

# Louth County Council



## Noise Action Plan Summary

**2018-2023**



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## 1. Louth Local Authorities Summary of Noise Action plan:

### 1.1 General Geographical Description

County Louth has an area of 821 square kilometres and although it is the smallest county in Ireland in geographical terms, it is one of the most populated and urbanised outside of Dublin. This is due to the presence within its borders of two of the largest provincial towns in the country, Dundalk and Drogheda. It is located to the north east of Ireland, is bordered by counties Monaghan and Meath to the west and south respectively and Counties Armagh and Down to the north. The eastern boundary of the county comprises of the Irish Sea. The three main towns are Drogheda, Dundalk and Ardee. Drogheda and Dundalk rank sixth and seventh, respectively in terms of size within the state.

The 2016 Census of Population gives the population of the county at 128,884 compared with 122,897 in 2011. The three main towns in the county are Drogheda, Dundalk and Ardee. Drogheda and Dundalk have a population of 40,956, and 39,004 respectively and Ardee has a population of 4928 (as recorded in the 2016 Census of population).

The housing units in the county as a whole are predominantly single dwelling with multi unit development generally confined to the larger towns. Within the Action plan areas, single unit dwellings predominate, with the majority located in the towns of Drogheda and Dundalk. Residential development in these urban areas is at a much higher density relative to the rural areas which consists predominantly of once off rural housing.

Road	Description
R-173	Ballymascanlon roundabout Dundalk east to junction with R174
R-132	Bridge Street Linen Hall Street, Clanbrasil Street, Crowe Street, Francis Street, Park Street, Dublin Street, old Dublin road until Green gates Junction on Old Dublin Road Dundalk
R-108	Beamore Road Drogheda
R-152	Platin Road Drogheda
R-168	Mell Trinity Street Drogheda
R-132	Old Dublin road from Monasterboice junction with motorway and south through Drogheda until Meath border
R-934	Castletown Road Dundalk
R-171	Anne Street Dundalk
R-950	Junction between Clanbrasil Street-Bridge Street-Linenhall Street Dundalk
R-172	Jocelyn Street to Seatown Place and Avenue Road Dundalk
R-166	Newfoundwell Road Drogheda
R-178	Dominick Place until junction with Mount Avenue Dundalk
M1	Motorway through Co Louth from border at North to border with Meath
N51	Slane Rd from Roundabout on M1 Motorway until Meath border
N53	Castleblaney Road from Roundabout on M1 motorway to Armagh border
N2	Monaghan border going south through Ardee and Collon.
N33	Ardee link road to M1 motorway
N52	Ballymascanlon roundabout through R132 until roundabout on M1 junction Dundalk

The noise action plan for County Louth refers to road traffic noise only. The following list gives the roads that have exceeded the three million vehicles passages per year threshold: The traffic counts for the Regional roads in the county were carried out in 2016 using Metro counters Radar Recorders Loop counters and Manual counts. The AADT figure was calculated using the NRA Expansion Factors 2012 for Short Period Traffic counts. The majority of regional roads identified were in or within the vicinity of the two main towns in Louth (Dundalk and Drogheda) which was expected. Transport Infrastructure Ireland identified the National roads there were over the threshold. The extents of these routes are identified on the attached noise maps at Appendix D and on the Louth County Council website;

Table 2: Extents of roads over three million vehicle passages per year

## **2. The Responsible Authority**

The following is the contact details for the responsible authorities:

Louth County Council  
Town Hall  
Crowe Street  
Dundalk  
Co Louth  
A91 W20C

Telephone (042)9335457

Fax: (042)9353196

Email: [environment@louthcoco.ie](mailto:environment@louthcoco.ie)

Louth County Council is the lead authority in developing the Noise Action Plan.

