

Variation No.1 – Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

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**Built.
Environment.**

Environmental Assessment **Built Environment**

Client:

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 was adopted on 22 September 2021 and came into effect on the 03 November 2021 (hereafter the Meath CDP). The CDP is divided into four volumes. Volume 1 of the CDP sets out the policies and objectives and the overall strategy for the development of the County over the plan period 2021-2027. Volume 2 of the CDP includes written statements and accompanying maps for all settlements within the county and sets out development and land use zoning objectives for each area. Volume 3 of the CDP includes a book of maps for the county, which includes the UNESCO heritage site of Brú na Bóinne. Volume 4 includes Environmental Assessments.

In accordance with Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), Meath County Council is proposing a variation of the County Development Plan 2021-2027. Proposed Variation No.1 comprises the first variation to the Meath CDP 2021-2027.

Brady Shipman Martin has been appointed by MCC to undertake a screening exercise for Appropriate Assessment (AA). This will determine the effects, if any, on European sites, of the implementation of the *Variation No. 1 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027* (hereafter the 'Variation No.1').

This document constitutes an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report prepared for this purpose. European sites are also known as Natura 2000 Sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)) and are designated for nature conservation. The requirements for an Appropriate Assessment are set out under *Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)*, transposed into Irish law through the *European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended)* and the *Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)*.

A comprehensive study has been undertaken and the potential impacts on European sites, both as a result of the implementation of the Variation and in-combination with other plans and projects, are appraised in this report.

This AA Screening Report should be read in conjunction with the Variation No. 2 of Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (MCC, 2024) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report (prepared by Brady Shipman Martin, 2024).

Meath County Council is also proposing *Variation No. 2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027*. Variation No.2 is subject to a separate screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA).

1.2 Expertise and Qualifications

This report has been prepared by Namrata Kaile, Ecologist and Environmental Consultant at Brady Shipman Martin. She holds a Bachelor's Degree (BSc) in Life Sciences from University of Delhi and a Master's Degree (MSc) with distinction in Environmental Sciences from Trinity College Dublin. She is an associate member of Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (ACIEEM) and has been working professionally in the field of environmental consultancy for the last four years. Namrata is experienced in drafting and reviewing AA Screening Reports, Natura Impact Statements, EIA Screening Reports as well as in coordination of EIARs. She is also experienced in undertaking baseline ecological surveys and preparing Ecological Impact Assessments Reports (EclA).

This report has been technically reviewed by Ecologist Matthew Hague BSc MSc Adv. Dip. Plan. & Env. Law CEnv MCIEEM. Matthew is an Associate with Brady Shipman Martin and is a highly experienced and qualified

ecologist, with a master's degree in Ecosystem Conservation and Landscape Management. He has over 20 years of experience in ecological and environmental consultancy, across a wide range of sectors. He has prepared numerous reports for AA Screening as well as Natura Impact Statements, for projects of all scales, from small residential developments to nationally important infrastructure projects. Matthew is a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM). Matthew has also completed an Advanced Diploma in Planning and Environmental Law, at King's Inns and is a member of the Irish Environmental Law Association (IELA).

1.3 Legal requirement for Appropriate Assessment

European sites make up a network of sites designated for nature conservation under Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the "Habitats Directive") and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (the "Birds Directive"). The requirements for Appropriate Assessment are set out under *Article 6 of the Habitats Directive*, transposed into Irish law by the *European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended)*¹ (the "Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations") and the *Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)* (the "Planning Acts").

European sites are also known as Natura 2000 Sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)). As defined in section 177R of the Planning Acts "European site" means:

- (a) a candidate site of Community importance,
- (b) a site of Community importance,
- (ba) a candidate special area of conservation,
- (c) a special area of conservation,
- (d) a candidate special protection area and
- (e) a special protection area.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states that:

(3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

The first test is to establish whether, in relation to a particular plan or project, appropriate assessment is required. Sections 177U of the Planning Acts requires that the AA screening test must be applied to the Variation, as follows:

- To assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site;
- An appropriate assessment is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the development (plan or project), individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

¹ SI No. 477 of 2011, SI No. 293 of 2021

This AA Screening Report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Birds Directive, the Habitats Directive, the Planning Acts and the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations.

2 Methodology

2.1 Baseline data collection

This assessment focused on habitats and species that are listed as Qualifying Interests (QI) (in the case of SACs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCI) (in the case of SPAs) in the designations for European sites. During the assessment the potential for *ex-situ* effects on European sites was also appraised.

This report takes the following guidance documents into account:

- 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 NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10;
- Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites- Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission, 2021);
- Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. Guidance issued by the European Commission (21st November 2018);
- Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community Interest under the Habitats Directive (Directorate – General for Environment (European Commission, 2021);
- Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (Office of the Planning Regulator, March 2021);
- 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 (National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) (2021)).

Information was collated from the organisations and websites listed below:

- Data on European sites and rare and protected plant and animal species contained in the following databases:
 - The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (www.NPWS.ie);
 - The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NDBC) (www.biodiversityireland.ie);
 - BirdWatch Ireland (www.birdwatchireland.ie);
 - Bat Conservation Ireland (www.batconservationireland.org).
- Information on land-use zoning from the online mapping of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (<http://www.myplan.ie/en/index.html>);
- Recent and historical OSi mapping and aerial photography, including www.geohive.ie;
- Information on local watercourses from www.catchments.ie;
- Information on water quality in the area (www.epa.ie);
- Information on soils, geology and hydrogeology in the area (www.gsi.ie);
- Information on the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland (Article 17 report) (NPWS, August 2019);
- 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2024);
- Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the accompanying reports.

The report has regard to the following legislative instruments:

- Planning and Development, Act 2000, as amended;
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended;
- European Commission (EC) Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;
- European Commission (EC) Birds Directive 2009/147/EC;
- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

The report takes full account of the details of the Variation No.1 and a detailed examination of all relevant elements was undertaken. The Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report (Brady Shipman Martin, 2024) was also reviewed in the preparation of this report.

3 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

3.1 Background

The first part of the Appropriate Assessment process is the Screening phase. Screening identifies the likely effects of the implementation of the Variation No.1 on European sites that could arise, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and considers whether these impacts are likely to have a significant effect on the European site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

In accordance with sections 177U and 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the AA screening must be carried out:

- To assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the Variation No.1, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site;
- An appropriate assessment is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the Variation No.1, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

Screening must be undertaken without the inclusion of mitigation and it is in this context that this AA Screening Report is prepared.

Following screening therefore, if there is a possibility of there being a significant effect on a European site, this will generate the need for an appropriate assessment for the purposes of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. This means that if the conclusions at the end of the screening exercise are that significant effects on any European sites, as a result of the implementation of the Variation, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, are likely, uncertain or unknown, then an Appropriate Assessment must be carried out. This is in accordance with established precedent and case law.

3.2 Potential zone of influence

This assessment is based on the source-pathway-receptor model, which dictates that, for an effect to occur, there must be a 'source' (such as a construction site); a 'receptor' (such as a designated site for nature conservation); and a 'pathway' between the two (such as a watercourse that links the construction site to the designated site). A construction site or completed development may also create a barrier to movement, for example, by preventing the migration of fauna along a river corridor, or by obstructing the migration of birds.

Identification of a potential effect means that there is a possibility of ecological or environmental damage occurring, with the level and significance of the impact depending upon the nature and exposure to the potential effect and the characteristics of the receptor. Although there may be a risk of an impact, it may not necessarily occur, and if it does occur, it may not be significant.

There are no set recommended distances for projects to consider European sites as being relevant for assessment. In 2010, DoEHLG stated that (pp. 31 – 32):

“The approach to screening is likely to differ somewhat for plans and projects, depending on scale and on the likely effects, but the following should be included:

1. *Any Natura 2000 sites within or adjacent to the plan or project area*
2. *Any Natura 2000 sites within the likely zone of impact of the plan or project. A distance of 15km is currently recommended in the case of plans, and derives from UK guidance (Scott Wilson et al., 2006). For projects, the distance could be much less than 15km, and in some cases less than 100m, but this must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in combination effects*
3. *Natura 2000 sites that are more than 15km from the plan or project area depending on the likely impacts of the plan or project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, bearing in mind the precautionary principle. In the cases of sites with water dependent habitats or species, and a plan or project that could affect water quality or quantity, for example, it may be necessary to consider the full extent of the upstream and/or downstream catchment.”*

The 2021 Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) guidelines, *Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*, state that the Zone of Influence *“should be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor framework and not by arbitrary distances (such as 15 km)”* (p. 8).

Therefore, considering the nature of the Variation and in accordance with the source-pathway-receptor model, the potential Zone of Influence (ZoI) for the Variation has been defined as follows:

- Any site to which there is a pathway from the proposed area under Variation No.1, regardless of distance, upon which significant effects could arise, resulting from the implementation of any element of the Variation. See Section 4.2.

Throughout the preparation of the Variation the strategic objectives and actions were reviewed in the context of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, in order to ensure that no elements of the Variation would have a significant impact on any European site.

