

# VARIATION No.2 - MEATH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2027 SEA SCREENING REPORT

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## Strategic Assessment **Built Environment**

Client:

Meath County Council

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## DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

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## Contents

1	Introduction .....	1
2	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) .....	2
2.1	Introduction.....	2
2.2	Appropriate Assessment (AA).....	3
3	Description of the Proposed Variation No.2 to the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 .....	4
3.1	Overview .....	4
3.2	Public Consultation.....	5
4	Screening for Requirement for SEA .....	6
5	Recommendation on Requirement for SEA.....	14
6	References.....	15



# 1 Introduction

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

In accordance with Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, Meath County Council is proposing Variation No. 2 of the County Development Plan 2021-2027.

Brady Shipman Martin (BSM) has been appointed by Meath County Council to carry out screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) in respect of the *Draft Variation No. 2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027* (hereafter the 'Draft Variation No.2').

This report documents the screening exercise for SEA in respect of Draft Variation No. 2 for the purposes of consultation, in accordance with Article 13K of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended and S.I. 436 of 2004 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. 201 of 2011.

This SEA Screening should be read in conjunction with Draft Variation No. 2 of Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (MCC, March 2024) and the Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report (BSM, 2024).

Meath County Council is also proposing *Draft Variation No. 1 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027*. Draft Variation No.1 is subject to a separate screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

## 2 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

### 2.1 Introduction

Directive 2001/42/EC<sup>1</sup> of the European Parliament and of the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the 'SEA Directive') requires EU Member States to assess the 'likely significant environmental effects' of plans and programmes prior to their adoption. This provides for the assessment of strategic environmental considerations at an early stage in the decision-making process.

Article 1 of the SEA Directive states that:

*"The objective of this directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment."*

The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish law through:

- Statutory Instrument (S.I.) No. 435 of 2004 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011); and
- S.I. No. 436 of 2004 (the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).

S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, relates to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes prepared for *"agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use"*<sup>2</sup>.

S.I. No. 436 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011, relates to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes where the context requires, *"a development plan, a variation of a development plan, a local area plan (or an amendment thereto), regional planning guidelines or a planning scheme"*<sup>3</sup>.

As the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 is a statutory plan, the *Draft Variation No. 2* is being screened for the requirement for SEA under the requirements of S.I. No. 436 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011.

This screening report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the S.I. No. 436 of 2004 (as amended). Article 13(K)(1) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended states that:

*"Where a planning authority proposes to make a variation of a development plan under section 13 of the Act, it shall, before giving notice under section 13(2) of the Act, consider whether or not the proposed variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, taking into account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A."*

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<sup>1</sup> SEA Directive: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

<sup>2</sup> See Section 9(1)(a)

<sup>3</sup> Section 5(c)

## 2.2 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the 'Habitats Directive') require Appropriate Assessment (AA) to be carried out where a plan or project is likely to have a significant impact on a Natura 2000 site. Natura 2000 sites include:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC), designated for the conservation of Annex I habitats and Annex II species of the Habitats Directive; and
- Special Protection Areas (SPA), designated for the protection of Annex I birds of Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (the 'Birds Directive') and other regularly occurring migratory birds and their habitats.

Stage 1 in the AA process is to establish whether AA is required for the particular plan or project. This stage is referred to as 'screening for the requirement for AA', and its purpose is to determine:

- Whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the site; and
- Whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives.

As set out in Department Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08<sup>4</sup> (15 February 2008), Screening for AA is of relevance to SEA in that *"where following screening, it is found that the draft plan or amendment may have an impact on the conservation status of a Natura 2000 site or that such an impact cannot be ruled out, adopting the precautionary approach:*

- An AA of the plan must be carried out, and
- In any case where SEA would not otherwise be required, it must also be carried out."

Hence, if the Draft Plan requires AA, it shall also require SEA.