## **3. Legal Context**

### **3.1 Roles and Responsibilities of Designated Bodies**

The Regulations designate the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as the national authority charged with overseeing the implementation of the Regulations – Article 5(1). As the designated national authority it is the responsibility of the EPA to report the results of the strategic noise mapping and action planning to the Commission. - Article 5(4). The EPA is required to submit summaries of the Action Plans to the EC no later than 18 January 2019. The EPA is also required to provide advice and guidance to the relevant noise mapping bodies and action planning authorities

### **3.2 Action planning Authorities**

Action Planning Authorities are responsible for making Action Plans following consultation with the EPA and the relevant noise mapping bodies. Action Plans must satisfy the minimum requirements as set out in the Fourth Schedule of the Regulations.

Action Planning Authorities produced Action Plans for the first and second round during 2008 and 2013. This is the third round of the Noise Action Plan commencing 2018. This will be carried out every five years

thereafter. Action Plans must be produced based on the results of the noise mapping. It is also required to review and revise the noise maps if necessary from time to time and whenever a major development occurs affecting the existing noise situation.

The Regulations require the Action Planning Authorities to consult the public when drawing up and revising Action Plans. – Article 11(6)

Under the Regulations (Art.7) the following organisations have been designated as action planning authorities:

For the agglomeration of Cork, Cork City and Cork County Councils.

For the agglomeration of Dublin, the four Dublin local authorities

For major railways, the local authority or local authorities within whose functional area or areas the railway is located.

For major roads, the local authority or local authorities within whose functional area or areas the road is located.

For major airports, the local authority or local authorities within whose functional area or areas the airport is located.

The EPA advise that Article 7 of the Regulations should be interpreted to mean “any local authority or local authorities within whose functional area or areas are affected by noise from the (road or railway or airport)” (Ref. EPA Draft Guidance Notes)

#### **4. Limits in Place Article 5**

##### **4.1 Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021**

The Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021 (LCDP) includes the Dundalk and Drogheda Development plans 2011-2017 which were both extended. It is a strategic objective of the LCDP to direct development in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy to provide for the sustainable development of the County for the period of 2015-2021 and beyond.

The preferred development strategy as stated in the LCDP is based *inter alia* on building strong urban centres while protecting the rural hinterlands and thus seeks to achieve the following:

- Critical mass in Dundalk and Drogheda, followed by the Level 2 and 3 centres
- Development of the 24 smaller rural settlements capable of providing local services with small rural enterprises
- Managing development in rural areas (focus on agricultural diversification/appropriate rural enterprise)
- Protecting the environment by implementing an environmental protection policy recognising the environmentally sensitive zones within the county
- The LCDP identified 6 Development Zones within the County. The purpose of the zones was to conserve and protect the amenities of rural areas and to promote development in a sustainable manner. They also assist in the operation of the development management function with regard to planning applications for development in rural areas. In exercising the development management role the Council has regard (*inter alia*) to the Strategic Objective for the Development Zone. Of note

in this instance is Development Zone 1, 2 and 6. The Strategic Objectives for each are as outlined below:

Development Zone 1: To preserve and protect the natural unspoilt physical landscapes (RD 31 and RD 32)

Development Zone 2: To protect the scenic quality of the landscape and facilitate development required to sustain existing rural community (RD 33 and RD 34)

Development Zone 6: To preserve and protect the heritage and cultural landscape of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bru na Boinne, the Tentative World Heritage Site of Monasterboice and the Site of the Battle of the Boyne. (RD 41 and RD 42)

### **Economic Development:**

The economic strategy seeks to focus development on strategic economic growth centres and support economic growth towns. The majority of economic growth will be focused on the two principle urban areas of Dundalk and Drogheda. There is recognition of considerable scope for economic opportunities in rural Louth and in this regard, the Level 2 centres of Ardee and Dunleer and to a lesser extent identified Level 3 centres are promoted. In this regard Policies EDE 9, EDE 10 and EDE 11 apply.

The importance of the provision of adequate and suitable landscaping and amenity in commercial and industrial development is recognised in the LCDP. Further, the provision of a buffer zone up to 15m in width will be required where industrial and other sensitive land uses adjoin, to ensure amenities of adjoining properties are not adversely affected. In this regard there should be no significant amenity loss (by way of noise, smell or other nuisance) to immediate neighbours or the area in general. Further, in relation to Nuisance generally, the LCDP requires that where conflict could arise in respect of commercial/industrial development and other users, the “Good Neighbour” principle shall be applied and the Louth County Council “Noise Action Plan 2013-2018”. Policy EDE 14 is applicable in relation to the above.

