

**DRAFT VARIATION NO. 5 OF MEATH
COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-
2027**

**SEA ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT NON
TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

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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

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (the Meath CDP / CDP) was adopted on 22 September 2021 and came into effect on the 03 November 2021. 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. Volume 4 includes the Environmental Assessments.

In accordance with Section 58 of the Planning and Development Act 2024, as amended, Meath County Council has prepared Draft Variation No.5 of the County Development Plan 2021-2027.

This is the non-technical summary of the Environmental Report prepared as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the *Draft Variation No. 5 of Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027* (hereafter “Variation No. 5”).

This environmental report has been prepared to comply with the provisions of Article 8 of S.I. 456 of 2025 – European Communities (Land Use Planning – Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations 2025¹).

The Report has had due regard to the SEA Regulations, in particular to: -

- methods of assessment;
- contents and level of detail in the Variation;
- 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 Variation No. 5 the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and Natura Impact Report (NIR), and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

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

1.1 Context to Draft Variation No.5

In April 2025 the *National Planning Framework (NPF) First Revision* was adopted to address evolving challenges in relation to climate change, housing, regional development and population growth. In July 2025 following the approval of the Revised NPF, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage published the *NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines* in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. The *NPF Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines* will replace the *Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, published in December 2020.

Local authorities are now required to update development plans to reflect on the national targets given by the Department. *The NPF Housing Growth Requirement Guidelines* requires sufficient zoning in

¹ <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2025/si/456/made/en/print>

County Meath to deliver 2,942 units annually up to 2035. This figure reduces to 1,362 from 2035 to 2040. The County Development Plan is mandated to be consistent with the *National Planning Framework* and the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy*. Accordingly, Draft Variation 5 is required to integrate the updated housing figures into the Core Strategy to ensure consistency with the planning hierarchy.

The high-level *National Planning Framework (NPF) First Revision* was subject to strategic environmental assessment (SEA) and appropriate assessment (AA).

1.2 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

The Draft Variation No.5 has been screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992²) and it has been concluded that potential for effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt and a Natura Impact Report (NIR) is being prepared.

The Variation No.5 has been subject to 'Stage 2 AA' as required by Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and a NIR has been prepared and accompanies the Draft Variation No.5 on public display.

1.3 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

The Variation No.5 has been subject to a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) which addresses the issues of assessment and management of flood risk relevant to the Draft Variation. The SFRA identified potential flood related considerations in relation to the proposed land use zonings in Dunboyne, Dunshaughlin, Kilcock and Navan and specific new objectives (DCE OBJ 23; DNS OBJ 14; KIL OBJ 5B, and NAV OBJ 38) have been included in the Draft Variation.

The SFRA has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of *The Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines for Planning Authorities*³, and accompanies the Draft Variation No.5 on public display.

² https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/habitats-directive_en

³ Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government: <https://www.opw.ie/en/media/Planning%20Guidelines%20-%20FRM%20-%20Nov%202009.pdf>

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...”⁴

The SEA Directive, as it applies to a plan / programme such as Variation No.5 is transposed into Irish law through:

- S.I. No. 456 of 2025 – European Communities (Land Use Planning – Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations 2025).

Therefore, the SEA for Variation No.5 is being prepared under the requirements of S.I. No. 456 of 2025.

The SEA process is designed to ensure that significant environmental effects arising from plans are:

- Properly identified and assessed;
- Subject to public participation;
- Taken into account by decision makers; and
- Regularly monitored.

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 Meath CAP are outlined in [Figure 3.1](#) and [Table 2.1](#).

⁴ Article 2(b) of Directive 2001/42/EC, European Union, Article 2 (3) of – European Communities (Land Use Planning – Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations 2025. S.I No. 455 of 2025

