

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

FOR
PROPOSED VARIATION No. 1
TO THE
LOUTH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015-2021

for: Louth County Council

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Section 1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction and Legislative Requirements

This is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report for Proposed Variation No. 1 to the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021.

SEA is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme, or variation to a plan or programme, before a decision is made to adopt it. The SEA Directive¹ requires, inter alia, that SEA is undertaken for certain plans and programmes. Screening is the process for deciding whether a particular plan, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant SEA.

Under Article 7 (13K) of the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 436 of 2004) as amended by the Planning and Development (SEA) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 201 of 2011), Louth County Council is required to determine whether any Proposed Variation needs to be subject to SEA. Screening is the process for determining whether a particular plan - or variation to a plan -, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant SEA.

The purpose of this report is to inform whether or not to undertake SEA on Proposed Variation No. 1. This report should be read in conjunction with the documents cited within, including the Proposed Variation and the AA Screening Report.

1.2 Purpose of Proposed Variation No. 1

The Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021 provides for development within County Louth. Proposed Variation No. 1 provides further detail on the type of development that would be considered under the category of "Economic Business Zone at Carrickcarnon" that is provided for by the County Plan under Development Zone No. 5 and associated Policy RD 39.

1.3 Consultations

As part of the screening process, environmental authorities² were notified that a submission or observation in relation to whether or not implementation of Proposed Variation No. 1 would be likely to have significant effects on the environment may be made to the Council. One submission was received from the Environmental Protection Agency. The issues raised in the submission are presented and responded to in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Submission from the Environmental Protection Agency

No.	Issue Raised in Submission	Response
1	<p>We acknowledge your notice, dated 10th December 2018, in relation to the Proposed Variation to the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021 ('the Variation') and associated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening.</p> <p>The EPA is one of five statutory environmental authorities under the SEA Regulations. In our role as an SEA environmental authority, we focus on promoting the full and transparent integration of the findings of the Environmental Assessment into the Plan and advocating that the key environmental challenges for Ireland are addressed as relevant and appropriate to the plan. Our functions as an SEA environmental authority</p>	<p>Noted. The EPA's online resources have been considered in the preparation of this report.</p>

¹ Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers, of 27th June 2001, on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment

² The following environmental authorities were notified: Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Meath County Council and Monaghan County Council.

No.	Issue Raised in Submission	Response
	<p>do not include approving or enforcing SEAs or plans.</p> <p>As a priority, we focus our efforts on reviewing and commenting on key sector plans. For land use plans at county and local level, we provide a 'self-service approach' via our guidance document 'SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans – EPA Recommendations and Resources'. This document is updated regularly and sets out our key recommendations for integrating environmental considerations into Local Authority land use plans. In finalising your SEA screening determination, we suggest that you take this guidance document into account and incorporate the relevant recommendations as relevant and appropriate to the Plan.</p>	
2	<p>Proposed SEA Determination Louth County Council should determine whether implementing the Variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.</p> <p>We refer you to Schedule 2A of the SEA Regulations (S.I. No. 436 of 2004 as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011) which sets out the '<i>Criteria for determining whether a Plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment</i>'; to use to determine whether the Variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.</p>	Louth County Council are making a determination, taking into account Schedule 2A, as to whether Proposed Variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.
3	<p>Sustainable Development In proposing and in implementing the Variation, Louth County Council should ensure that the Variation is consistent with the need for proper planning and sustainable development. Adequate and appropriate critical service infrastructure should be in place, or required to be put in place, to service any development proposed and authorised during the lifetime of the Variation.</p> <p>In considering the Variation, Louth County Council should take into account the need to align with national commitments on climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as incorporating any relevant recommendations in sectoral, regional and local climate adaptation plans.</p> <p>Louth County Council should also ensure that the Variation is consistent with key relevant higher level plans and programmes.</p>	The Variation is consistent with the need for proper planning and sustainable development and is consistent with key relevant higher level plans and programmes. Provisions have already been integrated into the existing Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021 that address infrastructure and issues relating to climate adaptation and mitigation.
4	<p>Available Guidance & Resources Our website contains SEA resources and guidance, including: - SEA process guidance and checklists - list of relevant spatial datasets - topic specific SEA guidance, such as how to integrate climate change into SEA.</p> <p>You can access these resources at: http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/</p> <p><i>EPA SEA Search and Reporting Tool</i> This tool allows public authorities to explore, interrogate and produce high level environmental summary reports. It is intended to assist in screening and scoping exercises. The tool is available through EDEN www.edenireland.ie</p> <p><i>EPA WFD Application</i> Our WFD Application provides access to water quality and catchment data from the national WFD monitoring programme. The Application is accessed through EDEN https://wfd.edenireland.ie/ and is available to public agencies. Publicly available data can be accessed via the www.catchments.ie website.</p>	The EPA's online resources have been considered in the preparation of this report.
5	<p>Future amendments to the Variation Where changes to the Plan are made prior to finalisation, or where modifications to the Plan are proposed following its adoption, these should be screened for potential for likely significant effects in accordance with the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the SEA Regulations (S.I. No. 436 of 2004)</p>	Any proposed changes to the Variation will be screened for potential for likely significant effects in accordance with the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the SEA Regulations (S.I. No. 436 of 2004).
6	<p>Appropriate Assessment You should ensure that the Variation complies with the requirements of the Habitats Directive where relevant. Where Appropriate Assessment is required, the key findings and recommendations should be incorporated into the SEA and the Variation.</p>	Screening for Appropriate Assessment is being undertaken and key findings have been incorporated into the SEA (see Section 2.2).
7	<p>Environmental Authorities Under the SEA Regulations, you should also consult with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government • Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, where it appears that the plan or programme, or modification of the plan or programme, might have significant effects on fisheries or the marine environment • where it appears to the competent authority that the plan or programme, or amendment to a plan or programme, might have significant effects in relation to the architectural or archaeological heritage or to nature conservation, the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and • any adjoining planning authority whose area is contiguous to the area of a planning authority which prepared a draft plan, proposed variation or local area plan. 	The cited environmental authorities have been consulted with in the preparation of this screening.
8	<p>As soon as practicable after making your determination as to whether SEA is required or not, you should make a copy of your decision, including, as appropriate, the reasons for not requiring an environmental assessment, available for public inspection in your offices and on your website. You should also send a copy of your determination to the relevant environmental authorities consulted.</p>	A copy of the Council's determination and associated SEA Screening Report will be circulated to environmental authorities and made available for public inspection in the Council's offices and on the Council's website.