### **Transport:**

Motorway interchanges are strategic locations sought after by developers due to the desirability and benefits of having immediate access to the national primary road network. Uncontrolled and poorly regulated development at such locations can be problematic for a myriad of reasons including negative impact on rural environments. Thus in regulating development in a sustainable and appropriate manner, a policy has been included in the Plan which promotes and facilitates development at Urban Related Interchanges (Junctions 10, 16, 17 & 18), but which most importantly resists development at rural related motorway interchanges (junctions 12, 13, 14, 15, & 20).

Louth is fortunate in having an excellent road hierarchy including motorway, national, regional and local roads. Specifically in relation to the M1 and the potential for development in close proximity to same, Policy TC 8 has been included which states the following:

*Development proposals of a residential or other nature within 100mts of either the M1 motorway or the N1/A1 national route will be restricted in all but exceptional circumstances\*. Any development assessed under this policy will be subject to the provisions of Policy ENV 6 and ENV 7 of this Plan, the “Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities” 2012 and the costs of implementing and mitigation measures concerned should be borne by the developer.*

*\*Only where the proposed development is infill development and is located within an established building line.*

Policies ENV 6 and ENV 7 both of which are referenced in Policy TC 8 above are contained within Chapter 8 of the LCDP and are concerned specifically with Environmental Noise. In this regard policies ENV 6 & ENV 7 state the following:

*“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.*

*To require that where new development is proposed within the limit 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.”*

Notwithstanding the fact that the county boasts an excellent road network as referenced previously it also has a good network of local, regional and national bus routes in addition to a main line rail service. Sustainable transport modes are increasingly being promoted in the form of improved public transport services, improved cycling and walking facilities and infrastructure supporting the use of electric vehicles.

The Plan whilst recognising the dominance of the private car will nonetheless seek to promote alternative sustainable modes of transport. This is reflected in the settlement strategy whereby the majority of development is directed to the existing compact towns and other settlements. This is reflected in many of the policies contained in the Plan and include but are not limited to the following: TC 1, TC 3 and TC 5.

Cycling as an alternative mode of transport is encouraged and promoted which is evident in the applicable policies, including *inter alia*: TC14, TC22, TC23, TC24, TC25 and TC 28.

In relation to public transport, the Council will seek to promote the enhancement of public transport and infrastructure in towns, villages and the rural areas and to this end, policies TC 32, TC 33, TC 34, TC 36, TC 37 and TC 38 apply.

### **Conservation and Natural Environment:**

Strategic objectives contained in the Plan include *inter alia* for the protection of the environment of County Louth whilst ensuring the fulfilment of environmental responsibilities coupled with the protection of the County’s heritage and other amenities. To this end, there are a substantial number of policies contained within the plan which seek to realise these objectives including in relation to European Sites (SPA and SAC), Proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Landscape Character Assessment, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Areas of High Scenic Quality.

There are 11 European Sites in Louth which form part of the Natura 2000 network which are the prime wildlife conservation areas in the county considered to be of significant importance at Irish and European level. Policy HER 5 states that plans or projects that would have a significant adverse impact upon conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 sites will not be permitted. Regarding pNHA, Policy HER 7 states that development which would result in a significant deterioration of habitats or a disturbance of species in the pNHA will be resisted.

A Landscape Character Assessment was prepared for the County and herein 9 Landscape Character Areas were identified the classification of which was based on a matrix of factors including *inter alia*: tranquillity (relates to low levels of build environment, traffic, noise and where artificial lighting (public and

private) is at a minimum). In relation to Landscape Character Assessment, policies HER 10, HER 11 and HER 12 apply.

Louth contains 2 distinct areas designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty by reason of their unspoiled natural landscapes and spectacular scenic quality. These are located in the North of the County at Carlingford and Feede Mountains and in the south of the County at Clogherhead and Port Oriel. In relation to the former, much of the area remains in its natural state covered in gorse, bracken and heather parts of which are designated as SAC and pNHA. The latter although less rugged is of equal importance and both the areas are extremely sensitive environments and are therefore afforded a high degree of protection in the Plan. In this regard Policy HER 60 applies.