The *Draft Variation No.2* has been screened for the requirement for AA. The AA Screening Report, (BSM, 2024: refer to standalone report under separate cover) has concluded that:

*"Following review of the Draft Variation No.2 against the Conservation Objectives of the relevant European sites, it is concluded that there is no possibility that the implementation of the Draft Variation No.2 could result in any likely significant effects on European sites on its own or in combination with other plans and programmes. This conclusion was reached without considering or taking into account mitigation measures or measures intended to avoid or reduce any impact on European sites.*

*In view of best scientific knowledge therefore, this report concludes that the Draft Variation No.2 to the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, individually or in combination with another plan or project, is not likely to have a significant effect on European sites under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) in light of their conservation objectives. The Draft Variation does not require an Appropriate Assessment and the preparation of a Natura Impact Report."*

## 2.3 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

A SFRA Screening has been undertaken for *Draft Variation No.2* by JBA Consulting (March, 2024). The SFRA undertakes a flood risk assessment screening for the additional zoning considerations, review and update Flood Zone mapping with any more up to date sources and to review additional zoning considerations. Refer to the standalone SFRA Screening report (JBA Consulting, 2024) prepared as part of *Draft Variation No.2* for further details.

<sup>4</sup> NPWS SEA letter: <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

## 3 Description of the Proposed Variation No.2 to the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

### 3.1 Overview

The purpose of Variation No. 2 is to give effect to a range of land use zoning amendments. These amendments are necessary to reflect the existing and current land use that has come to the attention of Meath County Council since the adoption of the CDP. These are not additional zonings for new development proposals but are being brought forward to reflect the current land use (or approved land use by way of a planning permission) and to avoid any non-conforming land use on a zoning.

Other zoning changes being brought forward relate to feedback from community consultations and redefining the land use boundary in line with the natural field boundary to ensure appropriate roll-out of development.

A total of 9 no. Landuse Zoning Maps will be changed and 1no. new land zoning map will be introduced to reflect the zoning amendment to lands at Killeen Castle. It is also proposed to omit the reference to 'a maximum of 500 residential units' from Section 7.0 Masterplan in the Dunboyne, Clonee and Pace Written Statement in Volume 2 of the CDP on lands at Dunboyne North adjoining Pace Rail Station. Digitisation of the World Heritage Site boundary also forms part of Variation No. 2.

Draft Variation No.2 proposes to change the zoning objective of the following land parcels to reflect revised and new circumstances that have emerged since the adoption of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027:

- A. **Dunshaughlin Land Use Zoning Map:** Re-zoning of 6.7 ha. of RA Rural Area and A2 New Residential lands to A1 Existing Residential. The proposed A1 Existing Residential zoning will reflect the permitted and commenced residential development for 212 residential units permitted under Strategic Housing Development SH307244 to Loughglynn Development Limited.
- B. **Dunboyne Land Use Zoning Map:** Rezoning of 23.6 ha. of RA Rural Area to A1 Existing Residential to reflect the existing residential use for the 99 dwelling units which exist/under construction on this site.
- C. **Longwood Land Use Zoning Map:** Re-zoning of approx. 1.37 ha of land from RA Rural Area to A1 Existing Residential to reflect the existing permitted and commenced residential development as per Planning Reference No. TA/190892 for 36 dwelling units.
- D. **Trim Land Use Zoning Map:** Relocation of Specific Spot Objective "TRM OBJ 16" included in the Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027 from G1 Community Infrastructure zoned lands at Iffernock to G1 zoned land South of the R160 at Commons, recently acquired by the Department of Education for the development of a school campus.
- E. **Navan Land Use Zoning Map:** Re-zoning from A1 Existing Residential to C1 Mixed Use at Flowerhill in Navan to provide for a greater mix of uses in at this location.
- F. **Killeen Castle** in a new Land Use Zoning Map: Re-zoning to change from RA Rural Area to D1 Tourism with an update to ED POL 59to facilitate the completion of residential units as permitted.
- G. **Ratoath Land Use Zoning Map** to extend the A2 New Residential land use zoning out to the permitted, partly constructed, and the preferred route for the remaining section of the Ratoath Outer Relief Road (RORR) design boundary.
- H. **Ratoath Land Use Zoning Map:** Re-zoning from A1 Existing Residential and B1 Commercial Town and Village Centre to G1 Community Infrastructure to provide for the development of community uses at this location.