Section 2 SEA Screening

2.1 Introduction

The section examines whether Proposed Variation No. 1 would be likely to have significant environmental effects (and thus would warrant the undertaking of SEA).

This examination takes account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A '*Criteria for determining whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment*' of the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations, as amended, (see Section 2.5).

2.2 Appropriate Assessment

AA is an impact assessment process concerning *Natura 2000*, or *European*, sites - these sites have been designated or proposed for designation by virtue of their ecological importance. The Habitats Directive³, its transposing Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) provide the requirement to screen for effects on European Sites. If the effects are deemed to be *significant, potentially significant or uncertain* then Stage 2 AA must be undertaken.

The Proposed Variation is being subject to a screening process in order to establish whether or not Stage 2 AA must be undertaken. The current findings of the AA screening are that the Variation does not introduce any additional sources for effects to ecological processes. As there are no additional sources for effects that were not already considered by the Stage 2 AA for the County Development Plan 2015-2021, no further assessment is required.

2.3 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

The zoning of the lands that are subject to the Proposed Variation was considered as part of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) that was undertaken to assess and inform the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021. The SFRA found that the Plan, including the Economic Business Zone at Carrickcarnon, complies with "The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (DEHLG/OPW, 2009). The relatively minor nature of the Proposed Variation would not change the findings of the SFRA and the Variation has been found to be compliant with the Flood Guidelines.

2.4 SEA Screening Analysis

The analysis of the Proposed Variation is undertaken with reference to the main interactions with Strategic Environmental Objectives⁴ (SEOs). SEOs are taken from the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021 SEA and are detailed in full at Table 2.1. The range of interactions identified with symbols are detailed on Table 2.2.

Using the SEO codes (Table 2.1) and interaction symbols (Table 2.2), Table 2.3 examines whether each relevant part of the Proposed Variation would be likely to have significant environmental effects (and thus would warrant the undertaking of SEA).

³ Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

⁴ Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are methodological measures developed from policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or Member State level and are used as standards against which the provisions of the Proposed Variation can be considered in order to help identify whether any provisions would be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

Table 2.3 is supplemented by Table 2.4 which identifies measures in force under the existing County Development Plan that any proposals at the site subject to the Proposed Variation will be required to comply with.

Effects considered encompass the full range of effects⁵.

The examination takes account relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A '*Criteria for determining whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment*' of the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations, as amended, (see Section 2.5).

⁵ These include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

Table 2.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives

Environmental Component	SEO Code	SEO
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	B1	Conserve protected habitats and species
	B2	Protect Natura 2000 sites in the planning process using the Habitats Directive Article 6 assessment methodology
	B3	Conserve the diversity of habitats and species in non-designated sites
Population and Human Health	P1	Facilitate a high level of living for County Louth's population by ensuring high quality residential, recreational and working environments and sustainable travel patterns
	P2	Protect human health by adhering to the County Emergency Plan
Soil	S1	Maximise the sustainable reuse of brownfield sites and maximise the use of the existing built environment
Water		Prevent any deterioration in the status of any water and to achieve at least "good status" in all waters by 2015
	SW1	Surface Water
	GW1	Ground water
	DW1	Drinking Water
	WS1	Water Supply
	F1	Flooding
Material Assets		Maximise the use of existing infrastructure and plan for future needs
	MA1	Transportation
	MA2	Waste Management
	MA3	Wastewater infrastructure
Air and Climatic Factors	AC1	Minimise greenhouse gas emissions in line with the National standards and targets
	AC2	Improve ambient air quality
Cultural Heritage	CH1	Promote best practice in archaeology and heritage conservation and management
Landscape	L1	Designate and protect views and prospects within the study area as detailed in the main body of the Plan