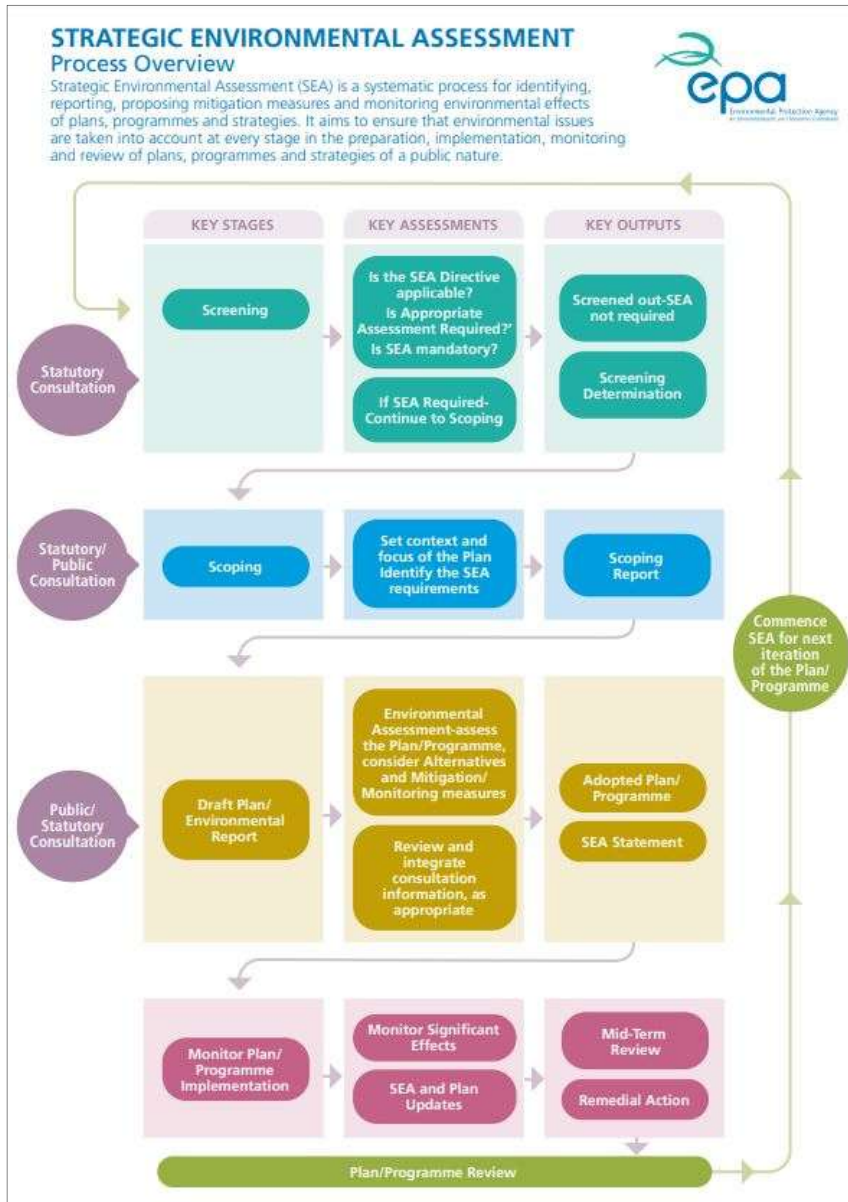



Figure 2.1 Overview of SEA Process (EPA SEA Process Flow, 2021⁵)

Table 2.1 Outline of the SEA Process

Stage	Description	Status
1. Screening	<p>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.</p> <p>The preparation of the draft Variation No.5 has been screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA) and it has been concluded that potential for effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>✓</p>

⁵ EPA: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/SEA%20Process%20Checklist.pdf>

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Stage	Description	Status
	<p>excluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt and is required to undergo Appropriate Assessment.</p> <p>Therefore, in accordance with Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08 the draft Variation No.5 was 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).</p>	
2. Scoping	<p>Preparation of a SEA Scoping Report highlighting that the Environmental Report is required to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. <p>Scoping provides for consultation with the Environmental Authorities specified in S.I. No. 456 of 2025, and the process allows for incorporation of the views of the environmental authorities within <i>draft Variation No.5</i> and the SEA Environmental Report.</p>	<p>Completed</p> 
3. Environmental Report	<p>Preparation of a systemic identification and evaluation of alternatives and assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the P / P.</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 S.I. No. 456 of 2025.</p> <p>The Environmental Report accompanied the draft Variation No.5 on public display.</p>	<p>Current Stage</p>
4. SEA Statement	<p>Completion / adoption of the Variation No.5, taking account of likely significant environmental effects, any submissions or observations received from consultations and integration of mitigation and monitoring measures within the Plan.</p> <p>The Environmental Report is concluded, and an SEA Statement is prepared in accordance with S.I. No. 456 of 2025, summarising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. 	<p>Next Stage</p>

