DRAFT MEATH CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2024 - 2029

SEA ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

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Environmental Assessment **Built Environment**

Client: Meath County Council

Date: 16 November 2023

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

7075_RPSEA-02_SEA Environmental Report Non Technical Summary

Project No.	7075
Client:	Meath County Council
Project Name:	Draft Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 - 2029
Report Name:	SEA Environmental Report Non Technical Summary
Document No.	RPSEA-02
Issue No.	01
Date:	16/11/2023

This document has been issued and amended as follows:

Issue	Status	Date	Prepared	Checked
01	Public Display	16 Nov 2023	NK	TB

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Glossary

Appropriate Assessment

The obligation to undertake Appropriate Assessment derives from Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. AA is a focused and detailed impact assessment of the implications of a strategic action or project, alone and in combination with other strategic actions and projects, on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives.

Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna

Biodiversity is the variability among living organisms from all sources including inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems' (United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity 1992).

Flora is all of the plants found in a given area.

Fauna is all of the animals found in a given area.

Environmental Problems

Annex I of 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 (the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive) requires that information is provided on 'any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme', thus, helping to ensure that the proposed strategic action does not make existing environmental problems worse.

Environmental problems arise where there is a conflict between current environmental conditions and ideal targets. If environmental problems are identified at the outset they can help focus attention on important issues and geographical areas where environmental effects of the plan or programme may be likely.

Environmental Vectors

Environmental vectors are environmental components, such as air, water or soil, through which contaminants or pollutants, which have the potential to cause harm, can be transported so that they come into contact with human beings.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures are measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment of implementing a human action, be it a plan, programme or project. Mitigation involves ameliorating significant negative effects. Where there are significant negative effects, consideration should be given in the first instance to preventing such effects or, where this is not possible, to lessening or offsetting those effects.

Protected Structure

Protected Structure is the term used in the Planning and Development Act and Regulations (as amended) to define a structure included by a planning authority in its Record of Protected Structures.

Such a structure shall not be altered or demolished in whole or part without obtaining planning permission or confirmation from the planning authority that the part of the structure to be altered is not protected.

Recorded Monument

A monument included in the list and marked on the map which comprises the Record of Monuments and Places that is set out County by County under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994 by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. The definition includes Zones of Archaeological Potential in towns and all other monuments of archaeological interest which have so far been identified. Any works at or in relation to a recorded monument requires two months' notice to the former Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (now Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht) under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994.

SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt it.

SEA Scoping

Scoping is the process of determining what issues are to be addressed, and setting out a methodology in which to address them in a structured manner appropriate to the plan or programme. SEA coping is carried out in consultation with appropriate environmental authorities.

Strategic Actions

Strategic actions include: Policies / Strategies, which may be considered as inspiration and guidance for action and which set the framework for Plans and programmes; Plans, sets of coordinated and timed objectives for the implementation of the policy; and Programmes, sets of projects in a particular area.

Strategic Environmental Objective (SEO)

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 Masterplan and the alternatives can be evaluated in order to help identify which provisions would be likely to result in significant environmental effects and where such effects would be likely to occur, if - in the case of adverse effects - unmitigated.

1 Introduction

This is the Environmental Report of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the proposed *Draft Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029* (hereafter referred to as - "Draft Meath CAP").

The following report has been prepared to comply with the provisions of Article 12 of S.I. 435 of 2004 – European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations – as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011 – European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.

The Report has had due regard to the SEA Regulation[1], in particular: -

- methods of assessment;
- contents and level of detail in the Plan / Programme;
- the stage in the Plan or Programme-making process;
- the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in the decision-making process in order to avoid duplication of environmental assessment; and
- consultation with the SEA Environmental Authorities.

This Environmental Report should be read in conjunction with the Draft Meath CAP and Natura Impact Report (Appropriate Assessment). The SEA Environmental Report will be placed on public display, together with the Draft Meath CAP and the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report (NIR) for comment from statutory bodies, the public and interested parties.

This SEA Environmental Report is prepared on behalf of Meath County Council (MCC) by Brady Shipman Martin, Environmental, Landscape and Planning Consultants.

1.1 Background

Meath County Council (MCC) has prepared the *Draft Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029* for the County to promote best practice in climate action, at the local level. The Draft Meath CAP aligns to the Government's overall *National Climate Objective*, which seeks to achieve the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy by no later than the end of 2050. This also aligns with the *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021*, which frames Ireland's legally binding climate ambition, to deliver a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 51% by 2030.

The *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021* specifically requires all local authorities in Ireland to prepare a Climate Action Plan, in consideration of wider national climate and energy targets, addressing both mitigation and adaptation measures. The Draft Meath CAP has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Authority Climate Action Plan Guidelines*, published by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (March 2023).

The Draft Meath CAP will set out the responsibility of Meath County Council for enhancing climate resilience, increasing energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, across its own assets, services and infrastructure, to which it is fully accountable for, whilst also demonstrating a broader role

[1] https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2004/si/435/made/en/print#:~:text=S.I.-,No.,European%20Communities%20Act%201972%20(No.

of influencing, advocating and facilitating other sectors, to meet their own climate targets and ambitions.

The pre-draft *Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029* has been screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the *Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC*[2]) and Regulation 42 of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011*, as amended. The screening process concluded that potential for effects on the integrity of European sites arising from the implementation of the Plan cannot be excluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt and Appropriate Assessment of the draft Plan is required. Therefore, in accordance with *Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08*[3]*,* the Draft Meath CAP 2024-2029 is also required to undergo a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with *Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment*[4] (known as the *SEA Directive*).

1.2 Appropriate Assessment

The pre-draft *Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029* has been screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the *Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC*[5]) and Regulation 42 of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011*, as amended. The screening process concluded that potential for effects on the integrity of European sites arising from the implementation of the Plan cannot be excluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt and Appropriate Assessment of the draft Plan, including preparation of a Natura Impact Report (NIR) is required.

[2] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/habitats-directive_en
[3] Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08
[4] DIRECTIVE 2001/42/EC: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN
[5] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/habitats-directive_en

2 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

2.1 Introduction

SEA is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, the environmental quality and consequences of Plans or Programmes (P/Ps). The purpose is to ensure that the environmental consequences of P/Ps are assessed both during their preparation and prior to their adoption. The SEA process also gives specified environmental authorities, interested parties and the general public, an opportunity to comment on the environmental impacts of the proposed P/P and to be kept informed during the decision-making process.

The SEA Directive and SEA Regulations require that competent authorities determine whether the implementation of plans or programmes, or modifications thereof, will be likely to have significant effects on the environment. This determination process is referred to as an Environmental Assessment and defined as:

> *"...the preparation of an environmental report, the carrying out of consultations, the taking into account of the environmental report and the results of the consultations in decision-making and the provision of information on the decision..."*[6]

2.2 SEA Stages and Process

The key focus of SEA is to take environmental issues, and in particular '*likely significant environmental effects*' of a P / P, into consideration during the plan or programme making process. The key stages in the SEA process as they relate to the Draft Meath CAP are outlined in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Outline of the SEA Process

Stage	Description	Status
1. Screening	The requirement to undertake a SEA is mandatory for certain Plan / Programme (P / P). Where SEA is not a mandatory requirement, the P / Ps is subject to a 'Screening process', to consider if it is *likely to have significant effects* on the environment, and therefore, if SEA is required. The preparation of the pre-draft *Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029* has been screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA) and it has been concluded that potential for effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt and is required to undergo Appropriate Assessment. Therefore, in accordance with *Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08* the *Draft Meath CAP 2024-2029* is also required to undergo a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with *Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment* (known as the SEA Directive).	Completed ✓

[6] Article 2(b) of Directive 2001/42/EC, European Union, Article 2 (3) of EC (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 S.I No. 435 of 2004

Stage	Description	Status
2. Scoping	Preparation of a SEA Scoping Report highlighting that the Environmental Report is required to include: ▪ methods of assessment; ▪ contents and level of detail in the Plan / Programme; ▪ the stage in the Plan or Programme-making process; and ▪ the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in the decision-making process in order to avoid duplication of environmental assessment. Scoping provides for consultation with the Environmental Authorities specified in Article 13 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011, and the process allows for incorporation of the views of the environmental authorities within the P / P and the SEA Environmental Report.	Completed ✓
3. Environmental Report	Preparation of a systemic identification and evaluation of alternatives and assessment of the *likely significant environmental effects* of implementing the P / P. The findings of the assessment, which is carried out at various stages in the P / P making (*e.g.* Draft, Amended Draft *etc.*), are provided in the SEA Environmental Report in accordance with Article 12 (including Schedule 2) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011. The output from this stage is an Environmental Report which accompanies the draft P / P required on public display.	Current Stage
4. SEA Statement	Completion / adoption of the Final CAP, taking account of *likely significant environmental effects*, any submissions or observations received from consultations and integration of mitigation and monitoring measures within the Plan. The Environmental Report is concluded and an SEA Statement is prepared in accordance with Article 16(2)(b) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011, summarising: ▪ how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan / Programme; ▪ how the environmental report, and any submissions /observations or consultations have been taken into account in the preparation of the Plan / Programme; ▪ the reasons for choosing the Plan / Programme in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and ▪ the measures decided for monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan / Programme.	Final (Future) Stage

2.3 SEA Scoping

SEA Scoping has been undertaken for consideration of the range and level of detail of the information to be included in the SEA Environmental Report as set out in Article 11 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended. This ensured that the SEA is focused on the relevant environmental issues and examines issues at the appropriate level of detail.

Scoping allowed for consultation with the Environmental Authorities specified in Article 9(5) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011 and for incorporation of the views of the Environmental Authorities within the Plan or Programme and the SEA Environmental Report.

The SEA Scoping Report was issued to the following Environmental Authorities specified in Article 9(5) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended, on 15 October 2023:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
- The Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications; and
- The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

Submissions / observations on the scoping of the Environmental Report were received from the environmental authorities and these have informed the drafting ofm the Plan and Environmental Report.

2.4 SEA Guidance

The SEA Environmental Report reflects the requirements of *Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment* (the *SEA Directive*) and the national implementing Regulations S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, and by the PDR 2001, as amended.

The following principal sources of guidance were used in the SEA process including in the preparation of this Environmental Report:

- Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of certain plans and programmes on the environment.
- S.I. No. 435 of 2004 – European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004.
- S.I. No. 200 of 2011 -Environmental Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.
- Guidance on Implementation of Directive 2001/42/EC, European Commission, 2004, at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/eia/pdf/030923_sea_guidance.pdf
- SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans - EPA Recommendations and Resources. EPA, Updated January 2023.
- SEA Pack. EPA, Updated January 2022.
- SEA Spatial Information Sources Inventory. EPA, Updated July 2023.
- SEA Resource Manual for Local and Regional Planning Authorities. EPA, 2015.
- Local Authority Climate Action Plan Guidelines. Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, March 2023.

- EPA Mapping. Environmental Mapping / Geographical Information System (GIS) tools are available at: http://gis.epa.ie/SeeMaps
- EPA Water and Air Quality Reports at: https://www.epa.ie/pubs/legislation/air/quality/
- EPA Ireland's Environment – An Integrated Assessment 2020 at: https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/irelands-environment/state-of-environment-report-/#
- SEA (EPA) Spatial Information Sources at: http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/
- Developing and Assessing Alternatives in Strategic Environmental Assessment, EPA 2015 at: https://www.epa.ie/publications/research/biodiversity/EPA-157_web.pdf
- Integrating Climate Change into Strategic Environmental Assessment in Ireland - A Guidance Note. EPA, 2015.
- Climate Action Plan 2023, Changing Ireland for the Better. Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, 2023.
- Circular Letter PL 9/2013: Article 8 (Decision Making) of EU Directives 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as amended. Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013.
- Circular Letter PSSP 6/2011: Further Transposition of EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2011.
- Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08: Appropriate Assessment of Land Use Plans. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2008.
- Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment - Streamlining AA, SEA and EIA Processes: Practitioner's Manual. Strive Report Series No. 106. Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013.
- Guidance on Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into Strategic Environmental Assessment. European Commission 2013.
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites - The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2000, at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/provision_of_art6_en.pdf
- Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2002, at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_asses s_en.pdf
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2009, at: http://www.npws.ie/publications/archive/NPWS_2009_AA_Guidance.pdf

3 Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029

3.1 Introduction

Meath County Council (MCC) has prepared the *Draft Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029* ("Draft Meath CAP") for the County to promote best practice in climate action, at the local level. As previously stated, the Draft Meath CAP aligns with Government's overall *National Climate Objective*, *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021* and *Local Authority Climate Action Plan Guidelines*, published by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (March 2023). The Draft Meath CAP also takes account of other relevant climate legislation and policy, a climate change risk assessment and a climate mitigation baseline assessment at a County scale. This Draft Plan is set within a broader context of international, EU, national and sectoral climate policy.

The *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act, 2021* commits Ireland to reach a legally binding target to deliver a reduction of 51% by 2030. An overall emission reduction of 2,170 ktCO2eq is required for the County Meath across all sectors to achieve the target to reduce GHG emissions by 51% by 2030.

The Draft Meath CAP sets a pathway for Meath to actively translate national climate policy to local circumstances with evidence-based measures, assist in achieving climate neutrality objective at local and community levels and to identify and deliver 'Decarbonising Zones' within Meath to act as test for a range of climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity measures in a specifically defined area, through the identification of projects and outcomes that will assist in the delivery of the *National Climate Objective*.