- I. **Athboy Land Use Zoning Map:** Re-zoning of a triangular wedge of lands measuring approx. 0.08 hectares from G1 Community Infrastructure to A2 New Residential to delineate the land use zonings to align with the natural field boundaries in the area and to ensure the land use zoning appropriately reflects the optimal use for the lands.
- J. Proposed text amendment to Section 7.0 of **Dunboyne, Clonee and Pace Written Statement**, Vol. 2 of the Meath CDP (proposed text in blue and deleted text in ~~strikethrough~~).
- “Employment, education (including third level), residential, commercial, and open space /amenity. In regard to the residential element of the Master Plan, it shall be a requirement that proposals will include for the provision of a maximum of 500 residential units with in a range of typologies densities to support the delivery of a sustainable “live work” community-based model.”*
- K. **Volume 3 Map 8.1 Brú na Bóinne:** Pursuant to the UNESCO requirement, the National Monument Service (NMS) recently carried out a GIS digitisation exercise of plotting the boundary of the inscribed World Heritage Property. This GIS plotting exercise has clarified the boundary of the Core and Buffer areas as inscribed and the proposed variation includes a map of Brú na Bóinne with this digitised boundary layer.

For further details refer to the Draft Variation No.2 of Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (MCC, March 2024).

## 3.2 Public Consultation

The Draft Variation No. 2 will be subject to public consultation for a period of four weeks. The Council’s Chief Executive will submit to the elected members a report on submissions and observations made in relation to the Draft Variation No. 2. The Members will consider the Draft Variation and the Chief Executive’s Report.

Draft Variation No.2 is accompanied by supporting reports – the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report, the Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report, the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and Settlement Capacity Audit (SCA).

Section 13(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) states that-

*13 (2) Where a planning authority proposes to make a variation in a development plan, it shall—*

*(a) send notice and copies of the proposed variation of the development plan to the Minister, the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, the Office of the Planning Regulator, the Board, the relevant regional assembly, and, where appropriate, to any adjoining planning authority, the prescribed authorities, and any local community development committee within the area of the development plan,*

*(b) publish notice of the proposed variation of the development plan in one or more newspapers circulating in that area.*

Further details regarding public consultation are included in the Draft Variation No.2 of Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (MCC, March 2024).



## 4 Screening for Requirement for SEA

The screening for the requirement for SEA has been conducted in accordance with the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of S.I. No. 436 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011.

The criteria are set out under two principal headings:

- Characteristics of the Plan; and
- Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected.

The corresponding sub-criteria are addressed in [Tables 4.1](#) and [4.2](#), below, respectively.

**Table 4.1: Characteristics of the Plan, having regard, in particular, to:**

*The degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions, or by allocating resources*

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

The proposed Draft Variation No. 2 to the County Development Plan proposes a number of land use zoning amendments that reflect revised and new circumstances that have emerged since the adoption of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, as follows:

