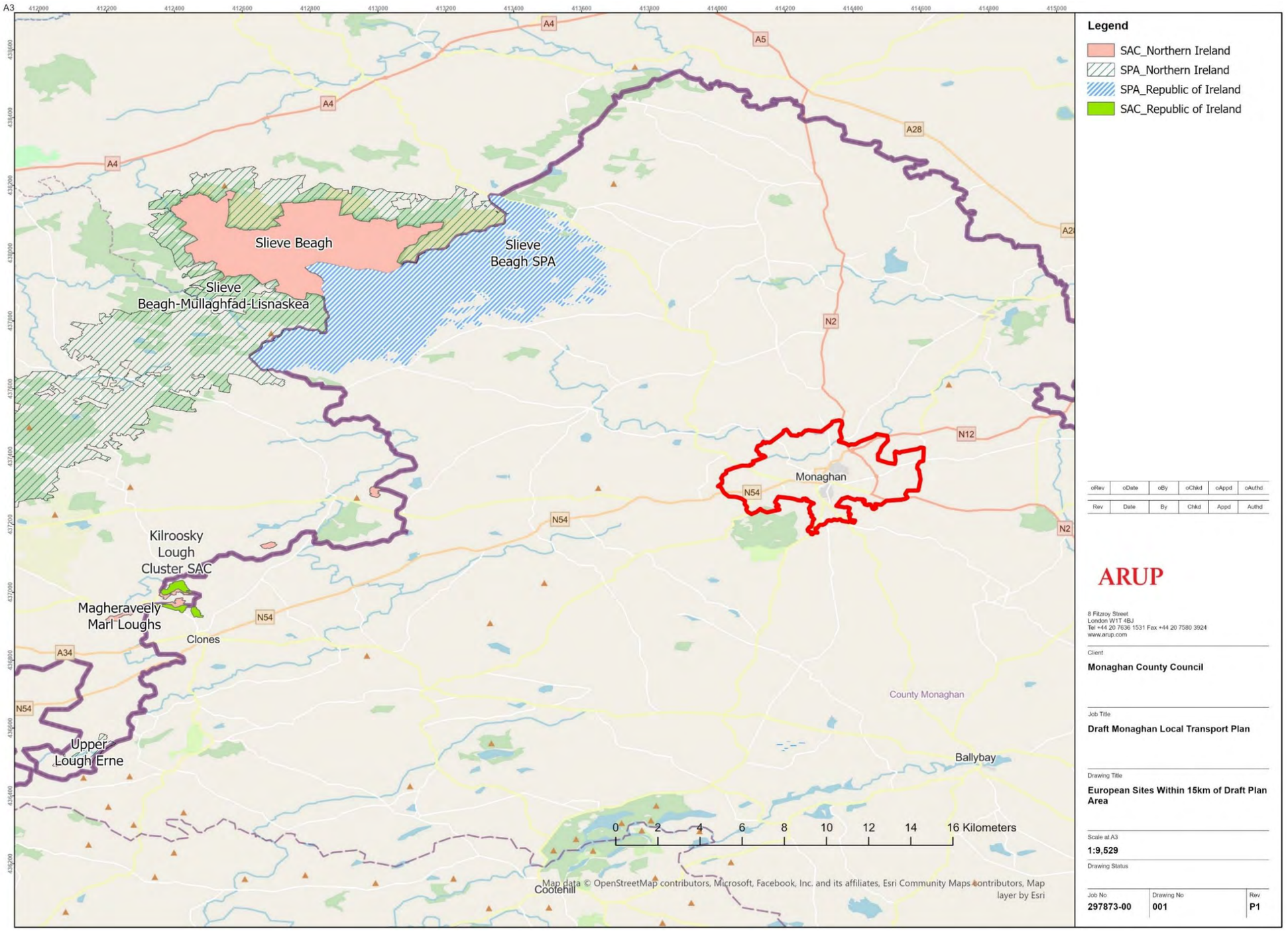

Figure 2 European Sites within Zone of Influence of Plan Area