Table 2.2 Main Interactions and associated Symbols

Symbol	Main Interactions Identified
+	Potential beneficial environmental effects are present already and would be further contributed towards.
-	Potentially adverse environmental effects are present already, would be further contributed towards and would be mitigated so as not to be significant ⁶ .
+/-	Potential environmental effects either: are beneficial, present already and would be further contributed towards; or are potentially adverse, present already, would be further contributed towards and would be mitigated so as not to be significant ⁷ .
0	No significant interaction.
*	Please also refer to Section 2.2.
#	Please also refer to Section 2.3.

⁶ Including by the measures identified on Table 2.4.

⁷ Including by the measures identified on Table 2.4.

Table 2.3 SEA Screening Analysis

Description of Proposed Variation	SEO Codes (see Table 2.2) for Main Interactions														SEA Screening Comments					
	B 1	B 2	B 3	P 1	P 2	S 1	S W1	G W1	D W1	WS 1	F 1	MA 1	MA 2	MA 3		A C 1	AC 2	CH 1	L 1	
<p>There are six Development Zones designated in rural areas within County Louth. The Strategic Objectives for these Development Zones are outlined on Table 3.2 in the current County Development Plan and are as follows:</p> <p>Zone 1 - To preserve and protect the natural unspoilt physical landscapes Zone 2 - To protect the scenic quality of the landscape and facilitate development required to sustain the existing rural community Zone 3 - To protect the recreational and amenity value of the coast. Zone 4 - To provide for a greenbelt area around the urban centres of Dundalk, Drogheda, and Ardee Zone 5 - To protect and provide for the development of agriculture and sustainable rural communities and to facilitate certain resource based and location specific developments of significant regional or national importance. Critical infrastructure projects of local, regional or national importance will also be considered within this zone. Zone 6 To preserve and protect the heritage and cultural landscape of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bru na Bóinne, the UNESCO (Tentative) World Heritage Site of Monasterboice and the Site of the Battle of the Boyne.</p> <p>Detailed policies are provided for each of the Development Zones and the Variation proposes to change part of one of the two policies (Policy RD 39) listed under Zone No. 5 in the current Plan. This change is shown below.</p> <p>Current Plan text that remains the same is shown in normal font, like this. Current Plan text that is proposed to be deleted is shown in red strikethrough, like this. Text that is proposed to be added is shown in green bold, like this.</p> <p>Policy RD 39 To consider developments falling within the following categories; limited one-off housing*, agricultural developments, extensions to existing authorised uses and farms, appropriate farm diversification projects; developments to be used for leisure, recreation and tourism; holiday accommodation including cottages and lodges where these are part of an existing or proposed integrated tourism complex; hotels/ guest houses / B & B's (only where the proposal involves the re-use or diversification of an existing building); extensions to existing authorised commercial and industrial developments; renewable energy schemes, public utility infrastructure, certain resource based and location specific developments of significant regional or national importance, critical infrastructure projects, nursing homes/analogous services, ** and Economic Business Zone at Carrickcarnon*** (for small scale commercial development including off line Motorway Services area, truck stop, service, repair and parking area and associated ancillary infrastructure to include motel/hotel, ancillary retail shop and dining facility, light industrial, storage and logistics facilities, retail warehousing (bulky goods only) and motor sales. To ensure co-ordinated and integrated development, this area will be subject to the preparation of a Masterplan for the written agreement of the Planning Authority, linked to leisure, recreation and tourism, agricultural diversification and extensions to authorised developments).</p> <p>* Refer to Section 2.19.1 for Qualifying Criteria ** In the location identified by red dot on Map 3.1 'Development Zones' *** In the location identified by light blue dot on Map 3.1 'Development Zones'</p>	-	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	#	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<p>The Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021 provides for development within County Louth. There are six Development Zones designated in rural areas within County Louth and the Proposed Variation would not change the extent of lands included within any of these Development Zones.</p> <p>The Proposed Variation would provide further detail on the type of development that could be considered under the "Economic Business Zone at Carrickcarnon". This zone is already provided for by the County Plan under Development Zone No. 5 and associated Policy RD 39. The County Plan already provides for "small scale commercial development" at this zone. The Proposed Variation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removes the reference to "small scale commercial development" being linked to "leisure, recreation and tourism, agricultural diversification and extensions to authorised developments"; Adds a number of examples of small scale commercial developments, including "off line Motorway Services area, truck stop, service, repair and parking area"; Adds reference to "associated ancillary infrastructure"; and Adds a commitment that "this area will be subject to the preparation of a Masterplan for the written agreement of the Planning Authority". <p>Potential adverse effects that could arise as a result of developing these lands include those detailed on Table 2.4.</p> <p>The preparation of a Masterplan for these lands would have to be subject to its own environmental assessment/screening processes, as relevant.</p> <p>Any future development of these lands would have to be subject to the various provisions of the existing Plan that relate to sustainable development and the protection and management of the environment – see Table 2.4. Considering these mitigating provisions together with the relatively minor change to what is already provided by the Plan – and considered by the SEA for the Plan – and the small extent of lands involved, residual adverse effects occurring would not be significant. The Proposed Variation would not provide positive environmental effects beyond those already provided for by the County Development Plan.</p> <p>Taking into account all of the above, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects. Consequently SEA is not required.</p>