MCC will be responsible for enhancing climate resilience, increasing energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, across its own assets, services and infrastructure, to which it is fully accountable for, whilst also demonstrating a broader role of influencing, advocating and facilitating other sectors, to meet their own climate targets and ambitions.

3.2 Draft Climate Action Plan – Vision, Mission and Targets

The Draft Meath CAP sets out the following:

3.2.1 Vision

Meath aims to be a climate resilient, biodiverse rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy that supports healthy lifestyles and jobs growth.

3.2.2 Mission

Meath County Council is committed to lead in translating the National Climate Policy into local actions through inclusive engagement, capacity building and leadership to the people of County Meath.

3.2.3 Targets

Meath County Council's Draft Climate Action Plan contains four key targets, as follows:

- *Energy Efficiency – 50% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030*
- *GHG Reduction – 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030*

- *Resilience – Making Meath a climate resilient region by reducing the impacts of future climate-change related events*
- *Awareness – Actively engaging and informing citizens, communities and businesses on climate change*.

The Actions for the Draft CAP are included in the environmental assessment in **Appendix 8.1** of this Non-technical Summary.

4 Other Relevant Plans and Programmes

Meath County Council has prepared this Draft Climate Action Plan, to create a low carbon and climate resilient County, by delivering and promoting best practice in climate action, at the local level.

The Draft Climate Action Plan is aligned to the Government's overall National Climate Objective, which seeks to pursue and achieve, by no later than the end of 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy. This objective is also set out in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, which frames Ireland's legally binding climate ambition, to delivering a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 51% by 2030. This will place the country on a trajectory to achieving climate neutrality by the end of 2050.

In preparing the Draft Climate Action Plan, the Council has taken account of other relevant climate legislation and policy, a climate change risk assessment and a climate mitigation baseline assessment, at a County scale, which are included as part of the Draft Plan.

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 specifically requires all local authorities in Ireland to prepare and make a Climate Action Plan, in consideration of wider national climate and energy targets, addressing both mitigation and adaptation measures.

Climate change is increasingly understood to be the most critical, long-term global challenge of our time, its impacts continue to be felt both worldwide and at home. The *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC's) Working Group I Sixth Assessment Report*, confirms overwhelming evidence that the climate has changed since the pre-industrial era and that human activities, through greenhouse gas emissions, are the principal cause of that change. It states the unequivocal cause of global warming has been human activities, with global surface temperatures reaching 1.1°C above 1850-1900, in the 2011-2020 period.

Climate action is given impetus by the scientific evidence that supports the findings of human influence on climate change and the most recent legally binding international treaty on climate change, which sets the framework for ambitious and strengthened policy responses, the Paris Agreement 2015. Consequently, the Draft Climate Action Plan is set within a broader context of international, EU, national and sectoral climate policy.

4.1 International Climate Change Policy

Effective action on climate change requires international cooperation and ambition. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), established in 1994, aims to foster global co-operation in addressing climate change and its consequences resulting from rising global temperatures.

A significant milestone in this global effort was the signing of the *Paris Agreement* in 2015 at the *Conference of the Parties 21 (COP21)*. This legally binding treaty, endorsed by all 196 member countries, including Ireland, came into force on November 4, 2016. The *Paris Agreement* sets two critical goals:

(i) limiting global temperature increases well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and striving to limit the increase to 1.5°C, and

(ii) enhancing adaptation capabilities to combat climate change impacts.

Another essential international commitment relating to climate change is the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, adopted in September 2015, comprising 17 Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs) with 169 targets to be achieved by 2030 (Refer to **Figure 4.1**). These goals aim to alleviate poverty, protect the environment, and improve global living conditions. All 17 Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030 can be related to the impacts and opportunities of climate change, particularly relevant is SDG 13 (Climate Action).

Figure 4.1 UN Sustainable Development Goals

To meet emissions reduction targets outlined in the *Paris Agreement*, the European Commission introduced the *European Green Deal* in December 2019. This initiative aims to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050 by decoupling economic growth from resource use. The *European Climate Law* legally enforces these objectives, including a reduction of net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030.

4.2 Ireland's Climate Change Policy

Ireland aligns its climate change policy with EU ambitions and international agreements. The *Climate (Amendment) Act 2021* promotes a sustainable economy where greenhouse gas emissions are balanced by emissions removal. Through carbon budgets, sectoral limits, and various strategies, Ireland seeks to scale up efforts in both adaptation and mitigation to achieve transformative climate action by 2030 and beyond to 2050.

The *Climate Action Plan 2023* aims to halve emissions by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, in line with the *Programme for Government*.

In 2018, Ireland published its first *National Adaptation Framework* (NAF) to assess climate risks and incorporate adaptation measures into national, regional, and local policy making.

The *Long-term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions* sets a roadmap for achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, building upon carbon budgets, sectoral limits, and the *National Climate Action Objective* and the *European Climate Law*.

Sectoral Climate Adaptation Plans have been published across Government departments, in response to the *National Adaptation Framework*. Each Plan identifies the key risks faced across the sector and the approach being taken to address these risks and build climate resilience for the future. The Plans address the following sectors: Agriculture, Forestry and Seafood, Biodiversity, Built and Archaeological Heritage, Transport infrastructure, Electricity and Gas Networks, Communications Networks, Flood Risk Management, Water Quality and Water Services Infrastructure and Health.

The *Local Authority Climate Action Charter* commits local authorities, including Meath County Council (October 2019), to lead climate action efforts at the local and national levels. It involves reducing emissions from Council operations and collaborating with various stakeholders on climate initiatives.

Delivering *Effective Climate Action 2030* (DECA 2030) is a local government strategy, published in April 2021, ensuring a coordinated approach to climate action across all 31 local authorities, emphasizing a strong leadership role in climate action.

The scale of the challenge facing Ireland in addressing climate change is significant, as highlighted in the EPA's *State of Environment Report: 'Ireland's Environment - An Integrated Assessment 2020'*[1] (EPA, 2020). There is an urgent need to accelerate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and implement adaptation measures to increase resilience to climate change.

The *2023 Annual Review* from the Climate Change Advisory Council details the following overall recommendations for initially reducing and ultimately preventing emissions of greenhouse gases:

- Government must address areas of uncertainty in how Ireland will reduce its emissions. The sectoral emissions ceiling for the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry sector must be set, and it must be clear by how much each sector must reduce its emissions.
- Government needs to identify and remove barriers to policy implementation by ensuring adequate funding and planning reform at scale and speed.
- Key actions need to be implemented now to prevent longer term damage and increased costs to society and the economy.
- Government must adopt new approaches to address emission reductions, creating investment and enhancing skills across the economy, particularly in areas such as retrofitting and renewable energy.
- The establishment of a Just Transition Commission is recommended to ensure that Ireland achieves its climate objectives in a way that is fair and equitable and protects vulnerable people and communities.
- The Government should support opportunities that reduce emissions and make Ireland better prepared for the impacts of climate change.

4.3 Other Plans and Programmes

The *County Meath Development Plan 2021-2027* provides for sustainable planning and development management context for all projects in County Meath. The Development Plan also provides the

sustainable development and protective environmental control framework for any development or works deriving from the Draft Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029.

5 Current State of the Receiving Environment (Environmental Baseline and Issues)

5.1 Introduction

The *SEA Directive* requires that the information on the baseline environment is focused upon the relevant aspects of the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected and the likely evolution of the current environment in the absence of the Draft Meath CAP. Being consistent with the strategic provisions of the Draft CAP, this section provides a strategic description of aspects of environmental components and any existing environmental issues which have the greatest potential to be affected by implementation of the Draft CAP, if unmitigated.

5.2 Likely Evolution of the Environment in the Absence of the Climate Action Plan

The Draft Meath CAP has been prepared to align to the Government's overall National Climate Objective, which seeks to pursue and achieve, by no later than the end of 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy. The *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021* specifically requires all local authorities in Ireland to prepare and make a Climate Action Plan, in consideration of wider national climate and energy targets, addressing both mitigation and adaptation measures.

It is a requirement of the SEA Directive to consider – *'the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.'* In the absence of the Draft CAP it is envisaged that the baseline environment would primarily evolve in line with the policies and objectives of the *Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027* (CDP) and Local Area Plans (LAPs) for the County. The CDP details policies and objectives specific to climate change, however, the standalone CAP provides significant opportunities for specific set of climate mitigation and adaptation measures and the associated likely positive environmental effects.

The Draft Meath CAP sets a clear pathway for Meath to actively translate national climate policy to local circumstances with the prioritisation and acceleration of evidence-based measures. It also assists MCC to identify and deliver Decarbonising Zones (DZs) within County administrative area to act as a test bed for a range of climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity measures in a specifically defined area, through the identification of projects and outcomes that will assist in the delivery of the *National Climate Objective*.

The Draft CAP sets out a clear pathway for MCC to enhance climate resilience, increase energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, across its own assets, services and infrastructure, whilst also demonstrating a broader role of influencing, advocating and facilitating other sectors, to meet their own climate targets and ambitions. Overall, in the event that the Draft CAP was not implemented, the risk of negative environmental effects occurring as a result of climate change related risks would be higher. This could also result in failure to reduce carbon emissions in line with, national and European environmental objectives.

5.3 Description of the Environmental Baseline

The baseline data helps to assess the current state of the environment, facilitate the identification, evaluation and subsequent monitoring of the effects of the Plan. Thus, this information creates a platform whereby existing issues relevant to the Meath County area can be quantified, where possible, or qualified thereby ensuring that the implementation of Meath CAP does not exacerbate identifiable problems.

Baseline data collection is a first step in the process of evaluating the sensitivity of the environment. The *SEA Directive* requires that information is provided on '*any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the Plan or programme...*'. Information is therefore provided on existing environmental problems which are relevant to the Plan, thus helping to ensure that the Plan does not exacerbate any existing environmental problems in the study area.

The environmental aspects are described in line with the legislative requirements, under the following headings:

- Biodiversity (including Flora & Fauna);
- Population and Human Health;
- Land, Soils and Geology;
- Water Quality;
- Air, Noise and Climate;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Landscape;
- Material Assets;
- Interaction of the foregoing; and
- Cumulative Impacts.

5.3.1 Biodiversity

Biodiversity plays a significant role in the provision of clean air, water, healthy soils and food as well as visually contributing to a plan area with its natural beauty and heritage. The natural heritage of County Meath is an important asset and a unique resource. Biodiversity is vulnerable to climate change as it accelerates the destruction of the natural world through droughts, flooding and wildfires, while the loss and unsustainable use of nature are in turn key drivers of climate change. However, biodiversity and nature are also vital in the fight against climate change.

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

5.3.1.1 Biodiversity Issues

Ireland is currently experiencing a decline in floral and faunal populations. Implementation of measures to achieve the requirements of the Habitats Directive and the objectives of the WFD are likely to benefit protected sites in the future.

Certain developments and activities associated with agricultural activities, afforestation, urban developments, windfarms, quarries, tourism and recreation, peat extraction, commercial fishing, ports,

coastal and fluvial flood defence schemes as well as a wide range of infrastructural works (including road works, water abstraction and wastewater disposal) that are located within, or close to, ecologically sensitive sites can give rise to significant environmental pressures. Within Meath, the protection of waterways, wetlands and coastal areas and the avoidance of the spread of invasive species are major issues.

Existing biodiversity issues / pressures and threats on Ireland's habitats and species, which are also relevant to the County Meath, include:

- Direct habitat loss within European Sites e.g. developments occurring on undeveloped sites, coastal protection works.
- Indirect effects on the ecological networks supporting European Sites e.g. linear developments forming barriers to movements of mobile species or loss of sites that support an overall population of species.
- Construction and use of residential, commercial, industrial and recreational infrastructure and areas. For example development on greenfield sites, and changes in farming practices.
- Indirect threat to water quality including changes to surface and groundwater quality and volumes e.g. wastewater treatment plants, septic tanks, changes to agricultural drainage, changes to flood regime.
- Direct / indirect disturbance of sensitive habitats / species e.g. recreation at coastal sites, riverside walkways etc.
- Direct / indirect threats to European Sites by invasive species e.g. landscaping, forestry, urbanization.
- Direct / indirect threats to native flora and fauna from pathogens / diseases – including on imported material (e.g. Ash Dieback - *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*).
- Climate Change - For example the loss of wetlands, due to climate change events i.e. storms and flood events.
- Geological events, natural catastrophes - For example flooding, storms / extreme weather events.
- Land Management - conversion of land / sites and sealing of soils can release CO_2 into the atmosphere and further reduce areas of 'carbon sinks'.
- Invasive Species and problematic species - continued control and management of invasive species. For example the loss of biodiversity as native species are shaded out, but also diseases and pathogens.
- Mixed source pollution - For example emissions from transport, heating homes, leachate from landfills, water pollution from wastewater treatment systems, eutrophication and acidification from forestry.

5.3.2 Population & Human Health

The administrative area of Meath covers an area of over 230,000 hectares (ha) and is the second largest county in Leinster. It shares its boundary with counties, Dublin, Louth, Monaghan, Cavan, Westmeath, Offaly and Kildare. Meath adjoins Dublin to the south and is a vital supporting partner in the recent growth of the Greater Dublin Area. The 2022 Census results showed that the population for County

Meath was 220, 826[7] persons, an increase of 13.2% from the 2016 census (195, 044 persons)[8]. The 2016 Census showed that the population of Meath was an increase of 5.9% from the 2011 census (184, 135 persons)[9].