4 Description of the Proposed Variation No.1 to the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

4.1 Overview

The purpose of Variation No. 1 is to give effect to Amendments to the two chapters of Vol. 1 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 where modifications are warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and to introduce flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2, the Core Strategy where appropriate and in line with national and regional policy.

The Variation also provides for the removal of unnecessary duplication of objectives contained in Volume No. 2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 that are appropriately addressed in Chapter 2 Core Strategy of Volume No. 1 Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. These objectives are listed in Appendix 2 of Variation No. 1 (MCC, March 2024).

4.2 Schedule of the Proposed Variation No.1

The detail of the proposed variation is set out in the following with deleted text shown in ~~striketrough~~ and new text shown in **bold blue text**.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Proposed text update to Section 1.5.1 Existing Suite of Local Area Plans

~~A Local Area Plan is currently in place for the following settlement centres: Ashbourne, East Meath, Dunshaughlin, Dunboyne, Ratoath and the Southern Environs of Drogheda.~~

A Written Statement and Land Use Zoning ~~objectives~~ map to establish a framework for interalia the future LAP's, to support economic development and to provide a basis for continued operation of the development management process pending the completion of the LAP's (in the case of Drogheda the UAP) has been included in Volume 2 for each Settlement. ~~center.~~ **These Written Statements will continue to have effect unless they are replaced and superceded by their respective Local Area Plan, Joint Local Area Plan or Joint Urban Area Plan.**

INT OBJ 1

When adopted, the Local Area Plan, Joint Local Area Plan or Joint Urban Area Plan will replace the respective Written Statement and update the relevant household allocation while retaining the land use zoning objectives contained in Volume 2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. During the intervening period, the Written Statement contained in the Meath County Development Plan will continue to have effect.

Chapter 2 Core Strategy

Proposed text update to Section 2.8.1 Guiding Principles for Core Strategies

2.8.1.1 Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)

The publication of the Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022) provides clarity in respect to excess zoned residential lands stating that it is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that 'zoned housing land in an existing development plan, that is serviced and can be developed for housing within the life of the new development plan under preparation, should not be subject to de-zoning' but should instead take a phased approach. Alternative zoning uses and deletion of the zoning objective can also be considered when addressing excess.

The Guidelines outline that de-zoning should occur where the land zoned has remained undeveloped and un-serviced through one or more development plan cycles, with no prospect of being serviced within the six-year life of the development plan.

The guidelines also acknowledge that in providing housing sites for development within settlements, it may be necessary to zone more serviced land and sites for residential (or a mixture of residential and other uses), than would equate to meeting precisely the projected housing demand for that settlement. The approach outlined in Section 4.4.2 of the guidelines accepts that a degree of choice in development sites is desirable to avoid restricting the supply of new housing development through inactivity on a particular landholding or site.

The release of such lands can compensate for lands with live planning permissions that have no subsequent activity within the duration of their permission will ensure site options are not curtailed at the advanced stages of the County Development Plan period and will ensure that a steady supply of land for housing in the right locations are built into the system.

In identifying the residential land requirement for this Plan and addressing the issue of excess lands, a significant quantum of residential lands were de-zoned in accordance with the RSES guidance during the CDP review. ~~consideration will be given to both options set out above. An~~ Having regard to the limited availability of remaining undeveloped residential zoned lands in some settlements, which was established following a detailed analysis at the two year review of the plan, a comprehensive evaluation of all undeveloped residential lands in each settlement by way of Settlement Capacity Audits (SCA) will inform future zoning and phasing of residential lands. The SCA will inform a future variation to the CDP. ~~has been carried out.~~ The prioritisation/phasing of residential lands will only be utilised in the larger settlements where population growth is to be concentrated i.e. Regional Growth Centre, Key Town, or Self-Sustaining Growth Towns and only where there are fundamental reasons which support the requirement to phase such lands.

Proposed update to Section 2.9.3 Recent Activity in Residential Construction

~~Section 2.9.3 Recent Activity in Residential Construction~~

~~*The continuation of the economic recovery, the associated increase in employment, and improved consumer confidence has resulted in increased activity in residential construction, particularly in the southern and eastern parts of the County.*~~

~~*This has been particularly evident from 2014, with year on year increases in the number of Commencement Notices received for multi-unit residential developments. These Commencement Notices are being translated into completed units. The CSO Report 'New Dwelling Completions' 2011-18 recorded that there were 1,512 residential units completed in Meath in 2018. This represents an increase of almost 40% on 2017 when 1,091 units were completed. In comparison to other parts of the region Meath is one of the most active counties behind Fingal (2,140 units), Dublin City (1,843 units), and South Dublin (1,654 units).*~~

Section 2.9.3 Monitoring of Population Growth and Housing Growth in the County

Section 10.3 of the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2022 requires monitoring of the Core Strategy for the county. This monitoring must be carried out annually and include a breakdown of the following indicators:

Indicator	
Residential	
1.	New home completions (including through refurbishment/conversions)
2.	New home completions per NPO 3 (see below)
3.	Planning permissions granted for residential development with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) A breakdown of 1, 2 ,3 and 4+ units permitted and (ii) A breakdown per Tier 1 and Tier 2 lands
4.	Breakdown by relevant rural area type of rural housing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Planning Applications lodged (ii) Breakdown in decisions (iii) New home completions

To address this requirement, a Residential Tracking Monitoring System for County Meath was established as a key quantitative data source to analyse and report residential planning and construction activity. This internal dataset is informed by Central Statistic Office (CSO) data on population and employment figures, internal housing completions records and Building Control Management System data.

A review of internal planning permission data and 2022 census data indicates that market and infrastructural constraints has restricted the delivery of housing across the county. It is a target of the County Development Plan to deliver 1,880 Units per annum up to 2027. Notwithstanding this, 2022 census data for the county shows that the total housing stock grew from 70,649 to 78,759 between 2016-2022. This indicates an average increase of 1,352 units annually since 2016. While internal monitoring reflects an increase in construction in more recent years, this data also indicates a shortfall of an average of 528 residential units annually on the planned housing delivery for County Meath. Having regard to the recent 2022 census data and the unanticipated population growth in Meath, the Council are reviewing the causes of this shortfall with the intention of identifying and addressing obstacles to the delivery of housing within the county.

Consequently, careful monitoring must be carried out for both permissions granted, units delivered, infrastructural or other impediments to ensure the likelihood of housing delivery is considered in the context of the various obstacles. In accordance with the Development Plan Guidelines, the anticipated rate of housing delivery and the likelihood of expiring permissions commencing must also be factored into the various considerations that form part of the successful delivery of the Core Strategy. The proposed phasing of larger residential developments must also be considered.

Notwithstanding that the county has zoned a sufficient amount of land to accommodate the household allocation up to 2027, regard must be had to the historical trends for housing delivery and the significant complexities that exist in delivering housing including issues such as economic viability, site assembly and site ownership, funding, timescales for delivering the necessary physical infrastructure and the nature of speculative land management that may render certain lands unavailable within the lifetime of the plan. Accordingly, where lands cannot be bought forward for development within the Core Strategy period, a degree of flexibility in the distribution of the housing and population targets, in

line with national and regional policy, is required to facilitate an adequate supply of housing to meet demand in the county. This may include allowing ‘additional provision’ of lands to provide some degree of competition and choice in the residential development land market.

Where such flexibility is awarded, an evidence-based assessment will be carried out that will consider active and expiring planning permissions, units delivered, the function of the settlement and the existing and planned infrastructural, employment and community services available to the settlement (the Asset-Based Approach). The focus and target must however be based on housing delivery as opposed to meeting targets.

In recognition of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, self-sustaining settlements with existing or planned high quality transport services must also be recognised for their potential to contribute to national objectives to transition to a climate resilient and low carbon society. Recognition of high-quality transport settlements also accords with RPO 8.1 of the RSES which states “The integration of transport and land use planning in the region shall be consistent with the guiding principles expressed in the transport strategy of the RSES’.

Active Land Management measures undertaken by the Council such as the Residential Zoned Land Tax will also support the delivery of housing in the county and ensure compliance with National and Regional Planning Policy.

Proposed Introduction of Text and Table under Table 2.12:

A review of the Residential monitoring data that informed Table 2.12: Core Strategy Table, on Population and Household distribution to 2027 has identified an issue in the existing residential planning permissions in the County. While it was previously understood that the existing units not yet built in the county comprised 5,820 units, subsequent commencement and completion data as part of the Two-Year Review of the County Development Plan identified that 781 of these units were completed and/or expired in 2019 and therefore were outside of the household allocation period of 2020 -2027. This situation occurred as a result of delays in the preparation and adoption of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 which was originally planned for adoption in 2019 but incurred significant delays pending the publication of the National Planning Framework 2018, Regional and Economic Spatial Strategy in 2019 and the Covid pandemic in 2020.

In Variation No. 1, it is now proposed to re-allocate these units to larger Settlements in Tier 1 – 5 in accordance with the CDP growth and settlement strategy and to ensure full utilisation of existing infrastructure and resources in the County. This data coupled with the fact that a number of settlements are reaching or have reached their targeted household allocation demonstrates the need for incorporating flexibility into the Core Strategy to ensure appropriate housing delivery against the backdrop of the current housing crisis and in line with the Government Housing Strategy, Housing for All (2021).