Table 2.4 Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated, and Environmental Requirements/Mitigation Measures

Environmental Component	Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated, of developing the lands that are subject to the Variation ⁸	Environmental Requirements/Mitigation Measures from the existing Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021, including
Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna	<p>Arising from both construction and operation of development and associated infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna; • Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and • Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species. 	<p>Please also refer to the relevant measures under the environmental components of Water and Landscape.</p> <p>HER 2 To promote and implement the objectives of the Draft Louth Biodiversity Action Plan 2014-2018 and any Louth Biodiversity Action Plan subsequently adopted during the lifetime of this Plan.</p> <p>HER 3 To ensure that all proposed developments comply with the DECLG "Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities 2010"</p> <p>HER 4 The Local Authority will ensure that a screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) on all plans and projects and or Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (NIS/NIR) where appropriate, is undertaken to make a determination. Natura 2000 sites located outside of the County but within 15 km of the proposed development site should also be included in such screenings. All screening assessments submitted to the planning authority shall include a written statement indicating control methods proposed to prevent the spread of invasive species onto a Natura 2000 site.</p> <p>HER 5 Any plans or projects that would have a significant adverse impact (either individually or in combination with other plans and projects) upon the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site will not be permitted.</p> <p>HER 6 To co-operate with the Regional Planning Authority and adjoining local authorities, public agencies and community interests to protect regionally significant heritage assets, environmental quality and to identify threats to existing environmental quality in a transboundary context throughout the region.</p> <p>HER 7 To resist any development that would result in a significant deterioration of habitats or a disturbance of species in the pNHA.</p> <p>HER 13 To protect trees and woodlands of special amenity value and to review and where appropriate make a Tree Preservation Order(s), in relation to trees of special amenity value (including those identified as Possible Tree Preservation Orders in the Level 3 Settlements) or any other tree(s) of amenity value where the planning authority considers such trees to be at risk.</p> <p>HER 14 To investigate the feasibility of carrying out a survey of all trees of special amenity value within the county.</p> <p>HER 15 To require an assessment of the implications of any proposed development on significant trees and hedgerows and streams located on lands that are being considered for development. Survey and protection procedures detailed in Appendix 16 will be required by the council.</p> <p>HER 16 Where in exceptional circumstances, trees and or hedgerows are required to be removed in order to facilitate development, there shall be a requirement that each tree felled is replaced at a ratio of 10:1 and each hedgerow removed is to be replaced with native species where feasible.</p> <p>HER 17 To increase native tree coverage in the County by promoting the planting of suitable trees along public roads, residential streets, parks and other areas of open space.</p> <p>HER 18 To promote such initiatives as private and community driven tree planting schemes.</p> <p>HER 19 To investigate during the lifetime of the Plan the addition of Trees & Woodlands of Special Amenity Value and where appropriate to include in Table 5.8 and Map 5.10 Green Infrastructure Policies⁹</p> <p>ENV 27 Development sites must be investigated for the presence of invasive alien species, which if present must be treated and/or eradicated in accordance with best practice.</p>
Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential interactions if effects upon environmental vectors such as water and air are not mitigated. 	<p>Please also refer to the relevant measures under the environmental components of Soil, Water and Air and Climatic Factors.</p> <p>ENV 6 To implement the Louth County Council Noise Action Plan 2013-2018 in order to avoid, prevent and reduce the harmful effects, including annoyance, due to environmental noise exposure.</p> <p>ENV 7 To require that where new development is proposed within the limits of the noise maps for the designated sections of roads in the County, appropriate mitigation measures are undertaken so as to prevent harmful effects from environmental noise.</p> <p>ENV 8 To ensure that all external lighting whether free standing or attached to a building shall be designed and constructed so as not to cause excessive light spillage, glare, or dazzle motorists, and thereby limiting light pollution into the surrounding environment and protecting the amenities of nearby properties, traffic and wildlife.</p> <p>ENV 9 Details of on-site lighting associated with all future development shall be submitted to and agreed with the planning authority</p> <p>ENV 24 To comply with the SEVESO II Directive in reducing the risk and limiting the potential consequences of major industrial accidents.</p> <p>ENV 25 To ensure that land use policies take account of the need to maintain appropriate distance between future major accident hazard establishments and residential areas, areas of</p>

⁸ The Proposed Variation would provide further detail on the type of development that could be considered under the "Economic Business Zone at Carrickcarnon". This zone is already provided for by the County Plan under Development Zone No. 5 and associated Policy RD 39.