The *National Planning Framework* (NPF) outlines that by 2040 there will be roughly an extra one million people living in Ireland. The population of Meath is growing at a slightly faster rate than both the region as a whole and the E*astern Strategic Planning Area*. There was a rapid growth in population in Meath between 2006-2011 when the population increased by 13% with 5.9% increase during the following five-year period (2011-2016). Over the 10-year period between 2006-2016 the population increase was 20%. Between 2016-2027 it is projected that the population of Meath will increase by 17.3% (*Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027*).

5.3.2.1 Existing Population and Human Health Issues

Provision of more sustainable travel choices to the residents should be a strategic priority to reduce transport carbon emissions while delivering number of key economic, social and community benefits. A focus on residential development in sustainable locations, accessible to public transport infrastructure utilising brownfield lands in our existing settlements is essential to deliver a reduction in emissions. Furthermore, provision of surface water and flood risk management measures throughout developments is essential to climate-proof any future developments.

Existing population and human health issues / pressures on the population of the Meath administrative area, include:

- Population / Households - there is an increasing demand for housing units in the county. This also influences the energy requirements within the county.
- Health and Well-being - continue the development of recreation and leisure facilities.
- Flooding - Over the past number of years there have been significant instances where flooding has occurred in areas of the County causing damage to homes and businesses. However, relative to other counties the extent of flooding in the County has been low.
- Radon - Radon risk map levels in the County have been collated from the EPA Radon Risk Map of Ireland, refer to Figure 5.7.
- Climate Change - potential impacts of climate change on human health from changes to local weather, including prolonged periods of hot or cold weather - which can lead to heat and cold stresses and their associated effects.
- Airport / Noise - potential adverse impacts from noise levels associated with exposure to undesirable noise levels from aircraft / flight paths. Health impacts include cardiovascular disease, effects on sleep / sleep patterns, cognitive impairment, becoming or increasingly disturbed or bothered by noise, impacts on quality of life and mental health, hearing impairment and tinnitus.
- Information on the status of drinking water, wastewater climate change are provided in other sections of this Report.

[7] 2022 Census - https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/population/censusofpopulation2022/
[8] 2016 Census - https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/ima/cop/2016&boundary=C03849V04599&guid=2ae19629-1494-13a3-e055-000000000001
[9] 2011 Census - https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/ima/cop/2011&boundary=C03994V04752&guid=C11

5.3.3 Land, Soils & Geology

Land is the solid surface of the Earth that is not permanently covered by water, while soil is the ecosystem in the uppermost layer of the ground in which plants can grow. Soil is composed of mineral particles, organic matter, water, air and living organisms. Land degradation is a global problem, often caused by a combination of factors such as poor land management and unsustainable development. Land degradation may exacerbate the impacts of natural disasters.

Soils comprise the most part organic matter, minerals and fine to course grained weathered rocks. The variability in the constituent parts and the percentage content of each in the soil matrix results in differing characteristics. This has implications for suitable land use and the appropriateness for differing land use practices. Geology encompasses the understanding and study of the solid and liquid matter that constitutes the earth and the processes by which they are formed, moved and changed.

5.3.3.1 Soils and Geology Issues

The development of green field sites resulting from urban expansion and population growth is a significant issue facing Meath. This places pressure on the agricultural potential and food production potential of soil. Soil is lost annually through the development of agricultural land. The challenge is to manage future population growth within Meath whilst minimising impacts on surrounding agricultural production and maintaining production levels.

Existing land, soil and geology issues / pressures with environmental considerations include:

- Soil - the loss / damage of soil from the construction of greenfield sites for development.
- Soil - contamination can occur from unauthorised waste-related activities, leakages and accidental spillages of chemicals. Technical and financial constraints on development and the threat contaminated soils pose to the health of the population.
- Soil - erosion of soils in the county from intensive agricultural / forestry practices, quarrying activities and major infrastructural projects.
- Soil - disturbance of contaminated soils could result in potential for water pollution and potential further land contamination.
- Pressure on soil - from land-use change, intensification of agriculture, erosion, overgrazing, disposal of organic wastes to soils, afforestation, industry and urbanisation.
- Land Management - conversion of land / sites can release CO_2 into the atmosphere and further reduce areas of '*carbon sinks*'.
- Geological Heritage - the protection of sites of geological importance within the county, see Table 5.5.
- Climate change - carbon stored in soils plays an important role in maintaining soil functionality, in water and air quality and in climate change. Proper land use management is essential to prevent carbon stored in soil from being released into the atmosphere.
- Groundwater - rock types in the county that provides for a productive groundwater aquifer.
- Quarries - pose a potential impact on the level of water tables and potential exposure of water table and contaminant to water tables.

5.3.4 Water Quality

Water is fundamental to all life; for humans, plants and animals alike. It is also critical in economic terms in generating and sustaining wealth in a number of key areas such as agriculture, fishing, power

generation, industry, transport and tourism. However, it is also a fragile resource requiring continued protection. In general terms Ireland's waters are of good quality, however, preserving the high standard of water is essential for human health and the natural environment.

For the purposes of this section, the water environment is taken to include natural features such as lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater waterbodies. In addition flooding is also dealt with in this section. Meath has a rich and extensive aquatic environment consisting of coastline, rivers, streams, lakes and estuarine waters (surface waters) and ground waters.

Wastewater treatment and drinking water are discussed under Material Assets in Section 5.7 below.

5.3.4.1 Water Quality Issues

The principal threat to water is pollution which can adversely impact on all parts of the water cycle from groundwater to rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters. Any development as part of the Draft Meath CAP can have the potential to impact waterbody status, water usage, flood risk and generate wastewater. The Plan must comply with the requirements of the WFD and the Groundwater Directive and aim to drive improvement to water quality in both the short and long-term. Existing water quality issues / pressures with environmental considerations include:

- **Water** - the surface waterbodies in Meath need to be improved to achieve 'good' ecological status in waterbodies by 2027.
- **Water** - pressure on water sources include excessive nutrient enrichment which leads to eutrophication; agriculture and municipal sources are the most important suspected causes of pollution to rivers.
- **Water** - pressure on water sources also comes from land-use changes, intensification of agriculture, erosion, afforestation, industry and urbanisation.
- **Water** - water contamination arising through poor working practices, leakages or accidental spillage of materials if efficient pollution control measures are not fully implemented and maintained.
- **Surface, ground & coastal waters** - are at risk of pollution from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems in the vicinity of waterbodies, potential pressures and impacts on water body status, water usage and flood risk from the construction projects i.e. increased sedimentation, groundwater recharge and accidental spillages.
- **Coastal** - the coastal zone is subject to growing pressures from increasing population and increasing and sometimes conflicting social, economic and recreational uses.
- **Flooding** - flood risk to be considered as a key environmental criteria.

5.3.5 Air Quality & Noise

5.3.5.1 Air Quality

Air quality legislation[10] in Ireland highlights the need '*to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole*'. In addition, it requires that Local Authorities where appropriate '*shall preserve through appropriate measures the best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development*'.

[10] S.I. No. 739/2022 – Ambient Air Quality Standards Regulations 2022 - https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2022/si/739/made/en/print

EU legislation on air quality requires that Member States divide their territory into zones for the assessment and management of air quality. The EPA manages the national ambient air quality monitoring network and measures the levels of a number of atmospheric pollutants. The current trends in air quality in Ireland are reported in the EPA publication '*2022 Annual Report on Air Quality in Ireland*' which is currently the most up to date analysis of air quality data for Ireland. Four national air quality zones have been designated in Ireland, these are:

- Zone A is the Dublin conurbation;
- Zone B is the Cork conurbation;
- Zone C comprises of 23 large towns in Ireland with a population of >15,000; and
- Zone D is the remaining area of Ireland.

County Meath is located within Zone D, within the 'Rural Ireland' zone and Navan Town is located within Zone C in the 'other cities and large towns' zone. The designated zones have been defined to meet the criteria for air quality monitoring, assessment and management as defined in the aforementioned regulations. The air quality monitoring site in County Meath is located at Navan (Station 68).

The air quality index for health (AQIH) regions are calculated on an hourly basis at various locations around Ireland. The AQIH is based on measurements of air pollutants which can harm health. The five pollutants are:

- Ozone gas;
- Nitrogen dioxide gas;
- Sulphur dioxide gas;
- $PM_{2.5}$ particles; and
- PM_{10} particles.

Air Quality Map show whether air quality is 'good', 'fair', 'poor' or 'very poor' in each region. The current air quality across County Meath is 'good'. Monitoring is done using continuous monitors for ozone and nitrogen oxides in various locations around Ireland. The pollutants of most concern are those whose main source is traffic such as Particulate Matter (PM) and Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2). There is need to protect and improve (as appropriate), air quality in County Meath, particularly in areas zoned for increased urban and transport related development.

5.3.5.2 Noise

The objectives of EU and Irish noise legislation is '*to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole*', and this includes noise nuisance. The Noise Directive - Environmental Noise Directive (END) 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise - is part of an EU strategy setting out to reduce the number of people affected by noise in the longer term and to provide a framework for developing existing community policy on noise reduction from source. The Directive requires competent authorities in Member States to:

- draw up strategic noise maps for major roads, railways, airports and agglomerations, using harmonised noise indicators and use these maps to assess the number of people which may be impacted upon as a result of excessive noise levels; and
- draw up action plans to reduce noise where necessary and maintain environmental noise quality where it is good; and inform and consult the public about noise exposure, its effects, and the measures considered to address noise.

The Directive does not set any limit value, nor does it prescribe the measures to be used in the action plans, which remain at the discretion of the competent authorities.

In accordance with *Environmental Noise Regulations (S.I. No. 140 of 2006)*, a *Noise Action Plan* was prepared by MCC (2019). This *Noise Action Plan* is aimed at managing environmental noise from road, rail and industrial sources within Meath.

Noise Strategic Maps from EPA (2022) are presented below in **Figures 5.14** and **5.15**. These strategic noise maps are to be used to identify priorities (Important Areas and Priority Important Areas) for noise action plans, which are to be made or revised every 5 years by designated action planning authorities. They can also be used to identify potential quiet areas in the three noise agglomerations.

During the implementation of the Draft Meath CAP, consideration should be given to protect, where relevant, any designated quiet areas in open country.

5.3.5.3 Air Quality & Noise Issues

Agriculture, transport and industrial emissions are the greatest source of air pollution. In urban areas, concern has clearly shifted to a range of pollutants associated with road traffic which may be considered relatively new in the context of air quality control. The most important of these pollutants are NO_2, particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM_{10}), carbon monoxide (CO) and a wide variety of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), including carcinogens such as benzene. Advances in engine technology and fuel development will, it is predicted, offset rises in tail pipe emissions from increased car usage due to an increased population. Therefore, it is important that a good quality road infrastructure is provided and alternatives to the private car are encouraged as much as possible. Overall the Draft Meath CAP is likely to have positive effects on air quality due to the nature of the plan. However, any new construction projects have potential during construction phase to result in temporary negative impacts on air quality and create noise pollution.

5.3.6 Material Assets

Material assets are resources that are valued and intrinsic to a development and the surrounding area. Material assets may be of either natural or human origin and the value may arise for economic or cultural reasons. Material assets include water supply, wastewater treatment infrastructure, waste disposal including recycling, transport infrastructure (road, rail, airports and ports), energy and supply networks and telecom services. Material assets also includes economic assets such as coastal and water resources which support fisheries and aquaculture. The sustainable growth of the County is dependent on the provision of services and infrastructure.

5.3.6.1 Material Assets Issues

The increased growth at the Country level will result in increasing demand for water, wastewater treatment, waste management, transport infrastructure / links and energy and telecommunications services.

Existing material assets issues / pressures within County Meath, include:

- **Seafood Industry** – socio-economic importance to coastal communities in an increasingly challenging marine environment.

- **Water Supply –** new developments (including housing, offices and retail development), will generate pressure on existing water sources to meet demands and provide a suitable, safe and secure quantity and quality of drinking water supply. Provision of rural housing development presents challenges in terms of adequate servicing with potable water and wastewater infrastructure, in protection of environmental resources such as biodiversity, landscape, surface water and groundwater, and increasingly in terms of climate change and climate change adaption.
- **Water Supply** - on-going investment in water conservation / leak detection and fixing.
- **Water Supply** and **Wastewater Services -** new developments (including housing, offices and retail development), will generate pressure on existing water and wastewater sources to meet demands. Inadequate infrastructure, including inadequate capacity, contribute to the contamination of receiving surface water and groundwater waterbodies.
- **Wastewater Services -** new developments, should only be permitted where there is adequate capacity in the wastewater infrastructure in accordance with urban wastewater treatment disposal requirements and standards. Currently, municipal wastewater discharges are creating significant pressure on the receiving waterbodies.
- **Energy** - there is a need to phase out the reliance on fossil fuels, with a shift to renewable energy resources, however, renewable energy will require large scale investment (public and private) in energy efficiency and innovative systems. Identifying and enabling indigenous renewable energy will also support Ireland's energy security. New developments and large developments require excellent energy and power services which create direct and indirect emissions, particularly CO_2, methane and dioxins.
- **Telecommunications -** the rollout of connectivity in the urban environment can be complex. Lack of coordination between infrastructure and utility providers can lead to the spatially inefficient and uncoordinated provision of utilities and connectivity infrastructure.
- **Transport -** the movement of people is key to the success of new development and areas, where adequate transport infrastructure (*i.e*. road, rail, cycle and pedestrian routes) to these developments and accessibility throughout the development / area (safe footpath and cycle paths) is fundamental to the development of Meath. The development of road infrastructure services, has major implications for biodiversity, landscape and air quality, as it causes habitat and landscape fragmentation and has health and Climate Change implications.
- **Waste -** population growth and development, and challenges in providing sustainable recycling infrastructure continues to put pressures on the local authorities to provide better waste management and access to waste services.
- **Light Pollution** - can arise when external lighting is not properly designed or managed which can in turn lead to inappropriate or excessive light spillage.
- **Utilities -** provision, protect and maintenance of adequate utilities to support existing and envisaged development.