Settlement	Additional Household Allocation 2020-2027
Settlement Tiers 1-5	781*

* Units recorded as extant permissions that were completed prior to 2020.

Proposed Text Changes to 2.14.1 Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

CS POL 1

To promote and facilitate the development of sustainable communities in the County by **monitoring** and managing the level of growth in each settlement to ensure future growth is in **informed by** ~~accordance with~~ the Core Strategy and County Settlement Hierarchy in order to deliver compact urban areas and sustainable rural communities.

Proposed text changes to 2.14.2 Objectives

It is an objective of the Council:

CS OBJ 3

To **be guided by** ~~ensure the implementation of~~ the population, ~~and~~ housing growth **and** household allocation set out in the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy, in so far as practicable. Meath County Council will monitor the number of units that are permitted and **delivered** ~~under construction/built~~ as part of the implementation of this objective, **in compliance with the Development Plans Guidelines 2022.**

Insert New Objective

CS OBJ 3A: The 781 residential units shall only be applied to Tiers 1 to 5 Settlements where there is a demonstrated demand for housing and sufficient supporting services available. This will be implemented through the Development Management function and applicable until such time as the NPF Review is completed and adopted.

For further details refer to the Variation No.1 of Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (MCC, March 2024).

4.3 Description of the receiving environment

The description of the receiving environment presented in this section has been based on a desktop study of relevant available information, as cited in the text.

The natural heritage of County Meath is an important asset and a unique resource. Habitat biodiversity in County Meath includes the Boyne and Blackwater Rivers as well as the short coastline which supports a wide range of rare or threatened flora and fauna species. Protecting and conserving these habitats is critically important, not just to the residents of the County but also in a national and international context.

The County contains significant stretches of both operational and derelict waterways including the River Boyne, River Blackwater, River Nanny, River Inny, River Delvin, River Tolka, River Broadmeadow and the Royal Canal.

There are 8 No. lakes in the County Meath which are designated WFD operational monitoring lakes. They are Lough Sheelin, Lough Doo, Lough Ben, Lough Glass, Lough Ervey, Lough Bracken, Lough Bane, and Annagh - White Lake. The *Water Quality in Ireland report 2016-2021* reports that the water quality in Annagh / White lake was classified as 'high' status, Lough Bane, Lough Ben, Lough Glass and Lough Doo were classified as being of 'good' status, Lough Sheelin and Lough Bracken were both classified with a 'moderate' status and Lough Ervey was classified as 'Poor'.

The Meath coastline extends for a distance of c.10km and stretches from the mouth of the River Boyne at Mornington, bordering County Louth, to Gormanston at the mouth of the River Delvin, bordering County Dublin. The coastal waterbody of County Meath is the Northwestern Irish Sea (IE_EA_020_0000) waterbody and has a 'good'² water quality status, while the Boyne Estuary transitional waterbody and Nanny Estuary both have a 'moderate' status.

The status of the river waterbodies in County Meath range from 'poor' to 'high', however the majority of the major river waterbodies range from 'poor' to 'moderate'. EPA data, on the biological quality of watercourses, based on monitoring up to 2021, indicates that one river achieved 'high' status, 21 of the monitored river waterbodies in County Meath achieved a 'good' status, 29 achieved a 'moderate' status and 33 were categorized as 'poor'. Table 4.1 below has a list of the WFD Catchments and WFD Sub-Catchments in County Meath.

Table 4.1 WFD Catchments and Sub-Catchments in Meath

Catchment (WFD Catchment Code)	Sub-catchment Name (WFD Sub-catchment Code)
Newry, Fane, Glyde and Dee Catchment (06)	Glyde_SC_010 (06_7)
	Dee_SC_010 (06_3)
	Dee_SC_020 (06_1)
	Dee_SC_030 (06_4)
Boyne Catchment (07)	Moynalty_SC_010 (07_14)
	Blackwater[Kells]_SC_020 (07_10)
	Blackwater[Kells]_SC_030 (07_8)
	Boyne_SC_070 (07_13)
	Boyne_SC_050 (07_12)
	Boyne_SC_100 (07_18)
	Boyne_SC_120 (07_15)
	Boyne_SC_130 (07_17)
	Boyne_SC_110 (07_1)
	Boyne_SC_080 (07_3)
	Boyne_SC_060 (07_20)
	Boyne_SC_090 (07_19)
	Boyne_SC_040 (07_9)
	Boyne_SC_030 (07_2)
	Boyne_SC_010 (07_4)
	Boyne_SC_020 (07_16)
	Blackwater[Longwood]_SC_10 (07_6)
	Deel[Raharney]_SC_010 (07_7)
	Yellow[Castlejordan]_SC_010 (07_11)
Upper Shannon Catchment (26F)	Inny[Shannon]_SC_010 (26F_6)
	Mountnugent_SC_010 (26F_3)
	Inny[Shannon]_SC_020 (26F_7)
Nanny-Delvin (08)	Nanny[Meath]_SC_020 (08_5)

² EPA 2019, Coastal Waterbody WFD Status 2016-2021: <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/default>

Catchment (WFD Catchment Code)	Sub-catchment Name (WFD Sub-catchment Code)
	Nanny[Meath]_SC_010 (08_4)
	Delvin_SC_010 (08_1)
	Broadmeadow_SC_010 (08_3)
Liffey and Dublin Bay (09)	Tolka_SC_010 (09_10)
	Liffey_SC_080 (09_5)
	Liffey_SC_100 (09_1)
	RyeWater_SC_010 (09_3)

4.3.1 Designated European Sites

Within County Meath, there are a total of 14 sites designated for protection under the Natura 2000 network (there are nine SACs and five SPAs). All designated European Sites located within County Meath are listed in Table 4.2 and shown in Figure 4.1 below.

There are a further 13 SPAs and 19 SACs within the potential ZoI (ZoI) of the MCC area listed in Table 4.2. These sites (a total of 46) are the sites located within the potential zone of influence of the county boundary.

Conservation objectives for SACs and SPAs have been set for the habitats and species for which the sites have been selected. Site specific detailed conservation objectives are available on the NPWS website³.

Table 4.2 European sites located in County Meath and within the potential Zone of Influence of the County Boundary

European Sites in County Meath			
Site Code	Special Protection Area (SPA)	Site Code	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
004232	River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA	002299	River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC
004065	Lough Sheelin SPA	002342	Mount Hevey Bog SAC
004080	Boyne Estuary SPA	000006	Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally) SAC
004158	River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA	002340	Moneybeg & Clareisland Bogs SAC
004236	North-West Irish Sea SPA	002120	Lough Bane and Lough Glass SAC
		002203	Girley (Drewstown) Bog SAC
		001957	Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC
		001398	Rye Water Valley / Carton SAC
		001810	White Lough, Ben Loughs & Lough Doo SAC
European Sites within a zone of influence (15km) of the County Boundary			
Site Code	Special Protection Area (SPA)	Site Code	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
004061	Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough SPA	002201	Derragh Bog SAC
004043	Lough Derravarragh SPA	002121	Lough Lene SAC
004102	Garriskill Bog SPA	000679	Garriskil Bog SAC
004044	Lough Ennell SPA	002341	Ardagullion Bog SAC

³ NPWS website 2019: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/conservation-management-planning/conservation-objectives>

004006	North Bull Island SPA	002205	Wooddown Bog SAC
004024	South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA	000582	Raheenmore Bog SAC
004016	Baldoyle Bay SPA	000685	Lough Ennell SAC
004025	Malahide Estuary SPA	000925	The Long Derries, Edenderry SAC
004015	Rogerstown Estuary SPA	000391	Ballynafagh Bog SAC
004122	Skerries Islands SPA	001387	Ballynafagh Lake SAC
004014	Rockabill SPA	001831	Split Hills and Long Hill Esker SAC
004091	Stabannan-Braganstown SPA	000206	North Dublin Bay SAC
004026	Dundalk Bay SPA	000210	South Dublin Bay SAC
		000199	Baldoyle Bay SAC
		000205	Malahide Estuary SAC
		000208	Rogerstown Estuary SAC
		003000	Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC
		001459	Clogher Head SAC
		000455	Dundalk Bay SAC

4.3.2 Nationally Designated Sites

Nationally Designated Sites include Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) which are legally protected areas that are considered important for their habitats, or which holds species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection. Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) are also of significance for wildlife and habitats but have not yet been statutorily designated. However, under the Wildlife Amendment Act (2000) NHAs are legally protected from damage from the date they are formally proposed for designation⁴.

Refer to Table 4.3 and Figure 4.2 below for the NHAs and pNHAs located in County Meath and within the zone of influence of the county boundary.