⁹ Including HER 65 To support the green infrastructure network of County Louth. To implement the green infrastructure network in any assessment of development proposals to prevent adverse impact on the ecological connectivity of County Louth's core areas. HER 66 To require the use of the green infrastructure network as a supplementary guide for the protection and conservation of the Natura 2000 sites in County Louth. HER 69 A minimum of 20m wide riparian corridor shall be kept free from development (except for pathways) along the side of each bank of the river for the purposes of habitat protection, maintenance access requirements, flood alleviation and recreational requirements. Any proposed path should be located a minimum of 6m from the top of the river edge. All proposed coastal walkways will be required to comply with the Habitats, EIA and SEA Directives. HER 70 Identified stone walls shall be incorporated into the overall development proposals. Where it is not feasible to retain the existing walls at the existing location, proposals submitted shall illustrate the removal and rebuild of the wall at a separate location. HER 72 To require future development proposals to integrate into the overall design any important biodiversity features including those listed in Table 16 (Green Infrastructure Strategy, Appendix 14, Volume 2(b)) into the overall design. HER 73 To require development proposals to include native planting schemes in landscaped areas and open spaces. HER 74 To require the integration of Green Infrastructure in all areas of public space. HER 75 To require the integration of climate change mitigation measures in any future spatial plans and climate change adaptation measures in proposed developments.

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Environmental Component	Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated, of developing the lands that are subject to the Variation ⁸	Environmental Requirements/Mitigation Measures from the existing Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021, including
		substantial public use and of particular natural sensitivity or interest. ENV 26 To have regard to the advice of the HSA when proposals for a new SEVESO site, modifications to an existing SEVESO site or when proposals for development within the consultation zone of a SEVESO site are being considered (including and as detailed in Table 8.2).
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damage to the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource. 	<p>Please also refer to the relevant measures under the environmental component of Population and Human Health and Water.</p> <p>HER 8 To promote the designation of qualifying sites of geological interest listed in Table 5.4 as Natural Heritage Areas and the remaining sites as County Geological Sites. HER 9 To protect and promote awareness, where appropriate, of areas of geological interest, including the provision of access and interpretation where desirable and feasible. ENV 28 To implement the provisions of the Derelict Sites Act, 1990 in respect of derelict and obsolete areas and to implement the provisions of the Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act, 1964 in respect of dangerous structures and places.</p>
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverse impacts upon the status of water bodies arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology. • Increase in the risk of flooding. 	<p>Please also refer to the relevant measures under the environmental components of Population and Human Health, Soil, Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna.</p> <p>Green Infrastructure Policies (detailed at Environmental Component of "Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna" above).</p> <p>WS 10 To ensure that the incorporation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) measures in all developments is mandatory. An integrated approach to drainage will be adopted and all development proposals shall be accompanied by a comprehensive SuDS assessment which will address run-off quantity, run-off quality and impacts on habitat and water quality. Best practice guidance is available from the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study and development proposals will be required to meet with design criteria (adjusted to reflect local conditions) and material designs therein.</p> <p>WS 11 To ensure that all discharges shall be attenuated to green field levels whereby both flow rate and volume of discharge of runoff from developments to receiving waters shall mimic in so far as possible pre-development levels.</p> <p>WS 12 To ensure that when Master Plans are being prepared that sustainable drainage will be adequately addressed. Master plans will identify appropriate aerial features for example ponds and basins based within the overall plan area that can provide both amenity and surface water management facilities for the full area rather than a large collection of small development based units.</p> <p>WS 13 To ensure that all new development shall incorporate appropriate measures to protect existing water bodies through appropriate treatment of runoff. In particular discharges from car parks shall be appropriately treated so as to remove pollutant materials.</p> <p>WS 14 To ensure that all new developments shall be provided with separated drainage systems.</p> <p>ENV 10 To protect the good status classification of identified bathing water areas within County Louth.</p> <p>ENV 11 To implement the recommendations contained in the River Basin District Management Plans for the Neagh Bann and the Eastern River Basin Districts, in so far as they relate to County Louth or any subsequent RBDMPs subsequently adopted during the lifetime of the Plan.</p> <p>ENV 12 To increase awareness through educational and other means so as to inform the public of the need and importance of maintaining the highest possible water quality standards.</p> <p>ENV 13 To implement the recommendations contained in any Groundwater Protection Scheme prepared under EU Ground Water Directives and to protect ground water resources in County Louth nutrient sensitive areas and the designated shellfish growing areas within Carlingford Lough and Dundalk Bay.</p> <p>ENV 14 To protect fisheries in all rivers in the County, where appropriate, including relevant species as contained in Annex II of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>ENV 15 To ensure compliance with and to implement the provisions of the Nitrates Directive in so far as it falls within the remit of the Council to do so.</p> <p>ENV 16 To require that collection and storage facilities for farm animal slurry are provided in accordance with the requirements of the Nitrate Directive.</p> <p>ENV 31 Development plans and local area plans should be consistent with the planning system and Flood Risk Management Guidelines – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009, and adopt strategic, integrated, sustainable and proactive approach to catchment management to avoid and reduce flood risk within the region, managing the risk from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tidal effects around estuaries and along the coast including the implications of the latest predictions for sea level rise; • fluvial flooding along river corridors and other significant watercourses resulting from catchments within and beyond the Region and other sources of flooding; and • pluvial flooding resulting from surface water runoff and capacity constraints in surface water drainage systems. <p>ENV 32 Where new or upgraded flood/coastal defences are shown to be essential to protect existing development, all such proposals shall be subject to the Floods and Habitats Directive and all other statutory requirements;</p> <p>ENV 33 New development should be avoided in areas at risk of flooding. However, it is recognised and acknowledged that the key urban settlements are at risk from coastal and fluvial flooding, but their continued growth and expansion can be facilitated through the careful expansion of the urban core and the implementation of appropriate land uses in areas at risk. New developments within a flood plain, will not only be at risk of flooding, but can add cumulatively to the risk of flooding elsewhere, and serve to undermine the flood plain's natural function of accommodating and attenuating flood flows. Accordingly, to minimise flood risk and help maintain their natural function it is essential to avoid development within flood plains wherever possible. However, where justification to permit development can be provided on sustainability and planning grounds, cognisance must be taken of outputs of CFRAM Studies in the provision comprehensive flood protection and management measures; which should be fully implemented in conjunction with any development in flood risk areas. Appropriate land uses should also be incorporated into those areas at risk.</p> <p>ENV 34 County development plans and local area plans shall include a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Existing and proposed zoning of lands for development in areas at risk of flooding should follow the sequential approach and justification test set out in the DECLG Guidance on Flood Risk Management. A flood plain may be defined as flood zone B, which defines the extent of a flood event with a 0.1% annual probability of exceedance as set out in the DECLG Flood Risk Management Guidelines, 2009.</p> <p>ENV 35 SUDS based drainage plans should be prepared in conjunction with local area plans to optimise flood/runoff management potential of the areas. Reducing the impact of existing and future development on flood risk can be achieved by adequately controlling runoff from new developments and associated areas, through employing Sustainable Drainage Systems,</p>