Concerning Areas of High Scenic Quality, there are 6 identified areas in the county and whilst not possessing the exceptional natural beauty of landscapes of outstanding natural beauty, they add to the stock of natural scenic landscapes within the county. Their protection is provided for under HER 61 of the LCDP.

#### **4.1.1 Dundalk & Environs Development plan 2009-2015 (extended)**

Provide a sustainable transportation system for Dundalk & Environs to secure the successful integration of land use and for the convenience of the public. (SO5)

Adopt a strategic approach to land use and transportation planning by prioritising development in areas where public transport facilities are available or can economically be provided and by encouraging higher density development in such areas. (TR3)

Require applicants for development likely to generate 500 plus vehicle trips per day to submit a mobility management plan. (TR6)

It is the policy of the council in co-operation with other agencies, bodies and developers, to implement an integrated pedestrian footpath and cycle path network throughout the plan area. (TR13)

Applications for economic development proposals will be assessed having regard to the following:

Noise impact assessment and the provision of mitigation measures, where appropriate

Provision of a buffer zone of up to 15m at the interface of the development and any adjoining areas

#### **4.1.2 Drogheda Development plan 2011-2017 (extended)**

Provide a sustainable transportation system for Drogheda and its environs to secure the successful integration of land use and for the convenience of the public (SO5)

Require applicants for any development likely to generate 500 plus vehicle trips per day to submit a Mobility Management plan. (TR6)

Adopt a strategic approach to land use and transportation planning by prioritising development in areas where public transport facilities are available or can economically be provided and by encouraging higher density development in such areas. (TR7)

It is the policy of the council in co-operation with other agencies, bodies and developers, to implement an integrated pedestrian footpath and cycle path network throughout the plan area.

Development Control

The following standard condition is generally applied to commercial and residential development over 5 units:

The equivalent continuous sound level ( $L_{eq}$ ) attributable to all on site operations associated with the development, outside of any inhabited house or building used for public assembly, in the vicinity of the site, shall not exceed 55dB(A) Leq (30minutes) over the period 08:00 hours to 20:00 hours, Monday to Friday and 08:00 hours to 16:00 hours on Saturday; and shall not exceed 45dB(A) Leq (30 minutes) at all other times. No pure tones or impulsive characteristics shall be audible outside of any inhabited house in the vicinity of the development

## 5. Summary of the Effects of Noise Mapping

### 5.1 Noise Maps

Noise maps for major roads in Co Louth are presented in Appendix D on the Draft Noise Action Plan and on the Louth County Council Website.

### 5.2 Summary Exposure Statistics for Action Planning Area

The following tables give estimated population exposed to traffic noise in each noise band for  $L_{den}$  and  $L_{night}$  within the County based on data obtained from the TII. Table 3a & b  $L_{den}$  and Table 4a and B  $L_{night}$ .

**Table 3a and 3b  $L_{den}$  exposure Limits**

<b>Table 3a <math>L_{den}</math></b>	
$L_{den}$	Population (estimate)
55-59	5440
60-64	2576
65-69	2862
70-74	2228
>75	56

<b>Table 3b <math>L_{den}</math></b>		
	No of dwellings per Contour (approx)	Approximate Area km <sup>2</sup>
> 55	5584	76
> 65	2449	17
> 75	30	3

**Table 4a and 4b**  $L_{night}$  exposure limits

<b>Table 4a</b> $L_{night}$	
$L_{night}$	Population (estimate)
50-54	2913
55-59	2867
60-64	2572
65-70	65
>70	0

<b>Table 4b</b> $L_{night}$		
$L_{night}$	No of dwellings per Contour (approx)	Approximate Area km <sup>2</sup>
> 50	3729	45
> 60	1372	9
> 70	0	0.1

### 5.3 Evaluation and Identification of Problem Areas

The first stage is to develop a list of potential areas for action using a noise scoring matrix. The next stage is to confirm that the noise levels assessed by the mapping exercise are accurate. This will be done by reviewing and refining the noise models, if appropriate, and by undertaking field survey work to measure noise levels.