- A. Dunshaughlin Land Use Zoning Map:** Re-zoning of 6.7 ha of RA Rural Area and A2 New Residential lands to A1 Existing Residential. The proposed A1 Existing Residential zoning will reflect the permitted and commenced residential development for 212 residential units permitted under Strategic Housing Development SH307244 to Loughglynn Development Limited.
- B. Dunboyne Land Use Zoning Map:** Rezoning of 23.6 ha of RA Rural Area to A1 Existing Residential to reflect the existing residential use for the 99 dwelling units which exist/under construction on this site.
- C. Longwood Land Use Zoning Map:** Re-zoning of approx. 1.37 ha of land from RA Rural Area to A1 Existing Residential to reflect the existing permitted and commenced residential development as per Planning Reference No. TA/190892 for 36 dwelling units.
- D. Trim Land Use Zoning Map:** Relocation of Specific Spot Objective "TRM OBJ 16" included in the Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027 from G1 Community Infrastructure zoned lands at Iffernock to G1 zoned land South of the R160 at Commons, recently acquired by the Department of Education for the development of a school campus.
- E. Navan Land Use Zoning Map:** Re-zoning from A1 Existing Residential to C1 Mixed Use at Flowerhill in Navan to provide for a greater mix of uses in at this location.
- F. Killeen Castle in a new Land Use Zoning Map:** Re-zoning to change from RA Rural Area to D1 Tourism with an update to ED POL 59 to facilitate the completion of residential units as permitted.
- G. Ratoath Land Use Zoning Map** to extend the A2 New Residential land use zoning out to the permitted, partly constructed, and the preferred route for the remaining section of the Ratoath Outer Relief Road (RORR) design boundary.

- H. **Ratoath Land Use Zoning Map:** Re-zoning from A1 Existing Residential and B1 Commercial Town and Village Centre to G1 Community Infrastructure to provide for the development of community uses at this location.
- I. **Athboy Land Use Zoning Map:** Re-zoning of a triangular wedge of lands measuring approx. 0.08 hectares from G1 Community Infrastructure to A2 New Residential to delineate the land use zonings to align with the natural field boundaries in the area and to ensure the land use zoning appropriately reflects the optimal use for the lands.
- J. Proposed text amendment to Section 7.0 of **Dunboyne, Clonee and Pace Written Statement**, Vol. 2 of the Meath CDP (proposed text in blue and deleted text in ~~strikethrough~~).
- “Employment, education (including third level), residential, commercial, and open space /amenity. In regard to the residential element of the Master Plan, it shall be a requirement that proposals will include for the provision of a maximum of 500 residential units with in a range of typologies densities to support the delivery of a sustainable “live work” community-based model.”*
- K. **Volume 3 Map 8.1 Brú na Bóinne:** Pursuant to the UNESCO requirement, the National Monument Service (NMS) recently carried out a GIS digitisation exercise of plotting the boundary of the inscribed World Heritage Property. This GIS plotting exercise has clarified the boundary of the Core and Buffer areas as inscribed and the proposed variation includes a map of Brú na Bóinne with this digitised boundary layer.

All of the amendments, which refer to small, localised situations, are necessary to correct and reflect the existing and current land uses that has come to the attention of the Meath County Council since the adoption of the CDP. These are not additional zonings for new development proposals but are being brought forward to reflect the current land use (or approved land use by way of a planning permission) and to avoid any non-conforming land use on a zoning. As such:

- Amendments No. A, B & C are brought forward to correct / reflect current and permitted land use.
- Amendment No. D is brought forward to relocate a school site objective from one zoned area in Trim to another nearby area, which is already zoned for ‘Community Infrastructure’ development.
- Amendments No. E, H & I are brought forward to change the existing zoning on small discrete areas from one development land use to another development land use.
- Amendment No. F is brought forward to reflect completion of permitted development and to reflect the character and nature of previously permitted development on the lands.
- Amendment No. G is brought forward to reflect the part permitted and part planned development for delivery of road infrastructure.
- Amendment No. J is brought forward to remove a stated maximum cap for the residential element within an area for which a masterplan is required.
- Amendment No. K is brought forward to clarify / correct a mapping boundary.

With the exception of a minor update to ED POL 59 (Killeen Castle), there are no changes to the existing polices or objectives within the adopted Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. Taking into account the existing land use zonings, the permitted development pertaining to the lands and

the limited nature of the proposed amendments, it is assessed that there will be no significant effect on the environment arising from the variation.