Table 4.3 Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) located in County Meath and within the zone of influence of the County Boundary

Natural Heritage Areas in County Meath			
Site Code	Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs)	Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)
001324	Jamestown Bog NHA	000006	Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally)
001580	Girley Bog NHA	000987	Lough Sheelin
001582	Molerick Bog NHA	001814	Lough Naneagh
		001810	White Lough, Ben Loughs And Lough Doo
		000556	Lough Shesk
		002103	Royal Canal

⁴ NPWS website 2019: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/nha>

		001398	Rye Water Valley/Carton
		001584	Mount Hevey Bog
		001357	Trim
		000557	Rathmoylan Esker
		001592	Boyne Woods
		000553	Crewbane Marsh
		001591	Slane Riverbank
		001589	Rossnaree Riverbank
		001593	Thomastown Bog
		001578	Duleek Commons
		001579	Balrath Woods
		001576	Cromwell's Bush Fen
		000554	Laytown Dunes / Nanny Estuary
		001957	Boyne Coast And Estuary
		001861	Dowth Wetland
		001862	Boyne River Islands
		001587	Mentrim Lough
		000552	Corstown Loughs
		001594	Ballyhoe Lough
		001558	Breakey Loughs
		001573	Ballynabarny Fen
Natural Heritage Areas within the zone of influence (15km) of the County Boundary			
Site Code	Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs)	Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)
000985	Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough	001203	Knock Lake
000684	Lough Derravaragh	001204	Bog of the Ring
000694	Wooddown Bog	002000	Loughshinny Coast
002323	Milltownpass Bog	000207	Rockabill Island
000677	Cloncrow Bog (New Forest)	001616	Louth Hall and Ardee Woods
001725	Nure Bog	001856	Dunany Point
000570	Black Castle Bog	001801	Barmeath Woods
001388	Carbury Bog	001454	Ardee Cutaway Bog
001393	Hodgestown Bog	001464	Melifont Abbey Woods
001218	Skerries Islands NHA	001293	Blackhall Woods
		000208	Rogerstown Estuary
		000205	Malahide Estuary
		001215	Portraine Shore

	001208	Feltrim Hill
	000199	Baldoyle Bay
	001763	Sluice River Marsh
	000178	Santry Demesne
	000206	North Dublin Bay
	000128	Liffey Valley
	000390	Ballina Bog
	001391	Donadea Wood
	001387	Ballynafagh Lake
	000391	Ballynafagh Bog
	002104	Grand Canal
	000925	The Long Derries, Edenderry
	000582	Raheenmore Bog
	000685	Lough Ennell
	000690	Lough Sheever Fen/ Slevin's Lough Complex
	002069	Ardagullion Bog
	000679	Garriskil Bog
	000672	Aghalasty Fen
	000686	Lough Glore
	000681	Hill of Mael and the Rock of Curry
	000992	Lough Gowna
	000008	Lough Ramor
	001608	Monalty Lough
	001671	Spring and Corcrin Lough
	001828	Reaghstown Marsh
	000560	Lough Fea Demesne
	000561	Lough Naglack
	002077	Nafarty Fen
	000456	Stabannan-Braganstown
	001806	Kildemock Marsh
	001464	Mellifont Abbey Woods
	001804	King William's Glen
	001721	Lough Bane
	001459	Clogher Head
	001458	Castlecoo Hill
	000692	Scragh Bog

	000978	Cordonaghy Bog
	000690	Lough Sheever Fen / Slevin’s Lough Complex
	001599	Creevy Lough
	001461	Darver Castle Woods
	001462	Drumacg, Toprass and Cortial Lough
	000455	Dundalk Bay
	001803	Stephenstown Pond
	000991	Dodder Valley
	000211	Slade of Saggart and Crooksling Glen
	001212	Lugmore Glen

Figure 4.1 European Sites in County Meath and in the surrounding zone of influence

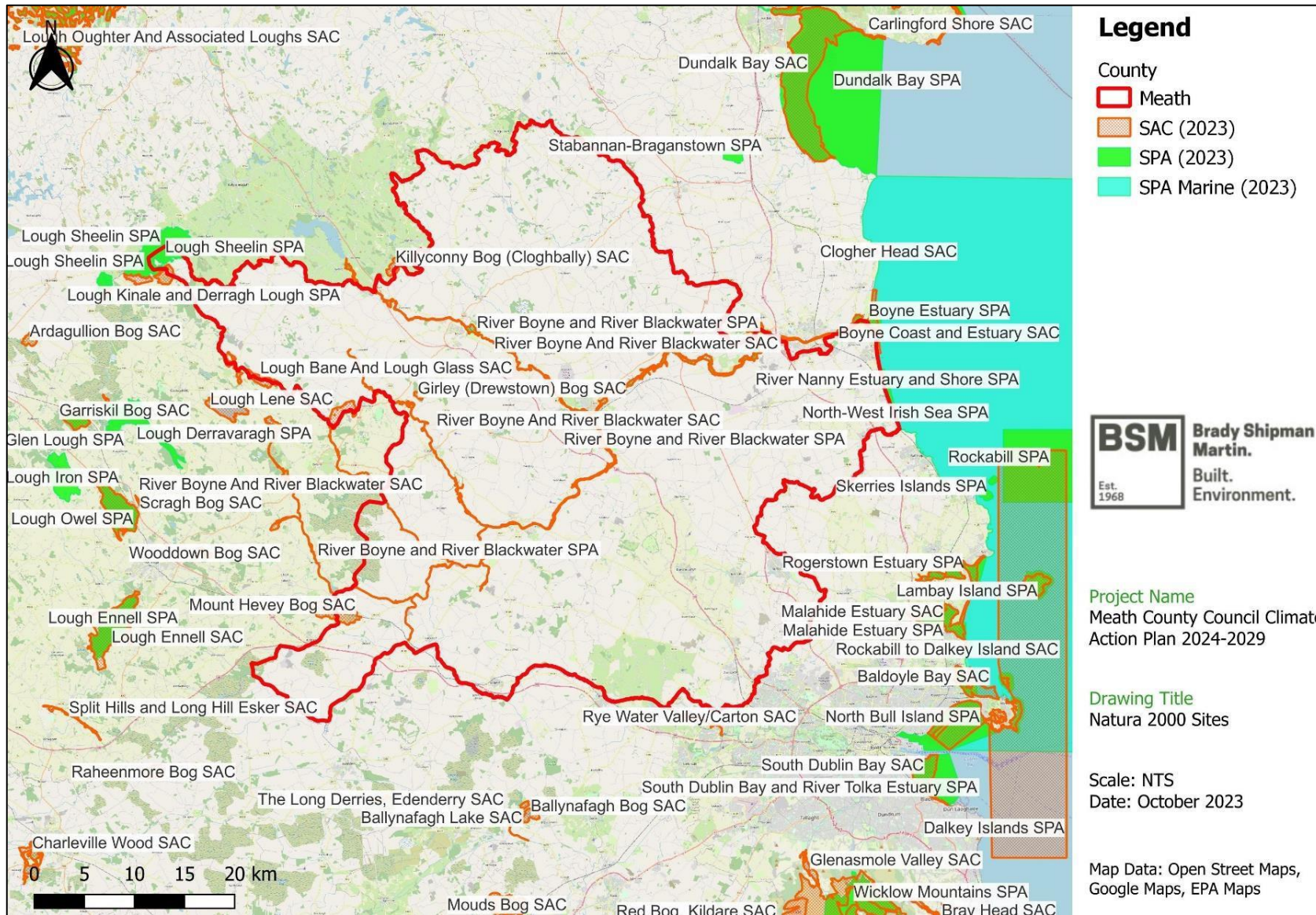
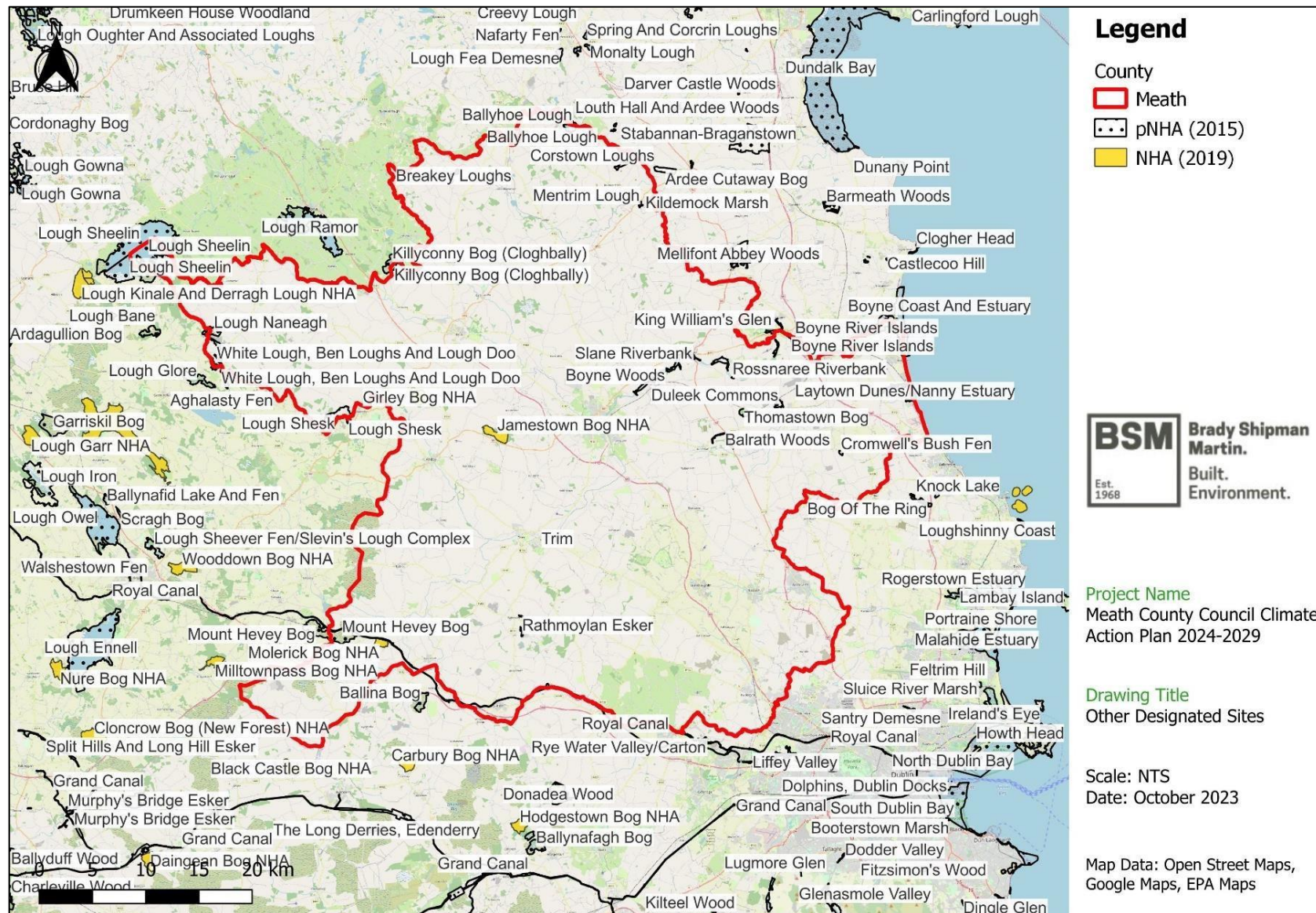