SEA Screening Report for Proposed Variation No. 1 to the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021

Environmental Component	Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated, of developing the lands that are subject to the Variation ⁹	Environmental Requirements/Mitigation Measures from the existing Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021, including
		<p>such that development impact is neutral or positive on flooding.</p> <p>ENV 36 Through flood plain protection and SUDS, local authorities should incorporate improvements in biodiversity and amenity for existing and proposed developments. Issues such as coastal squeeze and compensatory measures to mitigate impact of climate change on existing habitat sites should be considered. Appropriate SUDS planning will also address both water quality and amenity dimensions.</p> <p>ENV 37 Direct strategically significant growth to low risk areas. Strategically significant projects and infrastructure should, as a rule, be located in low risk areas.</p> <p>ENV 38 An evidence based approach should be adopted to the application of sequential approach and justification test in zoning of flood susceptible lands for development. This should be transparent and use objective criteria appropriate to proposed zoning transparency and objective criteria will ensure that zoning process optimizes economic, social and environmental value.</p> <p>ENV 39 Founded on the precautionary approach to dealing with flood risk, measures such as flood compensation storage works or new hard-engineered flood defences alone, will not be acceptable as justification for development in a flood plain. The provision of compensation storage or hard defences alone shall not be considered sufficient justification to permit a development. Such measures will only be considered as part of a proposal if development/zoning is warranted by justification test on planning and sustainability grounds in the first instance, and no alternative site is available</p> <p>ENV 40 Recognising the concept of coastal evolution and fluvial flooding as part of our dynamic physical environment, an adaptive approach to working with these natural processes shall be adopted. The focus of a flood management strategy should not solely be driven by conservation of existing lands. It should recognise that marshes, mud flats and other associated eco-systems evolve and degenerate and appropriate consideration should be given to the realignment of defences and use of managed retreat and sacrificial flood protection lands to maintain such habitats as part of an overall strategy.</p>
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment (water services infrastructure and capacity is needed to ensure the mitigation of potential conflicts)¹⁰. • Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development with adequate drinking water that is both wholesome and clean (water services infrastructure and capacity is needed to ensure the mitigation of potential conflicts). • Increases in waste levels. • Interactions between agricultural waste and soil, water, biodiversity and human health – including as a result of emissions of ammonia from agricultural activities (e.g. manure handling, storage and spreading) and the production of secondary inorganic particulate matter 	<p>WS 1 Louth County Council will work in co-operation with Irish Water in its new role as the lead authority for water services.</p> <p>WS 2 Louth County Council will liaise with and advice Irish Water in identifying, prioritising and progressing the implementation of water and wastewater projects throughout County Louth over the lifetime of the Plan.</p> <p>WS 3 Private Waste Water Treatment facilities other than single house systems will not be permitted except in the following limited circumstances. Consideration may be given to granting permission for private waste water/communal facilities in developments managed by suitable institutions.</p> <p>WS 4 To support the provision of high quality water and wastewater infrastructure for both existing and future developments within County Louth, consistent with the principles of sustainability, prioritising those centres where serious deficiencies are in evidence or where further sustainable development can be reasonably anticipated.</p> <p>WS 5 To support the extension or upgrading of existing water services infrastructure within the County (including those listed in the Irish Water Investment Programme) and the provision of water services infrastructure in un-serviced settlements to assist in the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.</p> <p>WS 6 To promote and support the development and proper management of Group Water Schemes subject to appropriate level of treatment being provided and suitable robust operational arrangements being put in place.</p> <p>WS 7 To prohibit the use of pump stations for conveyance of sewage unless the proposed pump station will cater for a significant catchment of zoned development lands that otherwise cannot be drained. Where deemed appropriate in consultation with Irish Water, temporary pumping arrangements may be considered as an interim measure, pending the provision of more permanent arrangements within a reasonable timeframe. All arrangements for same will be as per the requirements and agreement of Irish Water.</p> <p>WS 8 To support the commitment to water conservation and leakage reduction within County Louth in accordance with the Water Conservation Programme and in accordance with best practice in order to conserve valuable resources and by reducing wastage.</p> <p>WS 9 To support Irish Water in promoting public awareness of and involvement in water conservation measures by households, businesses and industries.</p> <p>ENV 17 To require that all permitted development taking place within an area served by a public wastewater treatment system connects to that system. ENV 18 To require that on lands identified for non-domestic development and where no public waste water facility exists or is proposed, that the wastewater be adequately treated and discharged to suitable receiving water, subject to a discharge licence. ENV 19 To require that private wastewater treatment systems for individual houses, where permitted, comply with the recommendations contained within the EPA Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems (2009) Serving Single Houses (population equivalent less than or equal to 10). ENV 20 To implement the requirements of the Groundwater Protection Scheme to protect known and potential ground water reserves.</p> <p>ENV 21 To require that proper supervision, installation and commissioning of on site wastewater treatment system by requiring site characterisation procedures and geotechnical assessments, be carried out by competent professionally indemnified and suitably qualified persons.</p> <p>ENV 22 To require that the construction and installation of all wastewater treatment systems are supervised and certified by a suitably qualified competent person as fit for the intended purpose and complies with the Council's requirements.</p> <p>ENV 23 To implement and support the provisions of the Eastern-Midlands Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021</p>
Air and Climatic Factors/ Sustainable mobility and associated effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emissions to air including greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions. 	<p>Please also refer to the relevant measures under the environmental component of Water and Population and Human Health.</p> <p>Various sustainable mobility provisions within Chapter 7 Transport.</p> <p>Green Infrastructure Policies (detailed at Environmental Component of "Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna" above).</p>