*The degree to which the plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy*

Under the Spatial Planning Hierarchy in Ireland, the Meath County Development Plan (CDP) 2021-2027 sits at the Local Government level and is below the Regional, National and International levels. The CDP influences plans at a lower level of plan hierarchy, including Local Area Plans and other area-specific plans such as Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Local Heritage Plan, Local Climate Action etc. The CDP was subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

Previous local area plans within Meath including Dunshaughlin, Dunboyne Clone Pace and Ratoath, have been superseded by the Written Statement and Land Use Zoning Map contained within Volume 2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

Draft Variation No.2 corrects and reflects revised and new circumstances that have emerged since the adoption of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and will not result in significant effect on the receiving environment. The proposed variation does not influence other plans in the hierarchy of land use plans.

*The relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development*

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 provides a positive vision for Meath which will enable the county to continue to make a significant contribution to national economic recovery by promoting sustainable development and facilitating stable economic growth thus delivering long term benefits for the County.

The content of the Development Plan has been informed by SEA, AA and SFRA undertaken as parallel processes in tandem with each stage of the Development Plan, thereby ensuring full integration and consideration of environmental issues.

Draft Variation No. 2 is compatible and complementary with the strategies, policies and objectives of the Development Plan relating to compact growth, population distribution, settlement strategy, urban regeneration, mixed-use development and with environmental protection. The re-zoned lands are compliant with the National Policy Objective contained within the National Planning Framework.

A Settlement Capacity Audit has been undertaken and accompanies Draft Variation No. 2 to inform the Council in respect of the land use strategy and application of the 'Tiered Approach to Zoning' as required by Appendix 3 of the National Planning Framework (NPF). All lands in proposed Variation No. 2 are considered to be "Tier 1 – Serviced Lands" and comply with the zoning considerations outlined in the Development Plan Guidelines, June 2022, and the 'Tiered Approach to Zoning' in Appendix 3 of the National Planning Framework.

The Core Strategy Vision for CDP states –

*"To continue to support the creation of socio-economically progressive vibrant, dynamic, and healthy communities throughout the County and ensure that future growth is based on the principles of sustainable development that delivers a high-quality living and working environment that meets the needs of all residents, in accordance with National and Regional Guidance."*

The CDP includes a wide range of policies in relation to environmental considerations. The proposed variation does not include changes to the above core strategy vision. With the exception of a minor update to ED POL 59 (Killeen Castle), the proposed amendments do not include changes to any objectives or policies of the CDP as adopted and which underwent Strategic Environmental Assessment.

The re-zoning of lands, minor amendment to the written statement of Dunboyne, Clonee and Pace and digitisation of the boundary for Brú na Bóinne as detailed in Section 3 does not alter the environmental considerations integrated into the CDP. The proposed change in zoning would reflect the current land use (or approved land use by the way of planning permission) and will avoid any non-conforming land use as zoning.

This would support developments having regard to appropriate environmental considerations integrated into the County Development Plan.

#### *Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme*

The environmental problems relevant to the Meath CDP 2021-2027 are detailed in the Strategic Environmental Assessment prepared for the plan.

Considering the existing land use zonings and the permitted development pertaining to the lands, the proposed amendments are limited nature, and they will not result in significant effects on the environment. Therefore, the proposed Variation does not alter or change in any way findings of the SEA for the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

#### *The relevance of the plan for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste management or water protection)*

The CDP includes a wide range of policies and objectives in relation to implementation of European Union legislation on the environment. With the exception of a minor update to ED POL 59 (Killeen Castle), the proposed amendments do not include changes to any objectives or policies of the CDP as adopted and which underwent Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment.

Taking account of the existing land use zonings and the permitted development pertaining to the lands, the proposed amendments are limited nature and they will not result in significant effects on the environment.

**Table 4.2: Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:**

#### *The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects*

Variation No. 2 to the County Development Plan proposes a range of land use zoning amendments, minor amendment to the written statement of Dunboyne Clonee and Pace and digitisation of the boundary for Brú na Bóinne that differs from the adopted County Development Plan.