2.3 Screening for the Requirement for SEA

Screening for the purposes of SEA is defined as “the determination of whether implementation of a P / P [Plan or Programme] would be likely to have significant environmental effects on the environment. The process of deciding whether a P / P [Plan or Programme] requires SEA.”⁶ The criteria for screening, i.e. determining whether a particular plan is likely to have significant environmental effects are set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. The criteria are set out under two principal headings, each of which have a number of sub-criteria:

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

It is also noted that in accordance with Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08⁷, SEA for a P / P is also a mandatory requirement where the P / P requires Appropriate Assessment (AA) under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

Draft Variation No.5 has been screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the *Habitats Directive* (92/43/EEC) and Regulation 42 of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011*, as amended. The AA Screening has concluded that potential for effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt and therefore appropriate assessment and the preparation of a Natura Impact Report (NIR) is required.

Therefore, in accordance with *Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08*⁸ the Variation No.5 is also required to undergo 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*⁹ (the SEA Directive).

2.4 SEA Scoping

SEA Scoping (Stage 2) has been undertaken for consideration of the range and level of detail of the information to be included in the SEA Environmental Report in accordance with S.I. 456/2025 – European Union (Land Use Planning – Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2025. This ensured that the SEA is focused on the relevant environmental issues and examines issues at the appropriate level of detail.

The SEA Scoping Report was issued to the following Environmental Authorities:

Table 2.1 List of Environmental Authorities for SEA Scoping

Prescribed Environmental Authorities*
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Development Applications Unit
Minister for Climate, Energy and the Environment
Minister for Agriculture, Food, & the Marine

⁶ EPA: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/SEA%20Pack%202018.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

⁹ DIRECTIVE 2001/42/EC: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

Prescribed Environmental Authorities*
<p>Adjoining planning authorities –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Louth County Council ■ Monaghan County Council ■ Cavan County Council ■ Westmeath County Council ■ Offaly County Council ■ Kildare County Council ■ Fingal County Council

*For purposes of consultation under S.I. No. 456 of 2025

Submissions / observations on the scoping of the Environmental Report were received from the environmental authorities and comments have been incorporated into the Plan and Environmental Report as set out in [Table 2.2](#).

Table 2.1 SEA Scoping Submissions / Observations from Environmental Authorities

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Ensure that the Variation aligns with key higher-level plans and programmes and is consistent with the relevant objectives and policy commitments of the revised National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region.	The information provided has informed the preparation of the Variation and the Environmental Report.
	Climatic factors should be considered with reference to the most up to date Climate Action Plan and relevant Flood Risk Management Plan.	These factors have been referenced
	Data / Resources - The Submission provides links to a range of SEA guidance and resources	The information provided has informed the preparation of the Environmental Report.
	State of the Environment (EPA, 2024) - The Submission refers to key relevant areas in the EPA State of the Environment Report (2024).	
	Reference is provided to the Environmental Monitoring set out in Table 7.1 of the revised NPF's SEA Statement. This monitoring should be reflected, where relevant and appropriate, in the context of future, environmental monitoring and related reporting associated with the revised CDP implementation.	This is noted. In addition as a Variation to the Development Plan, monitoring as detailed in the Environmental Report prepared for the Development Plan remains relevant to Variation as noted in this Environmental Report.
	The Variation should align with national commitments on climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as relevant sectoral, regional and local adaptation plans.	The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan.