¹⁰ Irish Water is responsible for strategic water services.
CAAS for Louth County Council

SEA Screening Report for Proposed Variation No. 1 to the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021

Environmental Component	Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated, of developing the lands that are subject to the Variation ⁸	Environmental Requirements/Mitigation Measures from the existing Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021, including
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture arising from construction and operation activities. 	<p>HER 20 To protect archaeological sites and monuments, underwater archaeology, and archaeological objects, which are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), and to seek their preservation in situ (or at a minimum, preservation by record) through the planning process.</p> <p>HER 21 To ensure that any development, both above and below ground, adjacent to or in the immediate vicinity of a recorded monument or an area of special archaeological interest (including formerly walled towns) shall not be detrimental to the character of the archaeological site or its setting and be sited and designed with care to protect the monument and its setting. Where upstanding remains exist, a visual impact assessment may be required.</p> <p>HER 22 Within areas of special archaeological Interest and other sites of archaeological potential (including formerly walled towns), as listed in the RMP, the Council will require applicants to include an assessment of the likely archaeological potential as part of the planning application and may require that an on-site assessment is carried out by trial work prior to a decision on a planning application being taken.</p> <p>HER 34 The form and structural integrity of the protected structure and its setting shall be retained and the relationship between the protected structure, its curtilage and any complex of adjoining buildings, designed landscape features, designed views or vistas from or to the structure shall be protected.</p> <p>HER 35 To prohibit inappropriate development within the curtilage and/or attendant grounds of a protected structure. Any proposed development within the curtilage and/or attendant grounds must demonstrate that it is part of an overall strategy for the future conservation of the entire complex including the structures, demesne and/or attendant grounds.</p>
Landscape /Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occurrence of adverse visual impacts and conflicts with the appropriate protection of designations relating to the landscape 	<p>HER 10 To afford protection to the landscapes and natural environments of the County, by permitting only those forms of development that are considered sustainable and do not unduly damage or take from the character of the landscape or natural environment.</p> <p>HER 11 To co-operate with adjoining local authorities, both north and south of the border, to ensure that the environment is maintained in a sustainable manner and to support the co-ordinated designation of sensitive landscapes and policy approaches with adjoining areas and on all aspects of environmental protection, particularly where transboundary environmental vulnerabilities are identified.</p> <p>HER 12 To consider the designation of Landscape Conservation Areas to protect specific important landscapes.</p>

2.5 Schedule 2A

PART 1

1. *The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: 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*

Proposed Variation No. 1 would contribute towards the already existing framework for future development consent of projects under the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021, which provides for development within County Louth. The Variation, when made, will be one relatively minor part of this wider framework.