5.3.7 Climate

Climate Change is a phenomenon that has widespread economic, health and safety, food production, security, and other dimensions. Climate change refers to a long term, large scale change in global or regional climate patterns. In recent years, global temperatures have been rising. Urgent action is

needed to address climate change and to move Ireland towards a low carbon, climate resilient economy and society.

The ever increasing rate of carbon dioxide combustion, and the emission of other greenhouse gases (GHG) such as methane and nitrous oxide since the industrial revolution, has resulted in the 'greenhouse affect'. Most greenhouse gases emissions are related to the energy generation, transport, agriculture, and industry sectors.

In Ireland, the expected effects of Climate Change are increased frequency of extreme weather events within the next century. This will include a 20%-30% increase in precipitation, greater rainfall intensity coupled with flash floods and an average annual temperature increase of ~2°C. The potential impacts of Climate Change could have serious consequences for both people and infrastructure along Ireland's coastal areas as well as its rivers[11].

The recent *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021* was established to provide for the approval of plans by the Government in relation to climate change. This aims at pursuing the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich and climate neutral economy by no later than the end of the year 2050. Ireland's *Climate Action Plan 2023* sets out Ireland's national and sectoral targets in this regard.

Future changes in climate and associated impacts on sea level, rainfall patterns/intensity and river flow will influence flooding frequency and extent in the future. Local Authorities in compliance with the *Regional Planning Guidelines* are attempting to adopt sustainable flood risk strategies in areas likely to be at risk of flooding in the future in the context of climate change and changing weather patterns. Changes to climate could lead to an increase in flooding events in Ireland. The OPW has undertaken a number of *Flood Risk Management Studies* for different River Basin Districts (RBDs) in Ireland. These studies have identified the areas which are most at risk and future management plans have been advised; these are adopted by the OPW. In some cases, mitigation measures will involve the construction of physical flood defences.

The *Climate Action Plan* identifies actions to decarbonise electricity generation, the built environment and transport and to move towards carbon neutrality for agriculture, forest and land use sectors.

5.3.7.1 Climate Change Issues

The potential effects of climate change resulting in an increase in the frequency and severity of weather events, including flooding, storms, heavy snowfall, and variation in temperature. Severe rainfall events, or very cold events with or with snowfall could adversely impact upon town's and people in Meath leading to water shortages, residential flooding and disruption to infrastructure and to movement. Towns and villages along the coast will become increasingly vulnerable to rises in the sea level and coastal erosion.

Therefore, it will be important to improve resilience of existing and planned critical infrastructure, systems and procedures to the effects and variability of climate change.

[11] GOI (2019).

Appropriate adaptation measures that can be implemented either directly or through relevant land use plans and/or specific plans e.g. *Flood Risk Management Plans*, *River Basin Management Plans* etc. The draft Plan will also help inform local authority land use and transport planning.

Overall, the Draft Meath CAP will have an overall positive effect in addressing climate change issues for the county and also to achieve national targets.

5.3.8 Cultural Heritage

The physical traces left in the landscape by previous generations in archaeological monuments and sites and in historic buildings, townscapes and vernacular structures forms part of the tangible cultural heritage linking the past and present. County Meath is intrinsically linked to its cultural heritage, and is central to how individuals, communities and the County see themselves. MCC recognises the importance of identifying, valuing and safeguarding the archaeological and architectural heritage of Meath for future generations which can be achieved through the proper management, sensitive enhancement and / or appropriate development of this resource.

Meath's wealth of archaeological and built heritage makes it exceptional in Ireland. It includes the *UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne*, the seat of the High Kings of Ireland at Tara, the passage tombs of Loughcrew, the largest Anglo-Norman castle in Europe at Trim, the historic towns and villages (Navan, Trim, Kells and Slane), great country houses, demesne landscapes, and a significant industrial heritage of canals and mills. Meath's natural heritage includes scenic river valleys, rolling farmland, a network of mature hedgerows and diverse coastal habitats.

A positive approach to heritage management enhances quality of life and environmental sustainability and ensures that the cultural and natural heritage is a resource that helps the County to compete as a cultural tourism destination.

5.3.8.1 Cultural Heritage Issues

Construction activities have the potential for direct negative impacts on heritage features and their setting. Development of infrastructure, in addition to development resulting from economic growth and increasing population, can potentially impact on the integrity of sites or features of architectural, archaeological or cultural heritage interest. This could directly impact upon the cultural amenity resource and tourism potential of Meath.

Existing cultural heritage issues / pressures include:

- Development of infrastructure - development resulting from economic growth and increasing population, can potentially impact on the integrity of sites or features and their views to / from architectural, archaeological or cultural heritage interest.
- Development - in close proximity to sites and areas of cultural heritage may adversely impact upon the cultural landscape setting.
- Development - development has the potential to impact archaeological heritage which is sub-surface. This includes the insertion of services (e.g. cycleways), landscaping works, ground levelling and tree planting.
- Architecture - impact on heritage streetscapes of regional and local importance.
- Archaeology - impact on archaeological monuments and their settings including undiscovered sites / features.

- **Climate change** - the direct effects of climate change on heritage may be immediate or cumulative. Potential impacts are flooding, storm damage, coastal erosion, soil movement, changing burial-preservation conditions, pest and mould and maladaptation.
- **Risk** - protection of built and archaeological heritage to identify the heritage assets at risk

5.3.9 Landscape & Visual

The concept of landscape encompasses all that can be seen by looking across an area of land, *i.e.* it is the visible environment in its entirety. The landscape supports a wide range of ecological habitats despite growth in its resident population. The interaction of all of these elements influences landscape character for future generations.

A National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025[12] was published, in line with Ireland's obligations under the European Landscape Convention. The key objectives of this Strategy are the recognition of landscape in law and the provision of a policy framework to put measures in place for the management and protection of landscape, the production of a national Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) through data gathering and an evidence based description of character assessment, raising awareness and public consultation.

5.3.9.1 Landscape & Visual Issues

Landscape can be considered a dynamic rather than static asset. It is constantly changing, and its changes are driven by nature itself, by direct human intervention, and indirectly through the consequences of human activity, notably Climate Change. All physical development undertaken by human impacts on the landscape. At the same time, human activity, especially farming, does much to maintain the landscape.

Areas of a highly sensitive landscape have a low capacity to absorb new development and this can be a challenge to locate new development in these areas without it becoming unduly obtrusive. Development of the CAP where feasible should seek to conserve and enhance natural habitats and ecosystems to protect and improve biodiversity.

Existing landscape and visual issues / pressures include:

- **Development -** development having adverse and visual impacts on the landscape.
- **Green Infrastructure** - protecting the existing green infrastructure network from fragmentation and loss due to pressures of urban development within and adjoining the network.
- **Ecosystem Services -** recognising and promoting the value of ecosystem services that the green infrastructure network provides to the County.
- **Coastal** - wind developments are having visual impacts on the coastline.

[12] National Landscape Strategy: https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2015/07/N-Landscape-Strategy-english-Web.pdf

6 Strategic Environmental Objectives

A series of Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) have been prepared in line with current guidance and also with specific reference to the SEA for the Draft CAP (refer to Table 6.1). The SEOs provide a basis for the assessment of the environmental effects of the Draft CAP and are framed in such a manner as to enable the Draft CAP to be fully assessed in environmental terms.

SEOs are distinct from the objectives within the Draft CAP, although they often overlap and are developed from international, national and regional policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives. These high-level SEOs are paired with specific targets which can be monitored using indicators (see Section 10 of this Report).

Table 6.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) for Draft Meath CAP

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Population & Human Health (PHH)	PHH_1	Ensure Decarbonising Zones does not conflict / contradict with the existing activities and land use objectives in the Meath CDP 2021-2027.
	PHH_2	Protect human health and well-being.
Biodiversity (Flora & Fauna) (B)	B_1	Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites and protected species.
	B_2	Ensure Draft Meath CAP does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and rehabilitation objectives in the Meath CDP 2021-2027.
	B_3	Implement biodiversity protection and enhancement measures wherever feasible to address climate and biodiversity emergency.
Land, Soils & Geology (LSG)	LSG_1	Safeguard soil and mineral resources.
Water Quality (WQ)	WQ_1	Protect, maintain and where necessary improve water quality and the management of watercourses, groundwater and the marine environment, in compliance with the requirements of the WFD objectives and measures.
	WQ_2	Implement and comply with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidelines.
Air Quality & Noise (AN)	AN_1	Minimise emissions of pollutants to air associated with transport.
	AN_2	Minimise noise emissions associated with traffic and transport.
	AN_3	Reduce reliance on motorised travel.
	AN_4	Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality through the reduction of emissions and promotion of sustainable renewable energy and energy efficiency.
Climate Change (CC)	CC_1	Contribute to Ireland's commitment to realising a climate neutral economy by 2050.
	CC_2	Support the delivery of national climate policy as appropriate to the county with the prioritisation and acceleration of evidence-based measures.
	CC_3	Deliver Decarbonising Zones (DZ) within County Meath to act as a test for a range of climate mitigation and adaptation measures in a specifically defined area through the identification of emission sectors

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
		and outcomes that will assist in the delivery of the National Climate Objective.
Material Assets (MA)	MA_1	Make best use of existing infrastructure and promote the sustainable development of new infrastructure to meet the needs of the county's population.
	MA_2	Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.
	MA_3	Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.
	MA_4	Promote sustainable water use and drainage management.
Cultural Heritage (CH)	CH_1	Protect and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).
	CH_2	Protect and avoid impact on places, features, buildings and landscapes of architectural heritage, (including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAHs)).
Landscape & Visual (LV)	LV_1	Protect and maintain the special qualities of landscape character including coastal character within Meath.
	LV_2	Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape designations as identified in the Meath CDP 2021-2027.

7 Assessment of Alternatives

7.1 Overview

Article 5(1) of the SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to consider reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme and the significant environmental effects of the alternatives selected.

Alternatives put forward should be reasonable, realistic and capable of implementation. They should also be in line with the appropriate strategic level at which the plan will be implemented within the national planning hierarchy. As preparation of the Meath County Council Climate Action Plan is a statutory requirement under Section 16 of the Climate Act, 'do-nothing' or 'do-minimum' scenarios are not viable alternatives.

Reasonable alternatives are assessed against the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) (refer to Section 6 of this Report), established for the assessment of the Draft Meath CAP against the baseline environment. The purpose is to determine if the reasonable alternatives result in positive, negative, neutral or uncertain environmental outcomes. This assessment process can result in mixed-effects outcomes.

7.2 Assessment of Alternatives

Three reasonable alternatives for the Draft Meath CAP have been identified and assessed as set out in Table 7.1.

Alternative	Assessment
Alternative 1 Target reducing GHG from the sectors with highest emissions to mitigate the impacts of climate change. This alternative could achieve a significant reduction in GHG emissions by prioritizing and supporting climate mitigation related action for areas of direct or reasonable influence to Meath County Council, *e.g.* the Residential and Transport sectors.	This alternative will lead to some positive environmental effects and will result in the reduction of GHG emissions in sectors that contribute significantly in terms of GHG emission in the County – the Residential and Transport sectors. It is less likely that this alternative will deliver the wide-ranging climate mitigation and offsetting related actions, which will be required to fully realise GHG emission reduction potential in the County. While improving the situation, it is also less likely this alternative would define a wide range of climate adaptation measures that would maximise protection for biodiversity, heritage resources, environmental receptors and people from climate change risks. By focusing on specific sectors, it is also likely that this alternative will not bring the community-wide response that is required to appropriately address climate change and adaptation. In comparison to other alternatives, this approach may generate negative environmental effects, which would not be counterbalanced by the positive environmental effects associated with other alternatives.

Alternative	Assessment
Alternative 2 A balanced focus on both climate mitigation and adaptation across several theme areas and all socio-economic sectors. This alternative would have enhanced potential to reduce GHG emissions across multiple sectors, potential to offset GHG emissions, and greater potential to protect the local community and the environment from climate change related risks.	This alternative will broadly deliver suitably wide ranging and effective climate action. The approach has the potential to generate multiple positive environmental effects, including a reduction in GHG emissions at organisational and sectoral levels, in addition to a variety of other environmental benefits. The alternative will place a balanced emphasis on both climate mitigation and adaptation action. However, with focus on theme areas and all socio-economic sectors, the approach would benefit from wider community engagement, support and initiative so as to realise maximum potential.
Alternative 3 A balanced focus on both climate mitigation and adaptation across several theme areas and all socio-economic sectors and all socio-economic sectors, and which has a strong community engagement emphasis, which underpins, supports and drives climate actions. This alternative would have enhanced potential to reduce GHG emissions across multiple sectors, potential to offset GHG emissions, and greater potential to protect the local community and the environment from climate change related risks. Climate mitigation and adaptation actions across a wide breath of theme areas would have better community level and organizational support given its strong community engagement emphasis.	Alternative 3 has the greatest potential to deliver effective climate action given its inclusive, encompassing approach and its strong emphasis on community engagement. This community support will support better participation in climate action at community level and across all environmental aspects.