These amendments are necessary to reflect the existing and current land use that has come to the attention of the Meath County Council since the adoption of the CDP. These are not additional zonings for new development proposals but are being brought forward to correct and reflect the current land use (or approved land use by way of a planning permission) and to avoid any non-conforming land use on a zoning. With the exception of a minor update to ED POL 59 (Killeen Castle), the Draft Variation does not include changes to any objective or policy of the CDP.

Taking account of the existing land use zonings and the permitted development pertaining to the lands, the proposed amendments are limited in nature and they will not result in significant effects on the environment. Therefore, the proposed Variation does not alter or change in any way findings of the SEA for the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

Therefore, considerations of probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects arising from the Draft variation do not arise.

#### *The cumulative nature of the effects*

The content of the Development Plan has been informed by SEA, AA and SFRA undertaken as parallel processes in tandem with each stage of the Development Plan, thereby ensuring full integration and consideration of environmental issues. Draft Variation No. 2 is compatible and complementary with the strategies, policies and objectives of the Development Plan relating to compact growth, population distribution, settlement strategy, urban regeneration, mixed-use development and with environmental protection. The re-zoned lands are compliant with the National Policy Objective contained within the National Planning Framework.

The Variation No. 2 to the County Development Plan proposes a range of land use zoning amendments, minor amendment to the written statement of Dunboyne Clonee and Pace and digitisation of the boundary for Brú na Bóinne that differs from the adopted County Development Plan. These amendments are necessary to reflect the existing and current land use that has come to the attention of the Meath County Council since the adoption of the CDP. These are not additional zonings for new development proposals but are being brought forward to correct and reflect the current land use (or approved land use by way of a planning permission) and to avoid any non-conforming land use on a zoning. With the exception of a minor update to ED POL 59 (Killeen Castle), the Draft Variation does not include changes to any objective or policy of the CDP.

The proposed Variation does not alter or change in any way findings of the SEA for the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. With the exception of a minor update to ED POL 59 (Killeen Castle), the proposed amendments do not include changes to any other existing policies or objectives within the adopted Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. Taking into account the existing land use zonings, the permitted development pertaining to the lands and the limited nature of the proposed amendments, it is assessed that there will be no cumulative effect on the environment arising from the variation.

#### *The trans-boundary nature of the effects*

The Variation No.2 will have no national, regional or inter-county transboundary effects, over and above the effects of the strategy, policies and objectives of the Development Plan.

#### *The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)*

The Variation No.2 would not give rise to risks to human health or the environment due to accidents owing to the limited scale, nature and character of the proposed re-zoning in relation to the surrounding development. The Variation is consistent with the existing and current land use and has come to the attention of the Meath County Council since the adoption of the CDP. The re-zoned lands are outside of the consultation distance indicated for the Seveso sites.

Taking account of the existing land use zonings and the permitted development pertaining to the lands, the proposed amendments are limited nature and they will not result in risks to human or the environment.

*The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)*

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, as adopted underwent Strategic Environmental Assessment for the entire of the Meath County Council's area. Draft Variation No.2 proposes to change the zoning objective of the following land parcels to reflect revised and new circumstances that have emerged since the adoption of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027:

**A. Dunshaughlin Land Use Zoning Map:** Re-zoning of 6.7 ha of RA Rural Area and A2 New Residential lands to A1 Existing Residential. The proposed A1 Existing Residential zoning will reflect the permitted and commenced residential development for 212 residential units permitted under Strategic Housing Development SH307244 to Loughglynn Development Limited.

The geographical area is very small and localised and no population is likely to be affected.

**B. Dunboyne Land Use Zoning Map:** Rezoning of 23.6 ha of RA Rural Area to A1 Existing Residential to reflect the existing residential use for the 99 dwelling units which exist/under construction on this site.