There are six Development Zones designated in rural areas within County Louth under the existing Plan and the Proposed Variation would not change the extent of lands included within any of these Development Zones. The Proposed Variation would provide further detail on the type of development that could be considered under the "Economic Business Zone at Carrickcannon". This zone is already provided for by the County Plan under Development Zone No. 5 and associated Policy RD 39. The County Plan already provides for "*small scale commercial development*" at this zone. Potential adverse effects that could arise as a result of developing these lands include those detailed on Table 2.4.

Any future development of the lands that are subject to the Variation would have to comply with the various provisions of the existing Plan that relate to sustainable development and the protection and management of the environment – see Table 2.4. Considering these mitigating provisions together with the relatively minor change to what is already provided by the Plan – and considered by the SEA for the Plan – and the small extent of lands involved, residual adverse effects occurring would not be significant. The Proposed Variation would not provide positive environmental effects beyond those already provided for by the County Development Plan.

Taking the above and the other SEA commentary provided under Section 2.4 into account, arising from the degree to which the Proposed Variation to the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021 sets a framework for projects and other activities, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

2. *The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: the degree to which the plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy*

The Variation is proposed to the existing Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021. The County Development Plan is influenced by higher-level legislation, plans and programmes and influences lower-tier plans including Local Area Plans. Any future development of the lands that are subject to the Variation would have to comply with the various provisions of the existing Plan that relate to sustainable development and the protection and management of the environment – see Table 2.4.

Taking the above and the other SEA commentary provided under Section 2.4 into account, arising from the degree to which the Proposed Variation and the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021 influence other plans, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

3. The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: the relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development

The existing Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021 - to which the Variation relates - has undergone SEA. This process integrated environmental considerations into the existing Plan and found that the Plan contributes to environmental protection and management and sustainable development.

Taking the above and the other SEA commentary provided under Section 2.4 into account, arising from the relevance of the Proposed Variation and the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021 for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

4. The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme

Environmental problems arise where there is a conflict between current environmental conditions and legislative targets.

Through its provisions relating to environmental protection and management, the existing Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021 contributes towards ensuring that environmental conditions do not get worse and, where possible, it contributes towards its amelioration.

Taking the above and the other SEA commentary provided under Section 2.4 into account, arising from environmental problems relevant to the Variation and associated Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

5. The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: the relevance of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)

The Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021 to which Proposed Variation No. 1 relates includes various provisions that would contribute towards the implementation of European legislation on the environment. Some of these provisions are provided within Table 2.4. The Proposed Variation does not add to or amend these provisions and would not affect compliance with this legislation.

Taking the above and the other SEA commentary provided under Section 2.4 into account, arising from relevance of Proposed Variation No. 1 and associated Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021, for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

PART 2

1. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects

The Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.4).

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the cumulative nature of the effects

The Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the various parts of the Plan provided under Section 2.4).

3. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the transboundary nature of the effects

The Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the various parts of the Plan provided under Section 2.4).

4. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)

The Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the various parts of the Plan provided under Section 2.4).

5. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)

The Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the various parts of the Plan provided under Section 2.4).

6. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:

a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;

The Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the various parts of the Plan provided under Section 2.4).

b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values, and;

The Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the various parts of the Plan provided under Section 2.4).

c) intensive land-use.

The Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the various parts of the Plan provided under Section 2.4).

7. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status

The Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the various parts of the Plan provided under Section 2.4).

Section 3 Conclusion

Screening is the process for deciding whether a particular plan - or variation to a plan -, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant SEA. The purpose of the report is to provide the findings of the evaluation of the requirement for SEA to be undertaken on Proposed Variation No. 1 to the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021.

This SEA Screening Report has examined the Proposed Variation, including against relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A '*Criteria for determining whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment*' of the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 436 of 2004), as amended by the Planning and Development (SEA) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 201 of 2011).

The Proposed Variation would contribute towards the already existing framework for future development consent of projects under the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021, which provides for development within County Louth. The Variation, when made, will be one relatively minor part of this wider framework.

Any future development of the lands that are subject to the Variation would have to comply with the various provisions of the existing Plan that relate to sustainable development and the protection and management of the environment – see Table 2.4. Considering these mitigating provisions together with the relatively minor change to what is already provided by the Plan – and considered by the SEA for the Plan – and the small extent of lands involved, residual adverse effects occurring would not be significant. The Proposed Variation would not provide positive environmental effects beyond those already provided for by the County Development Plan.

Consequently, taking into account the findings of this screening exercise, SEA is not required to be undertaken on the Proposed Variation.

This SEA screening report of Proposed Variation No. 1 to the Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021 is referred to Louth County Council for SEA Screening Determination.