Figure 4.2 Other Designated Sites in County Meath and in the surrounding zone of influence



5 Potential impacts due to Variation No. 1 of the Meath CDP 2021-2027

5.1 Description of any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the Variation on European sites by virtue of:

5.1.1 Size and Scale

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (adopted on 22 September 2021 and came into effect on the 03 November 2021) sets a framework for projects and other activities within County Meath and was subject to Natura Impact Report and Strategic Environmental Assessment as part of the plan making and adoption process.

The proposed Variation No. 1 to the County Development Plan proposes amendments across 3 broad areas:

First, where modifications are warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans which will replace the respective Written Statements.

Second, to introduce flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2, the Core Strategy, where appropriate and in line with national and regional policy.

And third, for the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives in Vol. No.2 of the Development Plan with those already in Chapter 2 of Vol. No.1 of the Plan.

Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, *Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)*⁵, which aim to ensure Development Plans take into account the forecasted amount of housing in an area and that sufficient new homes can be built in key areas of housing demand. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and there is no change in the manner in which the Plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions, or by allocating resources.

The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives has no effect on the degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions, or by allocating resources.

The size and scale of the Variation No.1 will not result in any impacts that have the potential, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.

5.1.2 Land take

There is no requirement for land take from any European site under Variation No. 1 to the Meath CDP 2021-2027.

5.1.3 Distance from European Site

Within County Meath, there are a total of 14 sites designated for protection under the Natura 2000 network (there are nine SACs and five SPAs). There are a further 13 SPAs and 19 SACs within the potential Zol (Zol) of

⁵ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/f9aac-development-plans-guidelines-for-planning-authorities/>

the MCC area listed in Table 4.2. These sites (a total of 46) are the sites located within the potential zone of influence of the county boundary.

The Variation No. 1 to the County Development Plan proposes amendments across 3 broad areas:

First, where modifications are warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans which will replace the respective Written Statements.

Second, to introduce flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2, the Core Strategy, where appropriate and in line with national and regional policy.

And third, for the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives in Vol. No.2 of the Development Plan with those already in Chapter 2 of Vol. No.1 of the Plan.

Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, *Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)*, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will have the positive effect of enhancing the delivery of residential development on appropriately zoned and serviced lands.

The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not adversely alter the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation.

5.1.4 Resource requirement

There are no resource requirements from any European site as a result of the Variation No. 1 to the Meath CDP 2021-2027.

5.1.5 Emissions (to land, water or air)

The proposed Variation No. 1 to the County Development Plan proposes amendments across 3 broad areas:

First, where modifications are warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans which will replace the respective Written Statements.

Second, to introduce flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2, the Core Strategy, where appropriate and in line with national and regional policy.

And third, for the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives in Vol. No.2 of the Development Plan with those already in Chapter 2 of Vol. No.1 of the Plan.

No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature and will not result in significant effects on the environment. Taking into account the existing land use zonings, the permitted development pertaining to the lands and the limited nature of the proposed amendments, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation. All development arising as a result of Variation No.1 will be guided by the development management policies and objectives of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

5.1.6 Excavation requirements

There are no excavation requirements from any European site as a result of Variation No. 1 to the Meath CDP 2021-2027.

5.1.7 Transport requirements

There are no transport requirements related to any European site as a result of Variation No. 1 to the Meath CDP 2021-2027.

5.2 Description of any likely changes arising as a result of:

5.2.1 Reduction in habitat area

The Variation No. 1 to the Meath CDP 2021-2027 proposes no reductions in habitat area in any European site.

5.2.2 Disturbance to key species

The Variation No. 1 to the Meath CDP 2021-2027 will not result in any disturbance to key species, in designated sites and elsewhere. No habitat or species disturbance will arise.

5.2.3 Habitat or species fragmentation

There will be no loss, fragmentation, disruption, disturbance or other change to any element of any European site as a result of the implementation of the Variation No. 1 to the Meath CDP 2021-2027, and no interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of any European site.

5.2.4 Reduction in species density

The Variation No. 2 to the Meath CDP 2021-2027 will not result in any effects that have the potential to result in reduction in the extent of the qualifying habitats of European Sites, disturb qualifying species of European Sites in the wider surrounding area or affect species population.

5.2.5 Changes in key indicators of conservation value

The Variation No. 1 to the Meath CDP 2021-2027 will not result in any changes to key indicators of conservation value. The Variation will not result in any interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of any European site.

5.2.6 Climate change

All development arising as a result of Variation No.1 will be guided by the development management policies and objectives of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and Meath County Council (MCC) Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029. The Variation No. 1 to the Meath CDP 2021-2027 will not result in any impacts on or due to climate change.

5.3 Description of any likely impacts on European sites in terms of:

5.3.1 Interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site

The Variation No. 1 to the Meath CDP 2021-2027 will result in no interference with the key relationships that define the structure of any European site.

5.3.2 Interference with the key relationships that define the function of the site

The Variation No. 1 to the Meath CDP 2021-2027 will result in no interference with the key relationships that define the function of any European site.

Potential pathways for impacts to European sites are presented in [Table 5.1](#).

Table 5.1 Potential impacts on designated sites in the potential Zone of Influence