7.3 Reasoning for Selection of the Preferred Alternative

Alternative 3 is selected as the preferred approach as it has the greatest potential to deliver the most-effective response to climate action given its inclusive, encompassing nature, and its strong community engagement emphasis.

Alternative 3 will place a balanced emphasis on climate mitigation and adaptation actions, ensuring climate change related risks across all environmental aspects, are adequately understood and managed at all levels.

8 Assessment of Effects of the Draft Meath Climate Action Plan

8.1 Introduction

The Draft Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 has been subject to an assessment for potential effects arising from the implementation of the Plan on the baseline environment as characterised and described in Section 5 of this Report. The assessment is carried out having regard to the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) established for the aspects of the baseline environment which have potential to be impacted by the Draft Meath CAP. These SEOs are detailed in Section 6 of this Report.

The Meath Draft Climate Action Plan aligns with the Government's overall *National Climate Objective*, the *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021* and the *Local Authority Climate Action Plan Guidelines*, published by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (March 2023). The draft Plan also takes account of other relevant climate legislation and policy, a climate change risk assessment and a climate mitigation baseline assessment at a County scale.

Therefore, the Draft Meath Climate Action Plan is set within and addresses a broader context of international, EU, national and sectoral climate policy, and hence the overall trust of the Draft Plan will have an overwhelmingly positive effect in terms of the environment. Nevertheless, a number of the proposed actions also have some potential for uncertain or negative effects on the environment, primarily arising from potential works deriving from the actions.

Given the limited regional scope of the Local Authority Climate Action Plan, transboundary effects do not arise.

The environmental assessment of the 'Goals / Thematic Areas / Objectives' and of the 'Actions' of the Meath Draft CAP are set out separately in the following sections of this Report.

8.2 Environmental Assessment of Goals Thematic Areas and Objectives of the Meath Draft Climate Action Plan

The finding of the environmental assessment of the overall Vision, Mission, Targets, Goals and Objectives of the Meath Draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 is that they will all have an overall positive effect on all aspects of the environment, but most notably on human health, biodiversity, water, air quality and climate, as well as in terms of interaction between these environmental factors.

8.3 Environmental Assessment of Actions of the Draft Meath Climate Action Plan

The Meath Draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 includes 71no. Actions set out under the 5 Goals, Thematic Areas and Objectives (refer to Section 8.2 of this Report). The full environmental assessment of the Actions is provided in Table 8.1A in Appendix 8.1 of this Report.

The finding of the assessment is that 56no. actions will have either potential positive effects or no effects impact on the environment. The remaining 15no. actions have potential for either potential negative effects or potential uncertain effects on the environment, of which only 6no. actions have

potential for negative effects. A summary of the potential negative and uncertain environmental effects is provided in Table 8.2.

Where potential negative or uncertain environment effects have been identified appropriate mitigation has been provided in Section 9.0 of this Report.

Table 8.1 Summary of Potential Negative and / or Uncertain Environmental Effects of Actions of the Draft Meath Climate Action Plan

(SEO Key: B – Biodiversity, PHH – Population & Human Health, LSG – Land, Soils & Geology, WQ – Water Quality, AN – Air Quality & Noise, CC – Climate Change, MA – Material Assets, CH – Cultural Heritage, LV – Landscape & Visual)

Actions	Description	Environmental Assessment	Potential Negative Effects	Potential Uncertain Effects
Goal 2				
2	Continue to work with appropriate external stakeholders to deliver social housing at a BER B2 or cost optimal standard including provision of Energy Efficient Design, on-site renewable energy, EV Charging Facilities, SuDs, and nature based solutions, as feasible.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. renewable energy, EV charging etc.) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, land / soils / geology, water, air / noise, heritage and landscape.	B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1)	AN (AN2) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
9	Undertake deep retrofit and install renewable energy sources as appropriate on LA owned buildings.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. renewable energy) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, water, air / noise, heritage and landscape.	CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)	B (B1, B2, B3) WQ (WQ1), AN (AN2)
10	Construct all new LA properties to A2 Energy Rating or higher including provision of Energy Efficient Design, on-site renewable energy, EV Charging Facilities, SuDs, and nature based solutions, where feasible.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. renewable energy, EV charging etc.) could have uncertain effects for biodiversity, land / soils / geology, water and heritage.		B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1) CH (CH1, CH2)
11	All Buy and Renew acquisition properties should be retrofitted to a B2 BER rating or higher including provision of Energy Efficient Design, on-site renewable energy, EV Charging Facilities, SuDs, and nature based solutions, as feasible.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. renewable energy, EV charging etc.) could have uncertain effects for biodiversity, land / soils / geology, water and heritage.		B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1) CH (CH1, CH2)

Actions	Description	Environmental Assessment	Potential Negative Effects	Potential Uncertain Effects
14	New Building projects designed to nZEB standard including provision of Energy Efficient Design, on-site renewable energy, EV Charging Facilities, SuDs, and nature based solutions.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. renewable energy, EV charging etc.) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, land / soils / geology, water, air / noise, heritage and landscape.	B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1)	AN (AN2) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
15	Promote the reuse and refurbishment of vacant and derelict properties in town centres and simultaneously promote the sustainable use of these properties for appropriate active town centre uses.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions could have uncertain effects for biodiversity (e.g. bats) and heritage (e.g. protected structures).		B (B3) CH (CH1, CH2)
16	Increase active travel usage in town centres through improved sustainable active travel proposals and an enhanced pedestrian and public realm environment.	While the overall intention is positive, actions could have uncertain effects for existing biodiversity.		B (B1, B2, B3), WQ (WQ1)
Goal 3				
4	Plant native woodland on appropriate LA owned lands.	While the overall intention is positive, actions could have uncertain effects for existing biodiversity.		B (B1, B2, B3)
8	Undertake climate risk assessment of local authority owned heritage assets (natural, built and cultural). Carry out regular programme of inspection, maintenance and phased conservation works to develop climate resilience.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. renewable energy, EV charging etc.) could have uncertain effects for biodiversity and heritage.		B (B1, B2, B3) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) CH (CH1, CH2)
Goal 4				

Actions	Description	Environmental Assessment	Potential Negative Effects	Potential Uncertain Effects
7	Increase number of safe routes to school scheme, where feasible.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. new routes) could have uncertain effects for biodiversity and water.		B (B1, B2, B3) WQ (WQ1)
8	To liaise with the OPW in the identification of new or the reinforcement of existing flood defences and protection measures.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. works) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, land / soils / geology, water, air / noise, material assets, heritage and landscape.	B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1) MA (MA3, MA4) LV (LV1, LV2)	AN (AN1, AN2) CH (CH1, CH2)
9	Review of Flood events and Flood susceptibility of infrastructure and liaise with relevant MCC Sections and Uisce Éireann to identify assets at risk from flooding/extreme rainfall to inform and implement low-cost 'minor works' flood relief schemes.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. works) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, land / soils / geology, water, air / noise, material assets, heritage and landscape.	B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1) MA (MA3, MA4) LV (LV1, LV2)	AN (AN1, AN2) CH (CH1, CH2)
10	Carry out a Coastal Erosion and Flood Risk Study for County Meath and implement the recommendations while prioritising nature based solutions.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. works) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, land / soils / geology, water, air / noise, material assets, climate, heritage and landscape.	B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1) CC (CC1, CC2) LV (LV1, LV2)	AN (AN1, AN2) MA (MA3) CH (CH1, CH2)
Goal 5				
10	Support development of enterprise hubs to facilitate remote working.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. works) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, land / soils / geology, water, air / noise, material assets, heritage and landscape.		B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN2) MA (MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
12	In4Green Urbact Network Project: Complete the Integrated Action Plan for	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. new routes) could have		B (B1, B2, B3) WQ (WQ1)

Actions	Description	Environmental Assessment	Potential Negative Effects	Potential Uncertain Effects
	Navan. (Plan objectives include strengthening walking and cycling, and optimising traffic access to reduce through traffic and to facilitate high quality public transport services; behavioural change linking to 2050 Vision)	uncertain effects for biodiversity and water.		

8.4 Interactions

An overview of the key and minor / no interaction between environmental factors with potential for effects arising from the Draft Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029.

Actions within the Draft Plan that give rise to positive or negative environmental effects for one environmental component also have the potential to generate positive or negative environmental effects for inter-related environmental components – e.g. negative effect on soils can have a negative effect on biodiversity, water, and / or landscape. Likewise, actions supporting the delivery of SuDS will improve water quality, which in turn can have a positive effect on aquatic ecology.

An assessment of impact inter-relationships and interactions is already embedded in the evaluation of environmental effects that has been carried out in this environmental report. This ensures that there is adequate coverage of all potential environmental effects associated with the implementation of plan actions. In addition the mitigation measures set out in Section 9.0 of this Report.

8.5 Potential Cumulative Effects

The assessment of cumulative effects above focused on national, regional and local plans, programmes, strategy and policy documents that have the potential to affect the same receiving environment that could be affected by the Draft Meath CAP.

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out policies and objectives for land use, settlement strategy, sustainable development, transport, infrastructure, environmental protection and management, climate change, land use etc. for County Meath. Other higher-level international, national and regional plans are integrated within the Meath County Development Plan and have been assessed as such. The Draft Meath CAP will comply with the provisions set within the Meath County Development Plan which itself has been subject to standalone environmental assessment (SEA, NIR, etc.).

The assessment of cumulative effects concludes that the implementation of the Draft Meath CAP will not result in direct, indirect or cumulative impacts which would have the potential to adversely affect the environment.

9 Mitigation Measures

9.1 Overview

The finding of the environmental assessment in Section 8.0 of this Environmental Report is that, if unmitigated, a number of the actions of the Meath Draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 have potential for uncertain or negative effects on aspects of the environment. These potential negative and / or uncertain effects, which derive from potential works resulting from the relevant action, focus primarily on biodiversity, water, climate, heritage and landscape. This section of the Environmental Report identifies measures for the mitigation and avoidance of potential uncertain or negative environmental effects.

9.2 Mitigation Measures

Specific mitigation in relation to environmental impact assessment (EIA) and appropriate assessment (AA) has been included in the Meath Draft CAP under Section 2.4.2 on Environmental Governance. Mitigation measures are also achieved through the detailed environmental protective policies and objectives as set out in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. The key environmental protective policies and objectives which will ensure avoidance and mitigation of potential uncertain and / or negative environmental effects are set out in Tables 9.1 and 9.2.

Table 9.1 Key Environmental Protective Policies in the Meath Development Plan 2021-2027

Theme	Protective Policies
Protection of Water Resources	INF POL 10: *To liaise and work in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the protection and improvement of the County's water resources.*
Surface Water Quality	INF POL 15: *To continue efforts to improve water quality under the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977, as amended and by implementing the measures outlined under the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) and complying with the requirements of the European Communities Environment Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 and other relevant regulations.*
Flood Risk Assessment	INF POL 20: *To require that a Flood Risk Assessment is carried out for any development proposal, where flood risk may be an issue in accordance with the "Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (DoECLG/OPW, 2009). This assessment shall be appropriate to the scale and nature of risk to and from the potential development and shall consider the impact of climate change.*
River Basin Management and Groundwater Protection	INF POL 32: *To ensure, through the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan(s) and the associated Programmes of Measures and any other associated legislation or revised plans with all relevant stakeholders, the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and ground waters throughout the County.*
Protection of Sites, Monuments, Places, Areas or Objects of	HER POL 1: *To protect sites, monuments, places, areas or objects of the following categories:*

Theme	Protective Policies
Archaeology Heritage Significance	• *Sites and monuments included in the Sites and Monuments Record as maintained by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht;* • *Monuments and places included in the Record of Monuments and Places as established under the National Monuments Acts;* • *Historic monuments and archaeological areas included in the Register of Historic Monuments as established under the National Monuments Acts;* • *National monuments subject to Preservation Orders under the National Monuments Acts and national monuments which are in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht or a local authority;* • *Archaeological objects within the meaning of the National Monuments Acts; and Wrecks protected under the National Monuments Acts or otherwise included in the Shipwreck Inventory maintained by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.*
Protection of Architectural Heritage	HER POL 14: *To protect and conserve the architectural heritage of the County and seek to prevent the demolition or inappropriate alteration of Protected Structures.*
Protection of Landscape Heritage	HER POL 26: *To encourage the protection and enhancement of heritage gardens and demesne landscapes, and to support, in consultation with the owners, the provision of public access to these sites as appropriate.*
Protection of Habitats and Species, including European Sites	HER POL 31: *To ensure that the ecological impact of all development proposals on habitats and species are appropriately assessed by suitably qualified professional(s) in accordance with best practice guidelines – e.g. the preparation of an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA), Screening Statement for Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment, Natura Impact Statement (NIS), species surveys etc. (as appropriate).*
Protection of European Sites	HER POL 32: *To permit development on or adjacent to designated Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas, Statutory Nature Reserves or those proposed to be designated over the period of the Plan, only where the development has been subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process and has been carried out to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, in consultation with National Parks and Wildlife.*
Protection of Geological Sites and Heritage	HER POL 46: *To maintain the geological and geomorphological heritage values of County Geological Sites listed in Table 8.7* (of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027) *and, through consultation with the Geological Survey of Ireland, protect them from inappropriate development.*
Protection of Wetlands	HER POL 48: *To manage, enhance and protect the wetlands of the County having regard to the 'County Meath Wetland Survey 2010' and ensure*