Once the extent of the noise impact has been confirmed for the locations under review, the potential noise mitigation measures will be investigated, and a cost benefit analysis undertaken for each, with the aim of developing a selection matrix leading to a recommendation for action

## 6. Public Consultations

### 6.1 Overview

The Regulations require the Action Planning Authorities to consult the public when drawing up and revising Action Plans.

A formal public consultation was undertaken on the Draft Action Plan, as detailed below. This gave the public an early and effective opportunity to participate in the preparation of the plan.

The consultation process was planned and undertaken having regard to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform publication *Consultation Principles & Guidelines 2016*.”

The Draft Action Plan was on public display from 28<sup>th</sup> May 2018 until 9<sup>th</sup> July 2018 with written submissions until 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2018. A notice was placed in the local papers in advance advising the public of the locations where and when the plan was on display. A copy of the Draft Action Plan was displayed in the following public buildings:

- Louth County Council, Millennium Centre, St Alphonsus Road, Dundalk
- Civic Offices Drogheda, Fair Street, Drogheda
- Town Hall Dundalk, Crowe Street, Dundalk
- County Library, Jocelyn Street, Dundalk
- Library Stockwell Street, Drogheda
- Civic Offices, Fair Green Ardee.

A copy was also available on the Louth County Council website - [www.louthcoco.ie](http://www.louthcoco.ie).

The public were invited to make submissions in writing to the following:

Emer O Gorman, Director of Service, Corporate Services, Environment, European Relations, and Human Resources, Louth County Council, Millennium Centre, St Alphonsus Road, Dundalk.

or

emailed to [environment@louthcoco.ie](mailto:environment@louthcoco.ie) to arrive no later than 4pm on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2018.

In addition comment will be sought from relevant groups as listed in Appendix C for the list of these organisations.

## **6.2 Results of Submissions:**

A total of three submissions were received during the public consultation process. There were from the following.

- Transport infrastructure Ireland
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht

### **Transport Infrastructure Ireland:**

Transport Infrastructure Ireland requested the following amendments to the Draft Noise Action Plan,

- 2.1.4 Amended by replacing *“these guidelines set out limits for noise related to both the construction and traffic flow on ne road schemes”* to *“ the guidelines specify design goals for noise associated with the construction and operation of new national road schemes”*
- 2.1.5 Section 77 of the Roads Act 1993. This paragraph was removed as it was repealed by the Public Transport Regulations Act 2009.
- 5.1.1 The following sentence was added, *“In 2017 TII undertook an internal project to develop a dataset of all environmental noise barriers installed along the national road network. For strategic maps prepared for county Louth 11km of noise barrier were included within the model”*
- 7.7 TII are available to meet with review and discuss potential noise mitigation measures and cost benefit analysis exercises to be completed by Louth County Council.
- 9.1 TII are available to meet with Louth County Council to review the strategic noise maps prepared.
- General comments were noted in the submission which related to minor errors within the Draft Plan as follows:

1.3.1 *“Traffic” Infrastructure* changed to *“Transport” Infrastructure*

1.4.2 Include *“(now transport Infrastructure Ireland)* after National Roads Authority.

4.2 *first* round changed to *third* round

9.6 *“Transport Infrastructure Ireland must be based upon the results of strategic noise mapping carried out by the designated noise mapping bodies”* changed to *“Noise Action Plans must be based upon the results of strategic noise mapping carried out by the designated noise mapping bodies”*

Appendix a includes Transport Infrastructure Ireland means the body formed through the merger of the National roads Authority and the Railway Procurement Agency under the Roads Act 2015 with effect from 01/08/15.