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
European sites <i>within</i> Co. Meath			
River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (site code 004232), within County Meath	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A229 Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>) <p>According to the first order site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 12 October 2022), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition of the bird species listed.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	No
Lough Sheelin SPA (site code 004065), within County Meath	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A005 Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) ■ A059 Pochard (<i>Aythya farina</i>) ■ A061 Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) ■ A067 Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) 	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p>	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<p>According to the first order site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 12 October 2022), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition of the bird species listed.</p>	<p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	
<p>Boyne Estuary SPA (site code 004080), within County Meath</p>	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) ■ A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) ■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) ■ A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) ■ A142 Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) ■ A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) ■ A144 Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) ■ A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) ■ A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa tetanus</i>) ■ A169 Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) ■ A195 Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) ■ A999 Wetlands 	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<p>According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 26 February, 2013), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	
<p>River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA (site code 004158), within County Meath</p>	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) (wintering) ■ A137 Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) (wintering) ■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) (wintering) ■ A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) (wintering) ■ A144 Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) (wintering) ■ A184 Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) (wintering) ■ A999 Wetlands <p>According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 21 September 2012), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
North-West Irish Sea SPA (site code 004236), within County Meath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A065 Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) ■ A001 Red-throated Diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>) ■ A003 Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>) ■ A009 Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) ■ A013 Manx Shearwater (<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>) ■ A018 Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) ■ A017 Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) ■ A177 Little Gull (<i>Larus minutus</i>) ■ A188 Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) ■ A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) ■ A182 Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) ■ A183 Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) ■ A184 Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) ■ A187 Great Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus marinus</i>) ■ A195 Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) ■ A192 Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) ■ A193 Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) ■ A194 Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) ■ A204 Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) ■ A200 Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) ■ A199 Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1 - dated 19 September 2023), for each of the listed</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	SCIs, the Conservation Objective maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the species for which the SPA has been selected.		
River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (site code 002299), within County Meath	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1099 River Lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>) ■ 1106 Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) ■ 1355 Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) ■ 7230 Alkaline fens ■ 91E0 Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>)* <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 03 December, 2021), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	No
Mount Hevey Bog SAC (site code 002342), within County Meath	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7110 Active raised bogs* ■ 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration 	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p>	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 21 March, 2016), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	
<p>Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally) SAC (site code 000006), within County Meath</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7110 Active raised bogs* ■ 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 02 November, 2015), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
		There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.	
Moneybeg & Clareisland Bogs SAC (site code 002340), within County Meath	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7110 Active raised bogs* ■ 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration ■ 7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 25 February, 2016), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	No
Lough Bane and Lough Glass SAC (site code 002120), within County Meath	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1092 White-clawed Crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>) 	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p>	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 3140 Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 21 October, 2021), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	
Girley (Drewstown) Bog SAC (site code 002203), within County Meath	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 19 July, 2023), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p>	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
		<p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	
<p>Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (site code 001957), within County Meath</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1130 Estuaries ■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ■ 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand ■ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) ■ 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) ■ 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes ■ 2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ('white dunes') ■ 2130 *Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation ('grey dunes') <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 31 October, 2012), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
<p>Rye Water Valley / Carton SAC (site code 001398), within County Meath</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1014 Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail <i>Vertigo angustior</i> ■ 1016 Desmoulin's Whorl Snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> ■ 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)* <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 22 December, 2021), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>White Lough, Ben Loughs & Lough Doo SAC (site code 001810), within County Meath</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1092 White-clawed Crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> ■ 3140 Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 21 October, 2021), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<p>condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	
<p>European sites <i>outside</i> Co. Meath but potentially within the Zone of Influence of the County Boundary</p>			
<p>Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough SPA (site code 004061), c. 4km north-west of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A059 Pochard (<i>Aythya farina</i>) ■ A061 Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) <p>According to the First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 12 October, 2022), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
		conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.	
Lough Derravarragh SPA (site code 004043), c. 11km to the west of the County boundary	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A038 Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) ■ A059 Pochard (<i>Aythya farina</i>) ■ A061 Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) ■ A125 Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) <p>According to the First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 12 October, 2022), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	No
Garriskill Bog SPA (site code 004102), c. 15.6km to the west of the County boundary	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A395 Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) <p>According to the First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 12 October, 2022), for each of the listed</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of</p>	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<p>SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition.</p>	<p>Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	
<p>Lough Ennell SPA (site code 004044), c. 12km to the south-west of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A059 Pochard (<i>Aythya farina</i>) ■ A061 Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) ■ A125 Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) <p>According to the First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 12 October, 2022), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
		conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.	
North Bull Island SPA (site code 004006), c. 13km to the south-east of the County boundary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) ■ A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) ■ A052 Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) ■ A054 Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) ■ A056 Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) ■ A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) ■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) ■ A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) ■ A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) ■ A144 Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) ■ A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) ■ A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) ■ A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) ■ A160 Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) ■ A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) ■ A169 Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) ■ A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) ■ A999 Wetland <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 9 March 2015), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	species and wetland habitat for which the SPA has been selected.		
<p>South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (site code 004024), c. 17km south-east of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A144 Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) ■ A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) ■ A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) ■ A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) ■ A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) ■ A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) ■ A192 Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) ■ A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) ■ A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) ■ A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) ■ A194 Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) ■ A193 Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) ■ A137 Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) ■ A999 Wetlands <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 9 March 2015), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	species and wetland habitat for which the SPA has been selected.		
Baldoyle Bay SPA (site code 004016), c. 14.7km to the east of the County boundary	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A046 Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) ■ A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) ■ A137 Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) ■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) ■ A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) ■ A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) ■ A999 Wetlands <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1 - dated 27 February 2013), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the species and wetland habitat for which the SPA has been selected.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	No
Malahide Estuary SPA (site code 004025), c. 9.5km to the east of the County boundary	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A005 Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) ■ A046 Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) ■ A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) ■ A054 Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) 	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of</p>	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A067 Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) ■ A069 Red-breasted (Merganser <i>Mergus serrator</i>) ■ A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) ■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) ■ A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) ■ A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) ■ A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>) ■ A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) ■ A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) ■ A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa tetanus</i>) ■ A999 Wetlands <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 16 August 2013), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the species and wetland habitat for which the SPA has been selected.</p>	<p>Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	
<p>Rogerstown Estuary SPA (site code 004015), c. 10km to the east of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A043 Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) ■ A046 Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) ■ A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) ■ A056 Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) 	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) ■ A137 Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) ■ A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) ■ A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) ■ A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>) ■ A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) ■ A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa tetanus</i>) ■ A999 Wetlands <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1 - dated 20 May 2013), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the species and wetland habitat for which the SPA has been selected.</p>	<p>Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	
<p>Skerries Islands SPA (site code 004122), c. 11.7km to the east of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A017 Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) ■ A018 Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) ■ A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) ■ A148 Purple Sandpiper (<i>Calidris maritima</i>) ■ A169 Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) ■ A184 Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) 	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<p>According to the First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 12 October, 2022), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition.</p>	<p>warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	
<p>Rockabill SPA (site code 004014), c. 13.7km to the east of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A148 Purple Sandpiper (<i>Calidris maritima</i>) ■ A192 Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) ■ A193 Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) ■ A194 Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1 - dated 08 May 2013), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the species and wetland habitat for which the SPA has been selected.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
<p>Stabannan-Braganstown SPA (site code 004091), c.11km to the north-east of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A043 Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) <p>According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 15 November 2022), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Dundalk Bay SPA (site code 004026), c. 14.8km to the north-east of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A005 Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) (wintering) ■ A043 Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) (wintering) ■ A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) (wintering) 	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) (wintering) ■ A052 Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) (wintering) ■ A053 Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) (wintering) ■ A054 Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) (wintering) ■ A065 Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) (wintering) ■ A069 Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) (winterin) ■ A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) (wintering) ■ A137 Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) (wintering) ■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) (wintering) ■ A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) (wintering) ■ A142 Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) (wintering) ■ A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) (wintering) ■ A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) (wintering) ■ A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) (wintering) ■ A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) (wintering) 	<p>changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A160 Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) (wintering) ■ A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa tetanus</i>) (wintering) ■ A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) (wintering) ■ A182 Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) (wintering) ■ A184 Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) (wintering) ■ A999 Wetlands & Waterbirds <p>According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 19 July, 2011), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>		
<p>Derragh Bog SAC (site code 002201), c. 7km to the north-west of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7110 Active raised bogs* ■ 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 19 July 2023), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
		<p>warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	
<p>Lough Lene SAC (site code 002121), c. 3km to the west of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1092 White-clawed Crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>) ■ 3140 Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 21 October, 2021), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
<p>Garriskil Bog SAC (site code 000679), c. 15.3km to the east of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7110 Active raised bogs* ■ 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration ■ 7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 02 November, 2015), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Ardagullion Bog SAC (site code 002341), c. 16.5km to the north-east of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7110 Active raised bogs* ■ 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration ■ 7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 06 November, 2015), for the listed QIs, the</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<p>Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	
<p>Wooddown Bog SAC (site code 002205), c. 16.2km to the east of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 19 July 2023), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
<p>Raheenmore Bog SAC (site code 000582), c. 13km to the south-east of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7110 Active raised bogs* ■ 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration ■ 7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 02 November, 2015), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Lough Ennell SAC (site code 000685), c. 13km to the south-east of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7230 Alkaline fens <p>The following habitat is listed as Qualifying Interests on the NPWS website, but are not included in the Conservation Objectives document: 3140 Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of Chara spp.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 12 January, 2018), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	
<p>The Long Derries, Edenderry SAC (site code 000925), c. 9.6km to the south of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (*important orchid sites) <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 11 November, 2021), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
<p>Ballynafagh Bog SAC (site code 000391), c. 11km to the south of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7110 Active raised bogs* ■ 7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration ■ 7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 10 November, 2015), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Ballynafagh Lake SAC (site code 001387), c. 10.4km to the south of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1016 Desmoulin's Whorl Snail (<i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>) ■ 1065 Marsh Fritillary (<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>) ■ 7230 Alkaline fens <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 10 december, 2021), for the listed QIs, the Conservation</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<p>Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	
<p>Split Hills and Long Hill Esker SAC (site code 001831), c. 16.8km to the south-east of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 20 June, 2018), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
<p>North Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000206), c. 17.8km to the south-west of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ■ 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines ■ 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand ■ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) ■ 1395 Petalwort (<i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>) ■ 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) ■ 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes ■ 2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) ■ 2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)* ■ 2190 Humid dune slacks <p><i>*indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive</i></p> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 06 November 2013), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is 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.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
<p>South Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000210), c. 17km to the south-west of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide <p>The following habitats are listed as Qualifying Interests on the NPWS website, but are not included in the Conservation Objectives document:</p> <p>(1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines</p> <p>1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand</p> <p>2110 Embryonic shifting dunes)</p> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 22 August 2013), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat for which the SAC has been selected.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Baldoyle Bay SAC (site code 000199), c. 14.7km to the west of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ■ 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand ■ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) 	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines</i></p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 19 November 2012), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p>	<p><i>for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	
<p>Malahide Estuary SAC (site code 000205), c. 9.5km to the west of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ■ 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand ■ 1320 Spartina swards (<i>Spartinion maritimae</i>) ■ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) ■ 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) ■ 2120 Shifting dunnes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) ■ 2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)* 	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<p><i>*indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive</i></p> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 27 May 2013), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is 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.</p>	<p>conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	
<p>Rogerstown Estuary SAC (site code 000208), c. 10km to the west of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1130 Estuaries ■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ■ 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand ■ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) ■ 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) ■ 2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) ■ 2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)* <p>*indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 14 August 2013), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is 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.</p>		
<p>Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC (site code 003000), c. 17.3km to the west of the County boundary</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1170 Reefs ■ 1351 Harbour Porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>) <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 07 May 2013), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Clogher Head SAC (site code 001459), c. 7.5km</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p>	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
to the north-west of the County boundary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts ■ 4030 European dry heaths <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 27 January, 2017), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	
Dundalk Bay SAC (site code 000455), c. 14.8km to the north-west of the County boundary	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1130 Estuaries ■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ■ 1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks ■ 1310 <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand ■ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>) 	<p>Variation No.1 would not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed variation. No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.</p> <p>Introducing flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2: Core Strategy, is in accordance with Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, <i>Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2022)</i>, and while no new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed the associated amendments will not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites. The modifications</p>	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of March 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 19 July 2011), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans and the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives do not give rise to any potential impacts on European sites.</p> <p>There will be no impacts on water quality or any other emissions and no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the implementation of the Variation.</p>	