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Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
<p>Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage</p>	<p>The submission notes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide map of protected structures from Record of Protected Structures ▪ Reference to historic designed landscapes (or cultural heritage landscapes), gardens and demesnes ▪ Have regard to Ministerial Guidelines ‘<i>Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities</i>’ ▪ Note sections from Chapter 8 of Development Plan relating to built heritage ▪ Proximity of new zonings to ACAs architectural conservation areas and protected structures, their curtilage/s and/or associated historic demesne/s ▪ Provides definitions for aspects of architectural heritage ▪ In relation to nature conservation the submission endorses the approach set out in the scoping report ▪ Evaluate whether subsequent development of lands to be rezoned in the East Meath area between Bettystown and Laytown and in Donacarney, and in the southern environs of Drogheda as proposed in Variation No. 5 might affect the ex-situ usage of these lands by Special Conservation Interest (SCI) bird species for the nearby River Nanny Estuary and Shore Special Protection Area (SPA) and Boyne Estuary SPA, such as Oystercatcher, Golden Plover, Lapwing and Redshank. ▪ Evaluation of the possible effects that pollutants entering the Rye Water from developments on the rezoned Kilcock lands during both the developments’ construction and operational phases might have on Qualifying Interests (QIs) for the downstream Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC. ▪ Proposed rezoning in vicinity of Duleek Commons pNHA 	<p>The information provided has been reviewed and has informed the preparation and assessment of the Environmental Report and the Appropriate Assessment/Natura Impact Report, as relevant.</p> <p>Map for Record of Protected Structures is included in the Environmental Report.</p> <p>A new objective (INF OBJ 25B) has been included in the Draft Variation in relation to the protection of all surface waters (including the Rye Water – as noted in the submission).</p> <p>The proposed rezoning in the vicinity of Duleek Commons pNHA is from A2 – New Residential to Whitelands – therefore, there is no risk to the pNHA.</p>
<p>Louth County Council</p>	<p>SEA scoping report is acknowledged and notes that LCC is satisfied that it has been prepared in accordance with the relevant legislation and best-practice guidance.</p>	<p>Noted</p>

2.5 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. 456 of 2025.

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. 456 of 2025 – European Communities (Land Use Planning – Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations 2025).
- S.I. No. 201 of 2011 - Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.
- Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.
- Planning and Development Act 2024, as amended.
- 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, Version 1.27 updated October 2025.
- SEA Pack. EPA, Updated January 2024.
- SEA Spatial Information Sources Inventory. EPA, May 2025.
- SEA Resource Manual for Local and Regional Planning Authorities. EPA, 2015.
- Good Practice Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Landscape. EPA, December 2023.
- Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statements and Monitoring. EPA, March 2023.
- Good Practice Guidance on Cumulative Effects Assessment in Strategic Environmental Assessment. EPA, January 2020.
- Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment - Environmental Impact Assessment Tiering, EPA, 2021.
- 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 State of the Environment Report 2024, <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring-assessment/assessment/state-of-the-environment/irelands-state-of-the-environment-report-2024.php>
- 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, 2019.
- Climate Action Plan 2025. Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, 2025.
- 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_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 Draft Variation No. 5

3.1 Introduction

Draft Variation No.5 has been prepared in response to the recent changes in National Planning Policy, namely the publication of the *National Planning Framework (NPF) First Revision* and the publication of Section 28 Guidelines, *NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements, Guidelines for Planning Authorities* issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), both published in 2025.

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) requires that a Development Plan shall, so far as is practicable, be consistent with national plans, policies and strategies which relate to proper planning and development and is also required to have regard to Guidelines published under Section 28.

As outlined in the Section 28 Guidelines, further to the approval of the Revised National Planning Framework (NPF) in April 2025, there is now a need for development plans to be updated to reflect the requirements of the NPF in respect of housing.

The Guidelines set out a requirement for Planning Authorities to assess the current adopted development plan and review the core strategy and associated settlement strategy and zoning objectives against the objectives of these Guidelines. Appendix 1 of the Guidelines consists of a table with the housing requirements for 31 Local Authorities including Meath County Council, see [Figure 3.1](#).

In accordance with the above, Meath County Council has prepared a Draft Variation to the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 to cater for the Housing Growth Requirement figures and the potential for 'additional provision'. This has a particular focus on the likelihood that the lands identified for residential development within the plan will come forward for development within the remaining period of the plan.

This review and the detailed analysis of the current core strategy and settlement strategy resulted in the proposed draft variation, which includes potential updates to these strategies and associated identification of development potential and zoning objectives where necessary to reflect the housing growth requirements, subject to the relevant environmental assessments being undertaken as required by the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended and in accordance with the Revised NPF.

