

Strategic Environmental Assessment Team  
Natural Environment Division  
Klondyke Building  
Gasworks Business Park  
Cromac Avenue  
Belfast  
BT7 2JA

[SEATeam@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:SEATeam@daera-ni.gov.uk)

Frank Pentony,  
Director of Services  
Louth County Council,  
Town Hall,  
Crowe Street,  
Dundalk,  
Co. Louth,  
A91 W20C

28<sup>th</sup> July 2021

**Re: Proposed Material alterations to the Draft Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027**

Dear Mr Pentony,

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) welcome the opportunity to comment on the Material Alterations to the draft Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 and accompanying environmental Reports (Strategic Environmental Assessment and Natura Impact Report-Appropriate Assessment). DAERA has considered the draft Development Plan and our opinion is set out below.

We are pleased to note that transboundary considerations continue to be included within the draft Development Plan and accompanying environmental reports. We are content that due consideration has been given to the natural and wider environment of Northern Ireland. We do not have any additional comments to make.

We are pleased to see that future development in the County Louth area will be conducted in a sustainable and sensitive manner.

Should you have any queries in regard to the content of our response we can be contacted at the above address.

Yours sincerely

Ms Donna Whelan  
Senior Scientific Officer  
NIEA, DAERA



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Director of Services  
Louth County Council,  
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**Re: Proposed Material alterations to the Draft Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027**

Dear Mr Pentony,

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Marine and Fisheries Division have provided me with additional comments to the Material Alterations to the draft Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 and accompanying environmental Reports. These comments will be in addition to the DAERA submission on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

**Teams within Marine and Fisheries Division Comments**

**DAERA Marine Plan Comments**

The Marine Plan Team welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed Material Alterations to the Environmental Report.

The Marine Plan Team previously commented on the Environmental Report in November 2020. Those comments remain unchanged by the proposed Material Alterations; however, we would ask that the maps provided in the Environmental Report be reconsidered in a transboundary context.

The area shaded on many of the maps gives the impression that transboundary considerations have been taken into account and that all parts of the shared marine waters have been assessed equally. However, the attributes of the shading in the northern parts of Carlingford Lough and adjoining sea area suggest that perhaps some relevant information has not been included.



In particular:

Figures 1.1 and 1.20 shows the Environmental Sensitivity on a scale of 0-100 but it can be seen that Carlingford Lough SPA (UK9020161) has been assessed as at least 20 points less sensitive than Carlingford Lough SPA (004078) and it is not clear why such a large difference should exist.

Figure 4.2 should perhaps include the Carlingford Lough Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI), Ramsar site and the proposed Marine Protected Area (MPA) in Rostrevor Bay.

Figure 4.6 should perhaps include the shellfish areas in Rostrevor Bay and Mill Bay.

The inclusion of shading for these maps for the Transboundary shared waters area is welcomed, however we would request that the information used be checked to ensure all relevant information for that sea area has been included.

### **DAERA Marine Conservation and Reporting Comments**

We welcome the inclusion of the UK Marine Policy statement within Appendix I but also suggest the inclusion of the draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland as this, along with the UK Marine Policy Statement documents provide the policy framework for both planning and marine licensing authorities in making their decisions.

I suggest under in the SEA Environmental Report under Section 4.6 Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna where reference is made to relevant ecological designations in Northern Ireland this should include Marine Conservation Zones. Under 4.6.2 European Sites, again for Northern Ireland this should include Carlingford Lough proposed marine extension SPA – any map showing the Carlingford Lough SPA should be amended to show the marine extension as well as Carlingford Lough MCZ.

Yours sincerely

p.p.

Michael Gillespie

Ms Donna Whelan  
Senior Scientific Officer  
NIEA, DAERA