### **Environmental Protection Agency:**

The Environmental Protection Agency submitted the same comments as per the to the Draft SEA Screening. All amendments were therefore carried out prior to the Draft Noise Action Plan going on display

- Relationship with other plans and programs;  
*“The plan should acknowledge the need for consistency between the Plan and with the relevant policies and objectives of the National Planning Framework and regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands region under preparation”*. Text acknowledging this has been integrated into Sections 2 and 9.6 of the Draft Action Plan.
- *“In finalizing the plan there is merit in considering the national/regional transport initiatives that may arise from the National Planning Framework and regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands region.”* Text has been integrated into Section 2.9 of the Draft Action Plan considering this issue.
- *The EPA also a stated that “there was merit in establishing a” Transport Strategy for County Louth” to provide for a co ordinate means of considering , assessing and developing sustainable transport options which can be implemented within the various settlements as appropriate”*. This was noted by Louth County Council. Sustainable mobility is currently addressed through land use planning by Louth County Council and by sectoral transport plans/strategies etc. prepared by others. Louth County Council will continue to take into account sectoral transport plans/strategies etc. when undertaking designated functions relating to land use planning and transport.
- *“Upon implementing the Plan there is merit in amending the existing County Development Plan to incorporate and implement the latest version of the Plan and the associated commitments. The requirements of the SEA Directive should be considered as part of this process”*. Any variation to the existing County Development Plan on foot of adopting the Action Plan will be subject to SEA and AA screening (and full assessments if necessary) in compliance with relevant legislation.
- *Specific Comments on the Draft SEA Screening Report. The SEA Screening Report provides a useful overview of the existing requirements in force within the planning hierarchy that provide for noise management at national, regional, county and local level. These were noted by Louth County Council.*
- *In addition to the assessment carried out in accordance with Schedule 1 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, we also note that the relevant parts of the Plan have been assessed against the SEA Environmental Report ‘Strategic Environmental Objectives’ for the Louth County Development Plan, as set out in Table 2.3 Screening Analysis relevant parts of the Noise Action Plan. This was noted by Louth County Council.*

- *Future Modifications to the Draft Plan 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 as set out in SEA Regulations Schedule 1 (S.I. No. 435 of 2004). This was noted by Louth County Council.*

- *Environmental Authorities Under the SEA Regulations (S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011), notice should also be given to, 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 to the competent authority 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. Notice has also been given to relevant environmental authorities by Louth County Council as part of the SEA screening process. These authorities will be notified again once a determination is made as to whether or not SEA is require*

### **Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht**

- *This Department notes that the draft Louth Noise Action Plan 2018-2023 is accompanied by two documents, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening report and Determination and a Screening Statement in support of the Appropriate Assessment (AA). It is also noted that an existing plan is in place for 2013-2018. Noted by Louth County Council.*

- *This Department welcomes the fact that the strategic environmental objectives in the SEA screening include the conservation of protected species (B1) and of biodiversity in general outside of designated sites (B3), in addition to protecting Natura 2000 sites (B2). Noted by Louth County Council.*

- *It appears that the Screening Statement in support of the Appropriate Assessment does not contain the AA screening as an appendix, whereas the SEA document is both a screening and a determination. This Department therefore cannot comment on the screening issues considered in any detail. However, section 7 of the Draft Noise Action Plan 2018-2023 Report details relevant parts of the Noise Action Plan and possible mitigation measures. The AA Screening Statement does not include a determination as this will be made, in compliance with the Regulations, at adoption of the Plan. Conclusions are provided in the SEA Statement at Section 4.*

- *Such measures include combating road traffic noise by traffic avoidance plans that combine walking, cycling and public transport and investment in dedicated cycle routes. Noted by Louth County Council.*

- *With regard to any new cycle and pedestrian routes, they should not target sensitive ecological sites or parts of sites, as such routes have potential for disturbance to habitats and species, including as a result of noise and lighting for example. Such routes would need ecological assessment in their*

*planning and design in order to ensure their development is consistent with nature conservation objectives and legal compliance requirements.* Louth County Council response; Any project that arises as a result of the Noise Action Plan must comply with all relevant levels of the National Planning Framework; including the Louth County Development Plan The potential noise impact of development is managed through the Planning and Licensing processes, including through Environmental Impact Assessments, Strategic Environmental Assessments and application of relevant Guidance relating to noise. It has been evaluated that the Noise Action Plan has no source for effects on ecological processes.