Theme	Protective Policies
	that there is an appropriate level of assessment in relation to proposals which would involve draining, reclaiming or infilling of wetland habitats.
Protection of Coastal Zones	HER POL 49: *To protect the character, visual, recreational, ecological and amenity value of the coast and provisions for public access, in assessing proposals for development.*
Protection of Natural Coastal Defences	HER POL 50: *To ensure that the County's natural coastal defences, such as beaches, sand dunes, coastal wetlands and estuaries are not compromised by inappropriate works or development.*
Protection of Landscape and Landscape Character	HER POL 52: *To protect and enhance the quality, character, and distinctiveness of the landscapes of the County in accordance with national policy and guidelines and the recommendations of the Meath Landscape Character Assessment (2007) in Appendix 5, to ensure that new development meets high standards of siting and design.*

Table 9.2 Key Environmental Protective Objectives in the Meath Development Plan 2021-2027

Meath Development Plan 2021-2027 Theme	Protective Objectives
Sustainable Ground and Surface Water Protection	INF OBJ 8: *To protect both ground and surface water resources and work with Irish Water to develop and implement Water Safety Plans to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchment.*
Surface and Ground Water Protection	INF OBJ 19 : *To ensure that developments permitted by the Council which involve discharge of wastewater to surface waters or groundwaters comply with the requirements of the EU Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations and EU Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations.*
Flood Risk Management	INF OBJ 20: *To implement the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG/OPW 2009) or any updated guidelines. A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment should be submitted where appropriate.*
Protection of Floodplains, Wetlands and Coastal Areas	INF OBJ 23: *To protect and enhance the County's floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas subject to flooding as "green infrastructure" which provide space for storage and conveyance of floodwater, and ensure that development does not impact on important wetland sites within river/stream catchments.*
Protection of Coastal Landscape and Visual Amenity	INF OBJ 34: *To strictly control the nature and pattern of development within coastal areas and ensure that it is designed and landscaped to the highest standards, and sited appropriately so as not to detract from the visual amenity of the area. Development shall be prohibited where the development poses a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features, and/or where the development is likely to result in altered patterns of erosion or deposition elsewhere along the coast.*

Meath Development Plan 2021-2027 Theme	Protective Objectives
Protection of Riparian Corridors	INF OBJ 38: *To establish riparian corridors free from new development along all significant watercourses and streams in the County as follows: -A 10 metre wide riparian buffer strip measured from the top of the bank either side of all watercourses in urban areas; - A 30m wide riparian buffer strip from top of bank to either side of all watercourses is required as a minimum outside of urban areas.*
Protection of Archaeological Landscape	HER OBJ 3: *To protect important archaeological landscapes from inappropriate development.*
Protection of Heritage Landscape	HER OBJ 29: *To require that proposals for development in designated landscapes and demesnes include an appraisal of the landscape, designed views and vistas, including a tree survey, where relevant, in order to inform site appropriate design proposals.*
Protection of European Sites	HER OBJ 33: *To ensure an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directives (92/43/EEC) and in accordance with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009 and relevant EPA and European Commission guidance documents, is carried out in respect of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary for the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site(s), either individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, in view of the site's conservation objectives.*
Protection of European and National Designated Sites	HER OBJ 34: *To protect and conserve the conservation value of candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas as identified by the Minister for the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and any other sites that may be proposed for designation during the lifetime of this Plan in accordance with the provisions of the Habitats and Birds Directives and to permit development in or affecting same only in accordance with the provisions of those Directives as transposed into Irish Law.*
Protection of Features Important to Coherence of the Natura 2000 Network	HER OBJ 60: *To encourage, pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), the management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.*

9.3 Conclusion

The adoption of the mitigation measures within the Draft Meath CAP, in combination with the development planning and control related environmental protection measures defined in the Meath County Development Plan will prevent and mitigate any potential negative environmental effects due to the implementation of the Draft Plan. No further mitigation measures are required.

10 Monitoring Measures

Monitoring of the Plan and its implications on the environment is important to ensure that the environment is not adversely affected through the implementation of the Plan. In accordance with Article 10 of the SEA Directive, monitoring must be carried out of the significant environmental effects directly related to the implementation of the Plan "*in order to, inter alia, identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action*."

Monitoring is based around indicators which allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives (Section 6) used in the assessment. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the targets. The monitoring programme may be updated to deal with specific environmental issues - including unforeseen effects - as they arise. Such issues may be identified by the Council or identified to the Council by other agencies.

Meath County Council is responsible for monitoring and the preparation of monitoring evaluation report(s), the publication of these reports and, if necessary, the carrying out of corrective action. It is recommended that the monitoring for the Draft Meath CAP and review is undertaken in parallel with monitoring and review of the Meath County Development Plan for efficiency and given that similar data sets will be used to measure the progress of each plan.

Environmental indicator assessment during monitoring can show positive / neutral impacts or negative impacts on the environment. Where an indicator value highlights a positive / neutral impact on the environment, it is likely that the objectives of the Draft Meath CAP are well-defined with regard to the environment. Conversely where the objectives of the Draft Meath CAP have a negative impact on the environment, it may be necessary to review the objectives of the Draft Meath CAP or to take some other form of intervention. For example, if an objective is having a significant adverse impact, an amendment may be considered during the lifetime of the Draft Meath CAP.

Refer to Table 10.1 below for the monitoring programme set for the SEA which includes details on the indicators, targets and data sources to monitor the progress of the Draft Meath Climate Action Plan.

Table 10.1 Environmental Monitoring Programme

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Source
Population & Human Health (PHH)	PHH_1	Ensure Decarbonising Zones does not conflict / contradict with the existing activities and land use objectives in the Meath CDP 2021-2027.	To comply with the policies, objectives and land use objectives of the Meath CDP.	No non-compliances with the policies, objectives and land use objectives of the Meath CDP 2021-2027. Individual developments within decarbonizing zone shall be subject to planning permission which are compliant with Meath CDP.	Meath County Council monitoring of the CDP policies and objectives.
	PHH_2	Protect human health and well-being.	Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan.	No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan	Consultations with EPA, Central Statistics Office (CSO) and Heath Service Executive (HSE)
Biodiversity (Flora & Fauna) (B)	B_1	Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites and protected species.	To comply with the conservation objectives for the Natura 2000 Sites and to maintain or restore the favourable conditions of the qualifying interests (SACs) and special conservation interests (SPAs) of the habitats and species of community interest.	Ensure there is compliance with the attributes and targets set with the conservation objectives for the Natura 2000 Sites. Ensure there is no adverse impacts on the condition of European Sites, habitats and species as a result of the Draft Meath CAP.	Consultation with NPWS and EPA. Meath County Council monitoring likely significant environmental effects of the developments.
	B_2	Ensure Draft Meath CAP does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and rehabilitation objectives in the Meath CDP 2021-2027.	To comply with the biodiversity policies and objectives of the Meath County Development Plan	No contravention of the biodiversity policies and objectives of the Meath County Development Plan.	Meath County Council monitoring likely significant environmental effects of the developments and

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Source
					compliance with policies and objectives of the CDP.
	B_3	Implement biodiversity protection and enhancement measures wherever feasible to address climate and biodiversity emergency.	Condition of habitats impacted by climate change. Number and geographical distribution of Species or Species population trends impacted by climate change. Compliance of action and development supported by the plan with policies providing for the protection and enhancement of Biodiversity and flora and fauna defined in the County's Biodiversity Action Plan.	Ensure no habitats are impacted by the effects of climate change. Ensure no reduction in the number of geographic distribution of species as a result of climate change effects. No contravention of policies providing for the protection and enhancement of Biodiversity and flora and fauna defined in the County's Biodiversity Action Plan.	Meath County Council monitoring likely significant environmental effects of the developments and compliance with policies and objectives of the CDP.
Land, Soils & Geology (LSG)	LSG_1	Safeguard soil and mineral resources.	Number of instances of significant adverse impacts on mineral resources or soils occurring, including the pollution, loss or degradation of mineral resources or soils, as a result of action and development supported by the plan.	No instances of significant adverse impacts on mineral resources or soils occurring as a result of action and development supported by the plan.	Meath County Council Consultation with Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) and GSI data and maps
Water Quality (WQ)	WQ_1	Protect, maintain and where necessary improve water quality and the management of watercourses, groundwater and the marine environment, in compliance with the requirements of the WFD objectives and measures.	Reference to EPA WFD Monitoring programme and status of surface waterbodies, groundwater bodies, and bathing water quality reported.	To comply with the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (SI No. 722/2003). The regulation objectives include the attainment of good status in	Meath County Council Consultation with EPA and EPA water quality monitoring reports.

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Source
				waterbodies that are of lesser status at present and retaining good status or better where such status exists.	
	WQ_2	Implement and comply with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidelines	Number of incompatible developments (supported by the plan) permitted within flood risk areas.	Implementation of Flood Risk Management Guidelines and to ensure that developments granted planning permissions are on appropriately zoned lands.	Meath County Council Consultation with OPW
Air Quality & Noise (AN)	AN_1	Minimise emissions of pollutants to air associated with transport.	Number of exceedances of ambient air quality standards in the County, as monitored under the EPA's National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Network.	No significant adverse air quality impact on sensitive receptors. Adhere to relevant Development Management Standards defined in the CDP relating to the protection of air quality.	Meath County Council Consultation with Roads Authorities and EPA
	AN_2	Minimise noise emissions associated with traffic and transport.	Number of sensitive receptors exposed to noise nuisance.	No sensitive receptors exposed to nuisance noise in the County.	Meath County Council Consultation with Roads Authorities
	AN_3	Reduce reliance on motorised travel	Degree of modal shift transport options.	Maximum use of non-motorised transport options.	Meath County Council Consultation with NTA
	AN_4	Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality through the reduction of emissions and promotion of sustainable renewable energy and energy efficiency.	Number of exceedances of ambient air quality standards in the County, as monitored under the EPA's National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Network.	No significant adverse air quality impact on sensitive receptors. Adhere to relevant Development Management Standards defined in the CDP	Meath County Council Consultation with EPA

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Source
				relating to the protection of air quality.	
Climate Change (CC)	CC_1	Contribute to Ireland's commitment to realising a climate neutral economy by 2050.	Level of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions in the County. Level of renewable energy infrastructure in the County.	Reduce GHG emissions associated with the Energy sector in the County. Increase the level of renewable energy infrastructure in the County.	Meath County Council Consultation with EPA.
	CC_2	Support the delivery of national climate policy as appropriate to the county with the prioritisation and acceleration of evidence-based measures.	Level of GHG emissions in the County	Reduce GHG emissions for all sectors in the County.	Meath County Council Consultation with EPA.
	CC_3	Deliver Decarbonising Zones (DZ) within County Meath to act as a test for a range of climate mitigation and adaptation measures in a specifically defined area through the identification of emission sectors and outcomes that will assist in the delivery of the National Climate Objective.	Level of GHG emissions in the Decarbonising Zone.	Reduce Decarbonising Zone GHG emissions to Net Zero.	Meath County Council Consultation with EPA.
Material Assets (MA)	MA_1	Make best use of existing infrastructure and promote the sustainable development of new infrastructure to meet the needs of the county's population.	Number of incompatible developments (supported by the plan) adversely affecting existing or planned infrastructure, including water supply, wastewater management, energy and transport infrastructure.	No incompatible development (supported by the plan) adversely affecting existing or planned material assets infrastructure.	Meath County Council, Consultation with Uisce Éireann, Gas Networks Ireland, ESB Networks and Transport Infrastructure Ireland.
	MA_2	Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.	% change in modal split. Kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network.	Percentage increase in the number of public transport users in the County	Meath County Council Consultation with Transport Infrastructure Ireland / NTA.

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Source
			Kilometres of permanent integrated cycling network. Number of Electric Vehicle charging points in the county. Total Area of road reallocated for sustainable alternatives.	Increase kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network. Increase kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network. Increase number of Electric Vehicle charging points in the county. Increase Total Area of road reallocated for sustainable alternatives	
	MA_3	Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.	Tonnes of hazardous waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually. Tonnes of W.E.E.E. waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually. Tonnes of Bulky waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually. Tonnes of garden waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually.	Increase waste recycling in the County. Reduce waste generation in the County.	Meath County Council Consultation with Regional Waste Authority.
	MA_4	Promote sustainable water use and drainage management.	Level of water use in the County.	Reduced water use in the county.	Meath County Council Consultation with Uisce Éireann.