Figure 3.1 NPF Implementation Housing Growth Requirements, Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) (July 2025) – Appendix 1

Local Authority	Existing Annual 2020 Housing Requirement (Housing Supply Target)	Adopted Development Plan - Annual Housing Requirement (Housing Supply Target)	2025 to 2034	2035 to 2040
			New Annual New Housing Growth Requirement to 2034	New Annual New Housing Growth Requirement 2035 to 2040
Carlow County Council	406	518	518	507
Cavan County Council	479	666	666	599
Clare County Council	550	960	985	687
Cork City Council	2,032	2,706	2,706	2,539
Cork County Council	2,437	3,769	3,837	3,045
Donegal County Council	965	1,280	1,283	1,206
Dublin City Council	4,861	8,196	8,196	6,075
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	1,908	3,085	3,585	2,384
Fingal County Council	1,717	2,738	3,153	2,146
Galway City Council	754	739	790	942
Galway County Council	1,831	1,790	2,008	2,288
Kerry County Council	690	1,167	1,167	862
Kildare County Council	1,535	1,524	2,755	1,918
Kilkenny County Council	618	775	948	772
Laois County Council	468	666	1,244	585
Leitrim County Council	124	201	201	155
Limerick City & County Council	2,193	2,599	2,599	2,740
Longford County Council	333	428	428	416
Louth County Council	956	1,380	1,677	1,195
Mayo County Council	501	542	1,111	626
Meath County Council	1,090	2,826	2,942	1,362
Monaghan County Council	306	330	751	382
Offaly County Council	439	663	891	549
Roscommon County Council	285	392	392	356
Sligo County Council	468	672	672	585
South Dublin County Council	1,932	2,596	3,270	2,414
Tipperary County Council	605	1,008	1,008	756
Waterford City & County Council	705	804	1,144	881
Westmeath County Council	548	983	983	685
Wexford County Council	578	1,072	1,622	722
Wicklow County Council	745	1,411	2,068	931
Total	33,059	48,484	55,598	41,312

3.2 Detail of Variation No. 5

Variation No. 5 is being brought forward to contribute to delivering the NPF housing requirement set out by the NPF Implementation Circular. The measures set out in the Variation primarily relate to the following amendments.

1. Proposed Amendment No. 1: Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 Volume 1 - Written Statement

To update the County Development Plan to take account of the new housing targets set out in the National Planning Framework Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines published by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in July 2025 and issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

In addition to updates as required to the text to the CDP Written Statement the amendment provides for the following updated/new objectives:

- Updated objectives CS OBJ 3, CS OBJ 8 and CS OBJ 11 in Chapter 2 Core Strategy
- Updated objectives SH OBJ 2, SH OBJ 7 and SH OBJ 20 in Chapter 3 Settlement and Housing Strategy
- New objective INF OBJ 25B in Chapter 6 (in relation to Protection of Surface Waters)

2. Proposed Amendment No.2: Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 Volume 2 - Written Statement for Settlements

In order to ensure consistency with the Written Statement of the Development Plan (Volume 1) and the revised housing targets, the Written Statements for the settlements that contain lands proposed for rezoning are required to be amended as part of this variation. The amendments primarily relate to adjustments to the household allocation for the relevant areas and projected population growth having regard to Census 2022 data and the new annual housing growth requirements for the county as set out in the NPF Implementation Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines 2025.

In addition to updates as required to the text to the CDP Written Statement for Settlements, the amendment provides for the following new objectives:

- New objective DCE OBJ 23 (Flood Risk Management) (Dunboyne)
- New objective DNS OBJ 14 (Flood Risk Management) (Dunshaughlin)
- New objective KIL OBJ 5B (Flooding) (Kilcock)
- New objective NAV OBJ 38 (Flood Risk Management) (Navan)

3. Proposed Amendment No.3: Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 Volume 2 - Maps for Settlements

In order to ensure consistency with the National Planning Framework and accommodate revised housing targets for the County, it is proposed to amend land use zonings as shown on the County Development Plan Map Sheets. It is also proposed to amend the development / settlement boundaries accordingly to ensure any lands that have been identified for development within the lifetime of the Plan fall within the development boundary of the relevant settlement.

The proposed rezonings are summarised below with details provided as to the existing and proposed land use zoning objectives for each individual area. The proposed rezonings are illustrated individually through updated land use zoning map sheets for the relevant settlements / areas with the proposed variations clearly marked on each sheet. Where no zoning changes are proposed in settlements under this Variation, the current map sheets remain in effect.