The geographical area is small and localised and no population is likely to be affected.

**C. Longwood Land Use Zoning Map:** Re-zoning of approx. 1.37 ha of land from RA Rural Area to A1 Existing Residential to reflect the existing permitted and commenced residential development as per Planning Reference No. TA/190892 for 36 dwelling units.

The geographical area is very small and localised and no population is likely to be affected.

**D. Trim Land Use Zoning Map:** Relocation of Specific Spot Objective "TRM OBJ 16" included in the Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027 from G1 Community Infrastructure zoned lands at Iffernock to G1 zoned land South of the R160 at Commons, recently acquired by the Department of Education for the development of a school campus.

The geographical area is very small and localised and no population is likely to be affected.

**E. Navan Land Use Zoning Map:** Re-zoning from A1 Existing Residential to C1 Mixed Use at Flowerhill in Navan to provide for a greater mix of uses in at this location.

The geographical area is very small and localised and no population is likely to be affected.

**F. Killeen Castle** in a new Land Use Zoning Map: Re-zoning to change from RA Rural Area to D1 Tourism with an update to ED POL 59 to facilitate the completion of residential units as permitted.

The geographical area is small and localised and no population is likely to be affected.

**G. Ratoath Land Use Zoning Map** to extend the A2 New Residential land use zoning out to the permitted, partly constructed, and the preferred route for the remaining section of the Ratoath Outer Relief Road (RORR) design boundary.

The geographical area is small and localised and the no population is likely to be affected.

**H. Ratoath Land Use Zoning Map:** Re-zoning from A1 Existing Residential and B1 Commercial Town and Village Centre to G1 Community Infrastructure to provide for the development of community uses at this location.

<p>The geographical area is very small and localised and no population is likely to be affected.</p> <p>I. <b>Athboy Land Use Zoning Map:</b> Re-zoning of a triangular wedge of lands measuring approx. 0.08 hectares from G1 Community Infrastructure to A2 New Residential to delineate the land use zonings to align with the natural field boundaries in the area and to ensure the land use zoning appropriately reflects the optimal use for the lands.</p> <p>The geographical area is very small and localised and no population is likely to be affected.</p> <p>J. Proposed text amendment to Section 7.0 of <b>Dunboyne, Clonee and Pace Written Statement</b>, Vol. 2 of the Meath CDP (proposed text in blue and deleted text in <del>striketrough</del>).</p> <p><i>“Employment, education (including third level), residential, commercial, and open space /amenity. In regard to the residential element of the Master Plan, it shall be a requirement that proposals will include for the provision of a maximum of 500 residential units with in a range of typologies densities to support the delivery of a sustainable “live work” community-based model.”</i></p> <p>The geographical area is small and localised and no population is likely to be affected.</p> <p>K. <b>Volume 3 Map 8.1 Brú na Bóinne:</b> Pursuant to the UNESCO requirement, the National Monument Service (NMS) recently carried out a GIS digitisation exercise of plotting the boundary of the inscribed World Heritage Property. This GIS plotting exercise has clarified the boundary of the Core and Buffer areas as inscribed and the proposed variation includes a map of Brú na Bóinne with this digitised boundary layer.</p> <p>The geographical area is very small and no population is likely to be affected.</p>
<p><i>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</i></p>
<p><i>(a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage</i></p>
<p>Taking account of the existing land use zonings and the permitted / planned development pertaining to the lands, the proposed amendments are limited nature. The lands are not of special value or vulnerability and the proposed amendments will not result in significant effects on the environment.</p> <p>There are no impacts on special natural characteristics or cultural heritage.</p>
<p><i>(b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values</i></p>
<p>Taking account of the existing land use zonings and the permitted / planned development pertaining to the lands, the proposed amendments are limited nature. The lands are not of special value or vulnerability and the proposed amendments will not result in significant effects on the environment.</p> <p>Environmental quality standards or limit values will not be exceeded.</p>
<p><i>(c) Intensive land-use</i></p>
<p>Taking account of the existing land use zonings and the permitted / planned development pertaining to the lands, the proposed amendments are limited nature. The lands are not of special value or vulnerability and the proposed amendments will not result in significant effects on the environment.</p> <p>The proposed amendments do not result in any intensification of land use.</p>



*The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status*

There are a number of protected views/ prospects and landscapes in County Meath as detailed within the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. No significant adverse effects on these sites resulting from the Draft Variation have been identified.