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Source
			Compliance with Sustainable Drainage System (SuDs) related development management standards defined in the CDP.	All development (supported by the plan) must comply with SuDs related development management standards defined in the CDP.	
Cultural Heritage (CH)	CH_1	Protect and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).	Percentage of features contained in the RMP (and, where relevant, the associated surrounding context) protected from adverse effects due to action and development occurring as a result of this plan.	No features contained in the RMP (nor the associated surrounding context) should be significantly adversely affected as a result of the implementation of this plan.	Meath County Council
	CH_2	Protect and avoid impact on places, features, buildings and landscapes of architectural heritage, (including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAHs)).	Percentage of features contained in the RPS and NIAH (and, where relevant, the associated surrounding context) protected from adverse effects due to action and development occurring as a result of this plan.	No features contained in the RPS and NIAH (nor the associated surrounding context) should be significantly adversely affected as a result of the implementation of this plan.	Meath County Council
Landscape & Visual (LV)	LV_1	Protect and maintain the special qualities of landscape character including coastal character within Meath.	Status of Landscape Character Areas, and Historic Landscape Character Areas. Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse impacts on Landscape Character Areas and, Historic Landscape Character Areas.	All action and development proposals supported by the plan must comply with policy objectives relating to the protection of Landscape Character Areas and Historic Landscape Character Areas defined in the CDP. No development supported by the plan should have an	Meath County Council

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Source
				adverse impact on Landscape Character Areas and Historic Landscape Character Areas.	
	LV_2	Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape designations as identified in the Meath CDP 2021-2027.	Status of High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects. Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse impacts on High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects.	All action and development proposals supported by the plan must comply with policy objectives relating to the protection of High Amenity Zone and Views and Prospects defined in the CDP. No development supported by the plan should have an adverse impact on High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects.	Meath County Council

Appendices

Appendix 8.1:

Detailed Assessment of Environmental Effects of the Implementation of the Draft Meath Climate Action Plan

Table 8.1A Environmental Assessment of the Actions of the Meath Draft Climate Action Plan

(Key: B – Biodiversity (Flora & Fauna), PHH – Population & Human Health, LSG – Land, Soils & Geology, WQ – Water Quality, AN – Air Quality & Noise, CC – Climate Change, MA – Material Assets, CH – Cultural Heritage, LV – Landscape & Visual)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
Goal 1 Develop appropriate structures and processes for directing and managing effective climate action **Thematic Area** Governance & Leadership **Objectives** 1.1 Support the development and implementation of positive climate action across all services and operations of Meath County Council, collaborating with others to	1	Implement ISO 50001 Energy Management System.	This action will result in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.	PHH (PHH1, PHH2), CC (CC1, CC2 & CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4)			B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), AN (AN1, AN2, AN3), CH (CH1, CH2), LV (LV1, LV2)
	2	Use green procurement where feasible in all procurement of good and services.	This action will result in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.	B (B1, B2, B3), PHH (PHH2), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), AN (AN1, AN2, AN4), CC (CC1, CC2), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4)			PHH (PHH1), AN (AN3), CC (CC3), CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	3	Prepare a Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Guidance Document to support the inclusion of the global goals in all plans, strategies and grant programmes published by the LA.	This action will result in overall positive effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.	B (B1, B2, B3), PHH (PHH1, PHH2), LSG (LSG1), WQ (WQ1, WQ2), AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4), CC (CC1, CC2, CC3), MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4), CH (CH1, CH2),			