5.4 Summary of potential impacts of the implementation of the Variation No.1

There will be no loss of any habitat or species listed as a QI or SCI of any designated site as a consequence of the implementation of the Variation. There is, therefore, no potential for the effects of habitat loss or fragmentation to occur.

There will also be no significant effects on any European sites as a result of:

- Habitat loss and/or fragmentation;
- Land-take;
- Resource requirements such as water abstraction;
- Impacts to habitat structure;
- Mortality to species (such as roadkill);
- Noise pollution / vibration impacts;
- Light pollution;
- Emissions to air (including dust);
- Emissions to water.

Additionally, for the reasons outlined in this report for the European sites, no impacts on any other designated sites including proposed Natural Heritage Areas, will occur.

6 Public Consultation – Draft Variation No.1 of Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Draft Variation No. 1 to the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 went on public display from 27 March (Wednesday) until 26 April (Friday) 2024 at the offices of Meath County Council, Buvinda House, Dublin Road, Navan, Co. Meath, during normal opening hours and the following Municipal District Offices during normal opening hours - Ashbourne Municipal District, 1-2 Killegland Square Upper, Ashbourne, Kells Municipal District, Town Hall, Headfort Place, Kells, Laytown/Bettystown Municipal District, Main Street, Duleek, Ratoath Municipal District, Drumree Road, Dunshaughlin and Trim Municipal District, Mornington House, Summerhill Road, Trim.

A total of 17no. submissions were received during the Proposed Draft Variation No.1 consultation period. The submissions received and outcome of the consultation process has been summarised in the Chief Executive's (CE) Report prepared by Meath County Council. The CE report sets out the Chief Executive's response to the issues raised in the submissions, and makes recommendations on the proposed amendments, as appropriate.

The alterations were screened for the requirement for Appropriate Assessment and no likely significant environmental effects were identified. Refer to Table 6.1 below.

In the following table, text deleted from Variation No. 1 is shown ~~red strikethrough~~, while new text is shown *green italic*. New text as included in the Draft Variation which remains unaltered is in *blue text*.

Table 6.1 Screening of Alterations for AA

Section of the Variation document	Revised Text	Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA)
Amendment No. 2 - Chapter 2 'Core Strategy' & Volume 2 Written Statements (Page 3 of 12)	<p>[...]</p> <p>Where settlement household allocations are therefore reaching or at capacity and where centrally located brownfield/infill sites remain available for development, prioritization will be given to vacant sites in town centre locations once physical and social infrastructure is available and adequate. Such development in brownfield or town centre locations should be considered Core Strategy neutral and therefore acceptable subject to all other normal planning considerations.</p>	<p>No likely significant environmental effects on European sites arise as a result of the deletion of this text in the Variation No. 1.</p> <p>The requirement for Stage 2 AA is screened out.</p>
	<p>CS OBJ 3: To be guided by ensure the implementation the population, housing growth and household allocation set out in the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy, in so far as practicable. Meath County Council will monitor the number of units that are permitted, under construction and delivered /built as part of the implementation of this objective, in compliance with the Development Plan Guidelines 2022.</p>	<p>No likely significant environmental effects on European sites arise as a result of this non-material amendment to the text in the Variation No. 1</p> <p>The requirement for Stage 2 AA is screened out.</p>

Section of the Variation document	Revised Text	Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA)
<p>Amendment No. 01 - Chapter 1 Introduction</p> <p>Text update to Section 1.5.1</p> <p>Existing Suite of Local Area Plans</p> <p>Written Statements for Settlements in Meath. (Page 6 of 12)</p>	<p>A Written Statement and Land Use Zoning objectives map to establish a framework for inter alia the future LAP's, to support economic development and to provide a basis for continued operation of the development management process pending the completion of the LAP's (in the case of Drogheda the UAP) has been included in Volume 2 for each Settlement. center. These Written Statements will continue to have effect unless they are replaced and superceded by their respective Local Area Plan, Joint Local Area Plan or Joint Urban Area Plan. On adoption, the Local Area Plan, Joint Maynooth Local Area Plan or Joint Drogheda Urban / Local Area Plan will replace the respective Written Statement in Volume 2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 by way of a variation to the Plan. During the intervening period, the Written Statement contained in the Meath County Development Plan will continue to have effect.</p> <p>INT OBJ 1</p> <p>When adopted, the Local Area Plan, Joint Local Area Plan or Joint Urban Area Plan will replace the respective Written Statement and update the relevant household allocation while retaining the land use zoning objectives contained in Volume 2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. During the intervening period, the Written Statement contained in the Meath County Development Plan will continue to have effect.</p>	<p>No likely significant environmental effects on European sites arise as a result of this amendment to the text in the Variation No. 1</p> <p>The requirement for Stage 2 AA is screened out.</p>
<p>Amendment No. 02 - Chapter 2 'Core Strategy' & Volume 2 Written Statements (Page 6 & 7 of 12)</p>	<p>2.8.1.2 Development Plan Guidelines for Local Authorities (2022)</p> <p>[...]</p> <p><i>In identifying the residential land requirement for this Plan and addressing the issue of excess lands, consideration will be given to both options set out above. A significant quantum of residential lands was de-zoned in accordance with the RSES guidance to align the amount of lands zoned with the housing allocation for each settlement during the County Development Plan review. Having regard to the limited availability of remaining undeveloped residential zoned lands in some settlements, which was established following a detailed analysis at the Two Year Review of the Plan, a comprehensive evaluation of all undeveloped residential lands in each settlement by way of a Settlement Capacity Audit (SCA) will inform future zoning and phasing of residential</i></p>	<p>No likely significant environmental effects on European sites arise as a result of this non-material amendment to the text in the Variation No. 1</p>

Section of the Variation document	Revised Text	Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA)
	<i>lands. The SCA will inform a future variation to the County Development Plan. A significant quantum of residential lands were de-zoned in accordance with the RSES guidance during the County Development Plan review.</i>	The requirement for Stage 2 AA is screened out.
Text changes to 2.14.1 Policies (Page 9 of 12)	<p>CS POL 1</p> <p>To promote and facilitate the development of sustainable communities in the County by monitoring and managing the level of growth in each settlement to ensure future growth is in accordance with the Core Strategy and County Settlement Hierarchy in order to deliver compact urban areas and sustainable rural communities.</p>	<p>No likely significant environmental effects on European sites arise as a result of this non-material amendment to the text in the Variation No. 1</p> <p>The requirement for Stage 2 AA is screened out.</p>
Text changes to 2.14.2 Objectives (Page 9 &10 of 12)	<p>CS OBJ 3</p> <p>To be guided by ensure the implementation of the population, and housing growth and household allocation set out in the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy, in so far as practicable. Meath County Council will monitor the number of units that are permitted and delivered under construction/built as part of the implementation of this objective, in compliance with the Development Plan Guidelines 2022.</p>	<p>No likely significant environmental effects on European sites arise as a result of this non-material amendment to the text in the Variation No. 1</p> <p>The requirement for Stage 2 AA is screened out.</p>