- *This Department notes from section 9.1 that Louth County Council will, following consultation with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), carry out a review of Zone 1 areas and Special Areas of Conservation in order to identify a process to delimit Quiet Areas in Open Country. As detailed in section 6.2.2, such areas under the Regulations mean an area, delimited by an action planning authority following consultation with the Agency and approved by the Minister, that is undisturbed by noise from traffic, industry or recreational activities.* Noted by Louth County Council.

- *In section 9.2 there is a target/objective of the delimiting of “Quiet Areas in open countryside”, and these will be linked with sites of national, regional or local importance with regard to landscape, cultural or historical significance, amenity areas or environmentally sensitive areas. It is also noted that there will be consultation on the delimiting of the Quiet Areas with the EPA in year 2 of the 5 year Plan and those areas identified will be submitted to the EPA and Minister in year 5.* Noted by Louth County Council.

- *With regard to the natural heritage, this Department requests that it is consulted where such Quiet Areas include environmentally sensitive areas of nature conservation importance, including European sites (i.e. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated under the EC Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) designated under the EC Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147 EC)) and sites proposed as Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) under the Wildlife Acts of 1976-2012.* Noted by Louth County Council see section 9.6.

## **7. Noise reduction Measures already in place**

**7.1** The M1 motorway/N1 dual carriageway through County Louth has now been completed. The motorway/dual carriageway was constructed on a phased basis beginning with the Dunleer Bypass in the 1990s and completed with the Dundalk Western bypass since 2008. The motorway/dual carriageway has had a significant effect on traffic noise in the County generally by diverting traffic from congested routes in heavily populated areas.

This has resulted in a reduction in the net number of the population subjected to noise pollution. However some properties along the motorway had the potential for an increase in noise levels due to the new road. These effects were mitigated by measures including the use of appropriate noise barriers, identified in the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA's). E.I.A.'s were carried out for all phases of the motorway except the Dunleer Bypass as this section predated the EIA Directive.

Funding has been obtained for the Ardee bypass-N52. This will reduce the volume of traffic within the town of Ardee thus reducing the associated traffic noise levels. Work for this is due to commence in 2018.

New residential development is restricted in the vicinity of the motorway. New one-off dwellings are not permitted within 100m of the curtilage of the motorway. The provision of a buffer zone of not less than 15m in width is required where industrial and other land use adjoin. These stipulations are included in the Louth County Development Plan.

## **7.2 Noise Action Plan 2013 – 2018**

It is important to note that just like the previous Noise Action Plans there are a number of risk factors associated with the delivery of the programme of measures such as the availability of finance and the approval of other statutory bodies

The second Noise Action Plan was developed in 2013 for the period 2013- 2018. All regional and National routes exceeding 3 million vehicle passages in a year were mapped. No direct mitigation measures were carried out as a result of the findings in the 2013 -2018 Noise Action Plan.

Louth County Council will endeavour to carry out the list of actions under the current Noise Action Plans' programme of measures. It is important to note that similar to the Noise Action Plan in round 2 there are a number of risk factors associated with the delivery of the programme of measures such as the availability of finance and the approval of other statutory bodies

## **8. Proposed Measures:**

### **8.1 Programme of Works**

#### **Year 1**

- Identify from noise maps where onset levels of assessment are exceeded
- Carry out site visits and visual assessment of these areas
- Identify areas for further investigation.
- Continue to carry out traffic counts on identified routes.

#### **Year 2**

- Identify budget for external noise consultants.
- Complete consultants brief
- Procure consultants
- Consult with the EPA on process for delimiting Quiet Areas.

### **Year 3**

- Identify areas for noise mitigation
- Agree works package with relevant Road Authorities, including timetable for implementation and evaluation. Allow time in programme for obtaining planning permission if required. Consult with relevant road authorities in respect of identifying mitigation measures and their delivery
- Identify budget.

### **Year 4**

- Review progress of Action Plan.

### **Year 5**

- Identify Quiet Areas for delimiting and submit proposal to EPA and Minister
- Review progress of works package
- End of programme review.