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
enable and inspire endeavours to reduce their climate impact.				LV (LV1, LV2)			
	4	Mainstreaming of climate mitigation and adaptation considerations into all policies, strategies and plans adopted by LA.	This action will support in raising awareness regarding climate change and measures to mitigate and adapt to it. This action will have a likely positive effect on climate.	CC (CC1, CC2)			B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) WQ (WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CH1, CH2, CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) LV (LV1, LV2)
	5	Identify an appropriate monitoring and reporting protocol on the implementation of low carbon construction in public tenders and grant schemes.	This action will assist to monitor and report the implementation of carbon reduction measures and will result in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.	CC (CC1, CC2)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	6	Undertake annual audits of climate expenditure that considers cost effectiveness, efficiency, governance,	This action will assist in annual monitoring to ensure that effective implementation of the climate budget is undertaken	CC (CC1, CC2)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
		relevance, coherence and impacts (environment and societal).	and will result in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.				WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1 MA2 MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	7	Identify and put in place appropriate business continuity measures to ensure continuity of service provision during severe weather events.	This action will result in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.	PHH (PHH2)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC1, CC2, CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	8	Conduct detailed study of staff modal split to identify measures to reduce staff travel emissions.	This action will result in a better understanding of the baseline, encourage modal shift away from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles and encourage use of active travel measures, resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on	AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA1, MA2)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) CC (CC3) MA (MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
			the environmental themes and SEOs.				
	9	Organise awareness, information, knowledge sharing and capacity initiatives with staff on mitigation and adaptation measures.	This action will support the implementation of effective climate action measures and support behavioural change resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.	CC (CC1, CC2)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	10	Delivery of EV Charging Strategy for County Meath.	This action promotes energy efficiency and reduction of GHG emission and will have a positive effect on climate and air quality. However, in the absence of mitigation, works involved in the construction of infrastructure to support the strategy can have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effects on biodiversity, lands & soils (e.g. groundworks), water quality (e.g. run off), air quality & noise and cultural heritage.	AN (AN1, AN4) CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA2)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) AN (AN2, AN3) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
	11	Continue to support and expand the 'Bus It 2 School' Pathfinder Project.	This action promotes energy efficiency and reduction of GHG emission and will have a positive effect on climate, air quality and population and human health.	PHH (PHH2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3 AN4) CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA2)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	12	Develop strategic partnerships to assist in achieving emissions targets.	This action can potentially result in reduced energy consumption and reduced GHG emissions. This can result in positive effects on climate and assist in achieving national GHG emission reduction targets and requirements	CC (CC1, CC2)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	13	Ensure readily available information, advice, knowledge and awareness of climate friendly actions via LA Climate Action Website and social media posts.	This action will support in raising awareness regarding climate change and measures to mitigate and adapt to it. This action will have a positive effect on climate.	CC (CC1, CC2)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
							MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	14	LA staff to receive climate action training under Local Authority Climate Action Training Programme	This action will support in raising awareness regarding climate change and measures to mitigate and adapt to it. This action will have a positive effect on climate.	CC (CC1, CC2)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
Goal 2 Achieve local government carbon emissions and energy efficiency Targets for 2030 Thematic Area	1	Incorporate biodiversity, mitigation and adaptation actions into the design and delivery of urban regeneration plans.	This action will ensure biodiversity is appropriately protected and managed at the site along with climate mitigation and adaptation measures and will have a positive effects on the environment.	B (B3) CC (CC1, CC2)			B (B1, B2) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	2	Continue to work with appropriate external	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g.	WQ (WQ2) AN (AN1, AN4)	B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1)	AN (AN2) CH (CH1, CH2)	AN (AN3)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
Built Environment & Transport Objective 2.1 Minimize the Council's contribution to climate change by increasing energy efficiency, reducing carbon emissions, and encouraging sustainable opportunities for the broader County Meath community.		stakeholders to deliver social housing at a BER B2 or cost optimal standard including provision of Energy Efficient Design, on-site renewable energy, EV Charging Facilities, SuDs, and nature based solutions, as feasible.	renewable energy, EV charging etc.) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, land / soils / geology, water, air / noise, heritage and landscape.	CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA1, MA4)	WQ (WQ1)	LV (LV1, LV2)	PHH (PHH1, PHH2) CC (CC3) MA (MA2, MA3)
	3	Reduce and remove where feasible plastic waste generated, through removing single use plastics within LA owned buildings and services.	This action will support proper management of waste, reduce the risk of improper waste disposal and thereby reduce environmental pollution, and will have positive effects on the environment.	CC (CC1, CC2) PHH (PHH2) MA (MA3)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	4	Switch to digital marketing and advertising materials wherever possible. Reduce production/waste on programmes and posters.	This action would result in positive effects for the environment and climate and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA3)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA4)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
							CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	5	Switch out on cleansing products to eco-friendly products	This action would result in positive effects for the environment and reduce existing pollution risks.	B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1) CC (CC1, CC2),			PHH (PHH1) WQ (WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	6	Introduce water usage conservation measures within LA owned buildings	This action would result in positive effects for the environment and climate and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA4)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	7	Management of municipal waste from LA owned buildings. Increase recycling/organise waste collection and reduce general waste.	This action will support proper management of waste, reduce the risk of improper waste disposal and thereby reduce environmental pollution and will	CC (CC1, CC2) PHH (PHH2) MA (MA3)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4), CC (CC3)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
			have a positive effects on the environment.				MA (MA1, MA2, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	8	Management of energy efficient LA fleet including implementation of driving efficiency software and associated eco driving training for all staff driving LA fleet	This action will result in positive effects on the climate and air quality by reduction of emissions.	CC (CC1, CC2) AN (AN1, AN4)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN2, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	9	Undertake deep retrofit and install renewable energy sources as appropriate on LA owned buildings.	This action will support energy efficiency and reduction of GHG emissions reduction. This action will have positive effects on climate and air. However, in the absence of mitigation, works involved in retrofitting of existing infrastructure can have the potential to result in uncertain or negative environmental effects on biodiversity, water quality, air quality & noise, cultural heritage and landscape.	AN (AN1, AN4) CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA1)	CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)	B (B1, B2, B3) WQ (WQ1), AN (AN2)	LSG (LSG1) AN (AN3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) WQ (WQ2) CC (CC3) MA (MA2, MA3, MA4)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
	10	Construct all new LA properties to A2 Energy Rating or higher including provision of Energy Efficient Design, on-site renewable energy, EV Charging Facilities, SuDs, and nature based solutions, where feasible.	This action promotes energy efficiency and reduction of GHG emission and will have a positive effects on climate and air quality. However, in the absence of mitigation, construction works involved in the provision of this infrastructure can have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effects on biodiversity, water quality, land and soils, and cultural heritage.	PHH (PHH2) WQ (WQ2) AN (AN4) CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA1)		B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1) CH (CH1, CH2)	PHH (PHH1) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3) CC (CC3) MA (MA3) LV (LV1, LV2)
	11	All Buy and Renew acquisition properties should be retrofitted to a B2 BER rating or higher including provision of Energy Efficient Design, on-site renewable energy, EV Charging Facilities, SuDs, and nature based solutions, as feasible.	This action will support energy efficiency and reduction of GHG emissions reduction. This action will have positive effects on climate and air quality. However, in the absence of mitigation, works involved in retrofitting of existing infrastructure can have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effects on biodiversity, lands & soils, water quality and cultural heritage.	PHH (PHH2) WQ (WQ2) AN (AN4) CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA1)		B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1) CH (CH1, CH2)	PHH (PHH1) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3) CC (CC3) MA (MA3) LV (LV1, LV2)
	12	Increase energy efficiency of ICT Infrastructure.	This action will have a positive effects on the environment.	CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA1)			B (B1, B2, B3)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
							PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	13	Deliver public lighting LED retrofit project under PLEEP (Public Lighting Energy Efficient Project).	This action aims to deliver LED lighting infrastructure. This has potential for positive effects on the environment.	AN (AN4) CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA1)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3) CC (CC3) MA (MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	14	New Building projects designed to nZEB standard including provision of Energy Efficient Design, on-site renewable energy, EV Charging Facilities, SuDs, and nature based solutions.	This action will support energy efficiency and reduction of GHG emissions reduction. This action will have positive effect on climate. However, in the absence of mitigation, works involved in	WQ (WQ2) AN (AN1, AN4) CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA1, MA4)	B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1)	AN (AN2) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)	AN (AN3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) CC (CC3) MA (MA2, MA3)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
			provision of new infrastructure can have the potential to result in uncertain or negative environmental effects on biodiversity, lands & soils, water quality, cultural heritage and landscape.				
	15	Promote the reuse and refurbishment of vacant and derelict properties in town centres and simultaneously promote the sustainable use of these properties for appropriate active town centre uses.	This action will provide support urban regeneration and have positive to population and human health and climate change. However, in the absence of mitigation, works involved in refurbishment can have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effects on biodiversity and cultural heritage.	CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA1)		B (B3) CH (CH1, CH2)	B (B1, B2) PHH (PHH1, (PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA2, MA3, MA4) LV (LV1, LV2)
	16	Increase active travel usage in town centres through improved sustainable active travel proposals and an enhanced pedestrian and public realm environment.	While the overall intention is positive, actions could have uncertain effects for existing biodiversity.	PHH (PHH2) AN (AN1, AN3, AN4) CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA1, MA2)		B (B1, B2, B3), WQ (WQ1)	B (B1, B2, B3), PHH (PHH1) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1) AN (AN2) CC (CC3) MA (MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
	17	Explore the feasibility of sustainable energy and heating solutions in County Meath	This action will result in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs	AN (AN4) CC (CC1, CC2, CC3) MA (MA1)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3) MA (MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
Goal 3 Protect and enhance Meath's natural environment by supporting biodiversity and increasing climate resilience Thematic Area Natural Environment & Green Infrastructure	1	Installation of water butts at public buildings, to aid tidy towns committees, staff and contractors access a sustainable water source for garden maintenance.	This action will promote sustainable water use and is will not result in any adverse environmental effects.	WQ (WQ1, WQ2) MA (MA4)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4), CC (CC1, CC2, CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	2	Commence a programme of auditing of LA lands to carry out ecological and habitat surveys and highlight areas at risk and those suitable for restoration and enhanced carbon storage.	This action will provide useful baseline data and will not result in any adverse environmental effects	B (B1, B2, B3) LV (LV1)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
Objective 3.1 Support the responsible management, protection and enhancement of Meath's natural heritage, biodiversity, and natural environment							CC (CC1, CC2, CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV2)
	3	Develop options for the delivery of a National Implementation Strategy for Nature-Based Solutions and interim guidance to the management of rainwater and surface water run-off in urban areas.	This action will provide useful baseline data for delivery of nature-based solution and water management and will not result in any adverse environmental effects.	B (B3) WQ (WQ1) CC (CC1, CC2)			B (B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC1, CC2, CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	4	Plant native woodland on appropriate LA owned lands.	This action is likely to have a positive environmental effect on many environmental factors. However, the action could also have uncertain effects for existing biodiversity.	LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN4) CC (CC1, CC2, CC3)		B (B1, B2, B3)	PHH (PHH1, PHH2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	5	Major Emergency Plan - co-ordinate update of emergency response plans and revise	This action will result in likely positive effects for population and human health. No likely	PHH (PHH2)			B (B1, B2,B3) PHH (PHH1) LSG (LSG1)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
		based on learnings of response to events, having regard to environment sensitivities	adverse environmental effect is predicted.				WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC1, CC2, CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	6	Identification of Critical Infrastructure Routes on the existing network for climate related extreme weather events.	This action will identify potential for extreme weather-related issues on key infrastructure routes for improved management of and reaction to same. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	PHH (PHH2) MA (MA1)			PHH (PHH1) B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WA (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC1, CC2, CC3) MA (MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	7	Develop and implement a County (Local) Biodiversity Action Plan, to protect and enhance local biodiversity, including climate-relevant measures	This action will ensure biodiversity is appropriately protected and managed at the site along with climate mitigation and adaptation measures. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	B (B1, B2, B3) CC (CC1, CC2)			PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WA (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
							CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	8	Undertake climate risk assessment of local authority owned heritage assets (natural, built and cultural). Carry out regular programme of inspection, maintenance and phased conservation works to develop climate resilience.	This action will provide useful baseline data for climate risk assessment and assist to develop climate resilience measures. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA1)		B (B1, B2, B3) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) CH (CH1, CH2)	PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA2, MA3, MA4) LV (LV1, LV2)
	9	Carry out an assessment of Section 4 discharges to Water Licenses	This action will provide useful baseline data for Section 4 discharges and water licences. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	B (B1, B3) PHH (PHH2) WQ (WQ1)			B (B2) PHH (PHH1) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC1, CC2, CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	10	Support the creation of community gardens through partnership with local communities and external agencies.	This action will increase engagement with the environment and is likely to have a slight positive environmental effect on biodiversity, water management, carbon	B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN4) CC (CC1, CC2)			PHH (PHH1, PHH2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
			sequestration, soil management, climate and air quality. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.				CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	11	Support and facilitate the planting of groups of trees within the boundary/built footprint of existing built-up areas.	This action will increase engagement with the environment and is likely to have a slight positive environmental effect on biodiversity, water management, carbon sequestration, soil management, climate and air quality. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	B (B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) AN (AN4) CC (CC1, CC2)			B (B1) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
Goal 4 Mobilise Climate Action in Local Communities, whilst achieving a just transition Thematic Area	1	Installation of water refill stations at public buildings / amenity areas, to reduce the use of single use plastics.	This action will reduce the use of single use plastic and reduce the risk of improper waste disposal and thereby reduce environmental pollution. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	CC (CC1, CC2) PHH (PHH2) MA (MA3)			B (B1, B2,B3) PHH (PHH1) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
Communities: Resilience & Transition Objective 4.1 Promote through collaboration and partnership sustainable, inclusive, and resilient communities, focusing on actions which promote health and wellbeing benefits and supports local economies.	2	Expand Trim Air Quality Project to other Decarbonising Zones	This action would provide valuable baseline data on air quality and will thereby assist in air quality reporting. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	PHH (PHH1) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	3	Monitor implementation of flood risk management guidelines in planning applications, having regard to environmental sensitivities e.g. biodiversity, archaeology, amenity value.	Monitoring programme will lead to positive environmental consequences. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA1, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)			PHH (PHH1) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA2, MA3)
	4	Expand operation and availability of bike and car share schemes. Promote bike and car share scheme.	This action supports the development of bike and car share infrastructure. The provision of these proposals have the potential for likely positive effects on population and human health through the promotion of active travel modes that benefit human health. The promotion of bike and car share schemes also has potential for likely positive	PHH (PHH2) AN (AN1, AN3, AN4) CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA1, MA2)			B (B1, B2, B3) MA (MA1) PHH (PHH1) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN2) CC (CC3) MA (MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
			effects on climate change and air quality due to reduction of GHG emissions. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.				
	5	Identify and map areas most susceptible to climate related extreme weather events on the road network	This action would provide valuable baseline data on climate change susceptible areas. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	PHH (PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA1, MA2, MA4)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA3) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	6	Promote & publicise the benefits of using the Home Energy Kits from the Library.	This action will raise awareness and provide better understanding of the energy usage at home and help improve energy efficiency. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	CC (CC1, CC2)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	7	Increase number of safe routes to school scheme, where feasible.	This action supports the development of safe routes to school scheme infrastructure. The provision of these proposals	PHH (PHH2) AN (AN1, AN3, AN4) CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA2)		B (B1, B2, B3) WQ (WQ1)	B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ2) AN (AN2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
			have the potential for likely positive effects on population and human health through the promotion of active travel modes that benefit human health. The promotion of this schemes also has potential for likely positive effects on climate change and air quality due to reduction of GHG emissions. However, in the absence of mitigation, infrastructure works involved as part of these proposals have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effects on biodiversity and water quality.				MA (MA1, MA3, MA4) CC (CC3) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	8	To liaise with the OPW in the identification of new or the reinforcement of existing flood defences and protection measures.	This action will enhance flood protection measures and provide likely positive effects on water management and population and human health. This action will also support to mitigate and adapt to climate change. However, in the absence of mitigation, infrastructure works for provision of flood defences	PHH (PHH2) WQ (WQ2) MA (MA1, MA4) CC (CC1, CC2)	B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1) MA (MA3, MA4) LV (LV1, LV2)	AN (AN1, AN2) CH (CH1, CH2)	MA (MA1) PHH (PHH1) AN (AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
			can result in a range of potential slight to significant negative environmental effects on biodiversity, water quality (run-off during construction works), lands and soils, air quality & noise, cultural heritage and landscape.				
	9	Review of Flood events and Flood susceptibility of infrastructure and liaise with relevant MCC Sections and Uisce Éireann to identify assets at risk from flooding/extreme rainfall to inform and implement low-cost 'minor works' flood relief schemes	This action will enhance flood protection measures and provide likely positive effects on water management and population and human health. This action will also support to mitigate and adapt to climate change. However, in the absence of mitigation, infrastructure works for provision of flood defences can result in a range of potential negative or uncertain environmental effects on biodiversity, water quality (run-off during construction works), lands and soils, air quality & noise, cultural heritage and landscape.	PHH (PHH2) WQ (WQ2) MA (MA1, MA4) CC (CC1, CC2)	B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1) MA (MA3, MA4) LV (LV1, LV2)	AN (AN1, AN2) CH (CH1, CH2)	PHH (PHH1) AN (AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
	10	Carry out a Coastal Erosion and Flood Risk Study for County Meath and implement the recommendations while prioritising nature based solutions.	This action will enhance flood protection measures and provide likely positive effects on water management and population and human health. This action will also support to mitigate and adapt to climate change. However, in the absence of mitigation, infrastructure works for provision of flood and coastal defences can result in a range of potential negative or uncertain environmental effects on biodiversity, water quality (run-off during construction works), lands and soils, air quality & noise, cultural heritage and landscape.	PHH (PHH2) WQ (WQ2) MA (MA1, MA4)	B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1) CC (CC1, CC2) LV (LV1, LV2)	AN (AN1, AN2) MA (MA3) CH (CH1, CH2)	MA (MA1) PHH (PHH1) AN (AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA2)
	11	Develop and provide information on Sustainable Living to engage Council Tenants on how they can reduce consumption of energy, water and waste	This action will raise awareness and provide better understanding of the energy usage, water consumption and waste generation at home and help improve energy efficiency and water/water management. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA3, MA4)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2) CH (CH1, CH2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
							LV (LV1, LV2)
	12	Promote, support the Sustainable Energy Communities Programme and deliver workshops	This action will raise awareness and provide better understanding of the energy usage and help improve energy efficiency. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.				B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC1, CC2, CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	13	Administer and support Strand 1 & 1A of Community Climate Action Programme to deliver selected Climate Action projects.	This action will support to build low carbon communities. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	CC (CC1, CC2)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	14	Encourage all events approved by MCC to incorporate sustainability and integrated consideration for biodiversity	This action will incorporate sustainability and increase awareness of biodiversity and receiving environment as a	B (B3)			B (B1, B2) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
		and other environmental sensitives	whole. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.				WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC1, CC2, CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	15	Guided by the Memorandum of understanding signed between the GAA and CCMA, towards working together on sustainability and climate action projects, engage with the Green Club Programme through a nominated lead, working with the CARO and GAA, in the promotion and support of projects by participating clubs, to meet the objectives, and during key phases, of the programme to 2029	No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	CC (CC1, CC2,)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	16	Develop and introduce a "Greening Festival" funding criteria for a selection of Meath-based festivals.	This action will provide overarching environmental benefits. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	B (B3)			B (B1, B2) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
							AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC1, CC2, CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
Goal 5 Create a culture of sustainability, promoting a circular economy throughout the County Thematic Area Sustainability & Resource Management Objective 5.1 Support circular economy initiatives and infrastructure, focusing on	1	Increase use of recycling and recovery for bulky household items, hazardous waste, electrical waste and green waste.	This action will provide behavioural change and raise awareness on circular economy principles. This action will result in reduction of GHG emissions and provide likely positive effects for climate change and waste management. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA3)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	2	Increase kerbside collection of Household Organic Waste using Brown Bin Scheme. Countywide Awareness Campaign in relation to roll out of Brown Bin using Radio, Print and social media	This action will provide behavioural change and raise awareness on proper waste segregation. This action will result in reduction of GHG emissions and provide likely positive effects for climate change and waste management.	CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA3)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA4)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
prevention, reuse, repair and recycling and promote green business opportunities.			No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.				CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	3	Support the establishment of 'Circular Economy Hubs' that act as physical material hubs for the drop-off and recirculation of materials and products from and for both commercial and residential activities	This action will provide behavioural change and raise awareness on circular economy principles. This action will result in reduction of GHG emissions and provide likely positive effects for climate change and waste management. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA3)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	4	Engage with businesses and residents to support adoption of reused and recycled materials	This action will provide behavioural change and raise awareness on circular economy principles. This action will result in reduction of GHG emissions and provide likely positive effects for climate change and waste management. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA3)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	5	Support locally produced sustainable food products and promote sustainable farm practices.	No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	CC (CC1, CC2) PHH (PHH2) LSG (LSG1)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
							AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	6	Provision of a 2 Day Green for Business Environmental Audit amongst small businesses in the County (1-50 employees).	The audit process will help to raise awareness amongst small businesses on measures to reduce carbon emissions. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA1)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	7	Support business in their transition via Government initiatives e.g., green for micro	This action will support to build low carbon communities and will not result in adverse environmental effects. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA1)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
							LV (LV1, LV2)
	8	Encourage and promote projects that will contribute positively and grow the circular and bioeconomy to promote sustainable rural and urban low carbon economic development	This action will support to build low carbon communities and will not result in adverse environmental effects. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	CC (CC1, CC2, CC3) MA (MA1)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) MA (MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	9	Promotion of local jobs and local workspaces to reduce the amount of commuting outside of the county.	This action will promote opportunities for local jobs and reduce travel based emissions. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	PHH (PHH2) AN (AN1, AN4) CC (CC1, CC2, CC3) MA (MA1)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN4) MA (MA2, MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	10	Support development of enterprise hubs to facilitate remote working	This action will promote opportunities for remote working and reduce travel based emissions. However, in the absence of mitigation, works involved as part of these proposals have the potential for uncertain	AN (AN1, AN4) CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA1)		B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN2) MA (MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)	PHH (PHH1, PHH2) AN (AN3) CC (CC3) MA (MA2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
			environmental effects on biodiversity, water quality (run-off during construction works), air quality & noise, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape.				
	11	Implement improved management of construction and demolition (C&D) waste from LA activities.	This action will provide behavioural change and raise awareness on circular economy principles. This action will result in reduction of GHG emissions and provide likely positive effects for climate change and waste management. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA3)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)
	12	In4Green Urbact Network Project: Complete the Integrated Action Plan for Navan. (Plan objectives include strengthening walking and cycling, and optimising traffic access to reduce through traffic and to facilitate high quality public transport services; behavioural change linking to 2050 Vision)	This action supports the development of active travel infrastructure and high quality public transport services. The provision of active travel proposals have the potential for likely positive effects on population and human health and through the promotion of active travel modes that benefit human health. The promotion	PHH (PHH2) AN (AN1, AN3, AN4) CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA1, MA2)		B (B1, B2, B3) WQ (WQ1)	PHH (PHH1) CC (CC3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ2) AN (AN2) MA (MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
			of modal shift also has potential for likely positive effects on climate change and air quality due to reduction of GHG emissions. However, in the absence of mitigation, works involved as part of these proposals have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effects on biodiversity, water quality (run-off during construction works), air quality & noise, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape & visual.				
	13	Develop a waste management plan with particular attention to the circular economy principles. Promotion of the circular economy e.g., recycling facilities / repair hubs, and Bike repair days to be organised. On street waste segregation to be trialled.	This action will provide behavioural change and raise awareness on circular economy principles. This action will result in reduction of GHG emissions and provide likely positive effects for climate change and waste management. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	CC (CC1, CC2) MA (MA3)			B (B1, B2, B3) PHH (PHH1, PHH2) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) CC (CC3) MA (MA1, MA2, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)

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