All development arising as a result of Variation No.2 will be guided by the development management policies and objectives of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. The Variation will not result in any significant effect on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status.



## 5 Recommendation on Requirement for SEA

As the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 is a statutory plan, *Draft Variation No. 2* has been screened for the requirement for SEA under the requirements of S.I. No. 436 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011.

Draft Variation No.2 has been considered in respect of the SEA screening criteria set out in Schedule 2A of S.I. No. 436 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011, and the findings are set out in [Section 4](#) of this report. It is considered, on the basis of this exercise, that the implementation of Draft Variation No.2 has no real likelihood of having likely significant negative effects on the environment.

The Screening for Appropriate Assessment (BSM, 2024) has concluded that-

*“...the Draft Variation No.2 to the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, individually or in combination with another plan or project, is not likely to have a significant effect on European sites under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) in light of their conservation objectives. The Draft Variation does not require an Appropriate Assessment and the preparation of a Natura Impact Report.”*

It is therefore recommended that the competent authority reach a determination that **Draft Variation No.2 is not likely to have significant negative effects on the environment and, therefore, SEA is not required.**

In accordance with the requirements of S.I. 436 of 2004, as amended by S.I. 201 of 2011, and Article 13K(3) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, Meath County Council shall give notice to the environmental authorities, specified in Article 13A(4) of the 2001 Regulations, that Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

The notice shall—

- (i) state that the planning authority proposes to make a variation of the development plan under section 13 of the Act,
- (ii) state that the planning authority must determine whether or not the proposed variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment and that, in so doing, it must take account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A, and
- (iii) indicate that a submission or observation in relation to whether or not the proposed variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment may be made to the authority within a specified period which shall be not less than 3 weeks from the date of the notice.

The specified environmental authorities are:

- Environmental Protection Agency;
- Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage , Development Applications Unit;
- Department of Environment, Climate and Communications;
- Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine

In accordance with the above requirements Meath County Council will notify the environmental authorities and place a copy of Draft Variation No. 2, the SEA Screening Report (this report) and the Screening for Appropriate Assessment Report on public display for a period of not less than 4 weeks.

## 6 References

*Council Directive Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.*

Environment Director General of the European Commission (2003). *Implementation of Directive 2001/42 on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment.*

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EPA (2023b). *SEA of Local Authority Land-Use Plans – EPA Recommendations and Resources.*

EPA (2022). *Spatial Information Resources Inventory.*

EPA (2022). *SEA Pack.*

EPA (2020). *Ireland’s Environment – An Integrated Assessment 2020.*

EPA (2015). *Strategic Environmental Assessment Resource Manual for Planning Authorities – Integration of SEA Legislation with Procedures for Land Use Plans.*

EPA (2008). *SEA Process Checklist [Consultation Draft 18<sup>th</sup> January 2008].*

EPA (2003). *Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland – Synthesis Report.*

*European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 435/2004).*

*European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 200/2011).*

*European Parliament and Council Directive 2001/42/EC of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.*

Government of Ireland (2018). *Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework.*

Government of Ireland (2004). *Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment – Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities.*

GSI (2024). *Geological Survey of Ireland Map Viewer.*

OPW (2009). *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities.*

*Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.*

*Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.*

*Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 201/2011).*

*Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 436/2004).*

University College Dublin, AIRO, EPA, OSi, OPR & Geohive (2022). *ESM Webtool.*



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