## **9. Long term Strategy**

### **9.1 Targets and Objectives**

The long term strategy of the Action Planning Agencies is to aim at avoiding significant adverse health impacts from noise and preserving environmental noise quality where it is good. The planning system is regarded as having a significant influence on the control of exposure to environmental noise and may play a key role in the improvement of amenity. The appropriate use of the planning system will continue to be used to help avoid, or minimise, the adverse impacts of noise without placing unreasonable restrictions on development.

The delimiting of 'Quiet Areas in open countryside' for approval by the EPA and the minister will be linked with sites of national, regional or local importance with regard to landscape, cultural or historical significance, amenity areas or environmentally sensitive areas.

The Action Plans drawn up for Round 3 over the next 5 years, and beyond to subsequent rounds, will ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are implemented to prevent and reduce environmental noise where necessary from major sources.

## **10. Financial Information**

### **10.1 Budget and Cost Benefit Analysis**

The cost-benefit analysis should address lifetime construction and maintenance costs against noise reduction benefit. The benefit of noise reduction may be viewed in terms of decibels / people / time or could be evaluated (in monetary terms) to fully process the analysis. Guidance documents such as *Community Support Framework Evaluation Unit, Proposed Working Rules for Cost Benefit Analysis, June 1999* are considered acceptable reference standards for undertaking cost benefit analysis of this nature.

However as the noise mitigation being reviewed relates to a single noise source, namely major roads, it is considered appropriate that the scope and detail of the cost benefit analysis to be employed should be agreed in advance with the relevant Roads Authority.

Following the cost-benefit analysis, the locations being reviewed will be prioritised to give a list of beneficial, achievable actions for noise mitigation. This will be done in consultation with the relevant Roads Authority and once agreed and a budget identified will be implemented.

## **11. Provisions envisaged for evaluating the implementation and results of the Action Plan**

### **11.1 Evaluation and Review**

A review of the programme will be carried out annually by Louth County Council. There are a number of risk factors associated with the delivery of the programme. These include financial, procedural and possibly planning risks. It should be noted that some critical elements are outside the control of Louth County Council and will require the approval of other statutory bodies. Also the financial resources required to deliver the programme has yet to be determined and the delivery of the noise action plan will be contingent on adequate funding being available.

In view of these uncertainties, it is important that the programme is subject to an ongoing review so as to alert all relevant parties to any change in circumstances. Louth County Council will review the programme on an annual basis and advise all relevant bodies on how the key outcomes are being progressed.

### **11.2 End of Program Review**

The Plan will span a five year period commencing in 2018 and finishing in 2023. This will coincide with the next round of noise mapping and action planning. The end of program review will evaluate progress in terms of the programme drawn up in the Action Plan. The review will also examine the effectiveness of individual measures in terms of measurable noise values. Lessons learned from the first phase action plan will be utilised in the preparation of the second phase and subsequent rounds of action plans.

## **12. Expected Outcome:**

The results of the strategic noise mapping indicates that, in the County as a whole, an estimated population of 2284 and 5504 have predicted noise levels above the onset levels for assessment of  $L_{den}$  and  $L_{night}$  respectively. Additionally a number of noise sensitive locations will be identified along the mapped routes in Co Louth. Louth County Council will endeavour to implement appropriate mitigation measures for these properties that are confirmed above the noise threshold during the currency of the plan. However as stated previously all works proposed are contingent on adequate funding being available.

It is expected that quiet areas in open country will be delimited during the currency of the plan. The process will be complimentary to the County Development Plan – Landscape Characterisation Assessment Study and will subject to EPA and Ministerial Approval.

**Appendix A Maps**

## **Appendix B**

List of relevant Groups for consultation

- An Taisce
- Forestry Service
- Newry and Mourne Council
- Northern Ireland Road Service
- Iamród Éireann
- Heritage Council
- Meath County Council
- Monaghan County Council
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Department of Environment Community and Local Government (DECLG)
- Department of Transport Tourism and Sport
- Loughs Agency
- Inland Fisheries