Section of the Variation document	Revised Text	Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA)				
Amendment No. 3 – Reallocation of residential units – Text Changes to 2.10.4 (Page 10 & 11 of 12)	<p>In Variation No. 1, it is proposed to re-allocate these units to larger Settlements in Tier 1 – 5 Tier 3 – 4 in accordance with the CDP growth and settlement strategy and to ensure full utilisation of existing infrastructure and resources in the County.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="456 517 1742 593"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="456 517 1093 555">Settlement</th> <th data-bbox="1093 517 1742 555">Additional Household Allocation 2020-2027</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="456 555 1093 593">Settlement Tiers 3-4 Tiers 1-5</td> <td data-bbox="1093 555 1742 593">781*</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Settlement	Additional Household Allocation 2020-2027	Settlement Tiers 3-4 Tiers 1-5	781*	<p>No likely significant environmental effects on European sites arise as a result of this amendment to the text in the Variation No. 1</p> <p>The requirement for Stage 2 AA is screened out.</p>
	Settlement	Additional Household Allocation 2020-2027				
Settlement Tiers 3-4 Tiers 1-5	781*					
<p>Insert New Objective <i>CS OBJ 3A: The 781 residential units shall only be applied to Tier 1 to 5 Tier 3 to 4 Settlements where there is a demonstrated demand for housing and sufficient supporting services available including access to employment, public transport, water/wastewater, commercial/retail services and social infrastructure. This will be implemented through the Development Management function, monitored by the Forward Planning Department, and applicable until such time as the National Planning Framework Review is completed and adopted.</i></p>	<p>No likely significant environmental effects on European sites arise as a result of this amendment to the text in the Variation No. 1</p> <p>The requirement for Stage 2 AA is screened out.</p>					

7 Mitigation specific to European sites

This screening assessment is consistent with the judgment of the European Court in Case C-323/17, People Over Wind & Sweetman v Coillte (Judgment of the Court (Seventh Chamber) of 12 April 2018) and the recent case-law of the High Court, including Heather Hill Management Company CLG v An Bord Pleanála [2019] IEHC 450 and Sweetman v An Bord Pleanála [2020] IEHC 39.

It is also consistent with the judgment in Eco Advocacy CLG v An Bord Pleanála [2021] IEHC 265. In that case, Humphreys J confirmed the core legal principle, being that regard should not be had to mitigation measures at AA screening stage. Humphreys J decided in that case that clarification was required from the CJEU on the matter (as it related to the consideration of SUDs and whether these represented mitigation measures).

The CJEU, in its ruling on this case dated 15 June 2023 clarified issues defining mitigation in the context of European sites⁶. It confirmed that Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43 *must be interpreted as meaning that, in order to determine whether it is necessary to carry out an appropriate assessment of the implications of a plan or project for a site, account may be taken of the features of that plan or project which involve the removal of contaminants and which therefore may have the effect of reducing the harmful effects of the plan or project on that site, where those features have been incorporated into that plan or project as standard features, inherent in such a plan or project, irrespective of any effect on the site.*

In relation to European sites, there will be no impacts capable of giving rise to any likely significant effects as a result of the Variation.

No mitigation is necessary or proposed for the protection of European sites.

8 In-combination effects

It is a requirement of Section 177U of the Planning Acts that, when considering whether a plan or project will have a significant effect on a European site, the assessment must take into account in-combination effects with other plans and projects. The assessment should consider plans and projects that are completed, approved but uncompleted, or proposed (but not yet approved)⁷. If there are identified effects arising from the plan or project, even if they are perceived as minor and not likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of a European site alone, then these effects must be considered in combination with the effects arising from other plans and projects.

The content of the Development Plan has been informed by SEA, AA and SFRA undertaken as parallel processes in tandem with each stage of the Development Plan, thereby ensuring full integration and consideration of environmental issues. Variation No. 1 is compatible and complementary with the strategies, policies and objectives of the Development Plan relating to compact growth, population distribution, settlement strategy, urban regeneration, mixed-use development and with environmental protection.

The proposed Variation No. 1 to the County Development Plan proposes amendments across 3 broad areas:

First, where modifications are warranted to give effect to the adoption of upcoming Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plans or Joint Urban Area Plans which will replace the respective Written Statements.

Second, to introduce flexibility in the permitting, delivery and distribution of housing set out in Chapter 2, the Core Strategy, where appropriate and in line with national and regional policy.

⁶<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:62021CC0721>

⁷ Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting European sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, 2001)

And third, for the consolidation / removal of duplication of objectives in Vol. No.2 of the Development Plan with those already in Chapter 2 of Vol. No.1 of the Plan.

No new land use zonings or changes to land use zonings are proposed and the proposed amendments are limited in nature and will not result in significant effects on the environment.

On the basis of objective information, it can be excluded that the implementation of the Variation No. 1, individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

9 Screening conclusion

Following review of the Variation No.1 against the Conservation Objectives of the relevant European sites, it is concluded that there is no possibility that the implementation of the Variation No.1 could result in any likely significant effects on European sites on its own or in combination with other plans and programmes. This conclusion was reached without considering or taking into account mitigation measures or measures intended to avoid or reduce any impact on European sites.

In view of best scientific knowledge therefore, this report concludes that the Variation No.1 to the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, individually or in combination with another plan or project, is not likely to have a significant effect on European sites under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) in light of their conservation objectives. The Variation does not require an Appropriate Assessment and the preparation of a Natura Impact Report.

10 References

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- DoEHLG (2010a). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities.
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- Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.
- European Commission (2021). Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites- Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
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- NPWS (2021). 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.
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- NPWS (2015). Boundary data – proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA). [Update date 01/11/2015].
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- OPR (2021). Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management.
- Wyse Jackson, M., FitzPatrick, Ú., Cole, E., Jebb, M., McFerran, D., Sheehy Skeffington, M. & Wright, M. (2016). Ireland Red List No. 10: Vascular Plants. Dublin Ireland: NPWS, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

⁸ Now Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).

Appendix I: Background

The European⁹ network is a Europe-wide network of ecologically important sites (SPAs and cSACs – also known as ‘European Sites’ or ‘Natura 2000 sites’) that have been designated for protection under either the EU Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds) or the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna).

The main aim of the Habitats Directive is “to contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats of wild fauna and flora in the European territory of the Member States to which the treaty applies”. Any actions taken must be designed to “maintain or restore, at a favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest”. Under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, an assessment is required where a plan or project may give rise to significant effects upon a European site.

In addition, it is a matter of law that candidate SACs (cSACs) and Sites of Community Importance (SCI) are considered in this process;

Article 6 (paragraphs (3) and (4)) of the Habitats Directive states that:

(3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

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

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

The requirements of the Habitats Directive are transposed into Irish law by means of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended)* (hereafter referred to as the *Birds and Habitats Regulations*) and by the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as amended.

In Ireland, the statutory agency responsible for the designated areas is NPWS.

Stages in the assessment

European Commission guidance (2001)¹⁰ sets out the principles on how to undertake decision making in applying the Habitats Directive. The requirements of the Habitats Directive comprise four distinct stages:

⁹ The EU Habitats Directive, Article 3.1, states “A Coherent European ecological network of Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas pursuant to Directive 79/409/EEC shall be set up under the title European”

¹⁰ European Commission (2001) *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting European Sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6 (3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*

Stage 1: Screening is the process which initially identifies the likely significant effects upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts may be significant. It is important to note that the burden of evidence is to show, on the basis of objective information, that there will be no significant effect; if the effect may be significant, or is not known, that would trigger the need for an Appropriate Assessment. There is European Court of Justice case law to the effect that unless the likelihood of a significant effect can be ruled out on the basis of objective information, then an Appropriate Assessment must be made.

Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment is the detailed 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 conservation objectives and its structure and function. This is to determine with scientific certainty whether or not there will be adverse effects on the integrity of the site in light of its conservation objectives. This stage also includes the development of mitigation measures to avoid or reduce any possible impacts.

Stage 3: Assessment of alternative solutions is the process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that would avoid impacts on the integrity of the European site, should avoidance or mitigation measures be unable to cancel out adverse effects.

Stage 4: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain. At Stage 4 an assessment is made with regard to whether or not the development is necessary for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) and, if so, of the compensatory measures needed to maintain the overall coherence of the European network.

Conservation Objectives of European sites

The conservation objectives for a European Site are intended to represent the aims of the Habitats and Birds Directives in relation to that site. To this end, habitats and species of European Community importance should be maintained or restored to 'favourable conservation status' (FCS), as defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive below:

The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as 'favourable' when:

- Its natural range and the 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;
- Conservation status of typical species is favourable as defined in Article 1(i).

The conservation status of a species will be taken as favourable 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;
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Guidance from the European Commission¹¹ indicates that the Habitats Directive intends FCS to be applied at the level of an individual site, as well as to habitats and species across their European range. Therefore, in

¹¹ Managing European sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. (European Commission 2000)

order to properly express the aims of the Habitats Directive for an individual site, the conservation objectives for a site are essentially to maintain (or restore) the habitats and species of the site at (or to) FCS.

The European Commission guidance recommends that screening should fulfil the following steps:

1. Determine whether the plan (or policy) is directly connected with or necessary for the management of European sites;
2. Describe the plan and describe and characterise any other plans or projects which, in combination, have the potential for having significant effects on European sites;
3. Identify the potential effects on European sites;
4. Assess the likely significance of any effects on European sites.

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