Lands in 11 settlements have been identified for rezoning as follows:

- Dunboyne
- Southern Environs of Drogheda
- Navan
- Kilcock
- Dunshaughlin
- Enfield
- Bettystown-Laytown-Mornington East-Donacarney- Mornington(East Meath)

- Duleek
- Stamullen
- Athboy
- Carlanstown

3.3 Site selection

In identifying suitable alternative lands capable of accommodating additional growth, due regard was given to the settlement hierarchy. County Meath contains Metropolitan Areas of Dunboyne and Kilcock, the Regional Growth Centre of Drogheda and the Key Town of Navan where growth should be directed, to promote sustainable development patterns. Having regard to this and the development trends/rates of delivery in these settlements, it is recommended that specific parcels of land be brought forward within each of the above settlements.

4 Other Relevant Plans and Programmes

Draft Variation No.5 to the CDP has been prepared in direct response to the requirements of higher-level plans and programmes.

In April 2025 the *National Planning Framework (NPF) First Revision* was adopted to address evolving challenges in relation to climate change, housing, regional development and population growth.

On the 29th of July 2025 following the approval of the Revised NPF, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage published the *NPF Implementation; Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines* in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The *NPF Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines* will replace the *Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, published in December 2020. Local authorities are required to update development plans to reflect the national targets set out by the Department. The *NPF Housing Growth Requirement Guidelines* requires sufficient zoning in County Meath to deliver 2,942 units annually up to 2034. This figure reduces to 1,362 from 2035 to 2040.

In accordance with Section 43 of the *Planning and Development Act 2024* (as amended), the County Development Plan is mandated to be consistent with the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. Accordingly, Proposed Variation 5 is required to integrate the updated housing figures into the Core Strategy to ensure consistency with the planning hierarchy.

As required by Section 3.0 of the *NPF Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines*, local authorities must initially assess the current adopted Development Plan and review the Core Strategy, related settlement strategies and zoning objectives against the objectives of the *NPF Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines*.

The Draft Variation is prepared in the context of a legislative framework and European, national, regional and county level plans and programmes, which provides for sustainable development and for the protection of the environment and our natural resources.

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 Variation.

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 Variation No.5. 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 Variation No.5, if unmitigated.

The administrative area of Meath is c.230,000 hectares and is the second largest county in Leinster. Meath adjoins Dublin to the south and is a vital supporting partner in the recent growth of the Greater Dublin Area.

5.2 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 plan area can be quantified, where possible, or qualified thereby ensuring that the implementation of the Variation 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.

5.2.1 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.

5.2.1.1 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.

Plants species such as Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*), Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), Zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*) and Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), can be found in several locations in Meath. Problems associated with these species include:

- loss of biodiversity as native species are shaded out;
- increased erosion as it stops plant growth beneath it in the summer and dies back in winter leaving bare river banks open to erosion;
- infrastructure damage since it can grow through tarmac, walls, pipework and even concrete;
- expensive and time consuming to eradicate;
- Giant Hogweed is a health hazard; and
- reduced access to riverbanks.

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.* roads and other development occurring on undeveloped sites, coastal protection works).
- Indirect effects on the ecological networks supporting European Sites (*e.g.* roads and other linear developments forming barriers to movements of mobile species or loss of sites that support an overall population of species).
- 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.

- Land Management - conversion of land / sites and sealing of soils can release CO₂ 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.

5.2.2 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. The 2022 Census results showed that the population for County Meath was 220, 826¹⁰ persons, an increase of 13.2% from the 2016 census (195, 044 persons)¹¹. The 2016 Census showed that the population of Meath was an increase of 5.9% from the 2011 census (184, 135 persons)¹².

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 Eastern Strategic Planning Area. There was a rapid growth in population in Meath between 2006-11 when the population increased by 13% with 5.9% increase during the following five-year period (2011-2016). Over the 10-year period between 2006-16 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). Existing Population and Human Health Issues

5.2.2.1 Population and Human Health Issues

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.
- 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 5.6.

¹⁰ 2022 Census - <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/population/censusofpopulation2022/>

¹¹ 2016 Census - <https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/ima/cop/2016&boundary=C03849V04599&guid=2ae19629-1494-13a3-e055-000000000001>

¹² 2011 Census - <https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/ima/cop/2011&boundary=C03994V04752&guid=C11>

- 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.

5.2.3 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 coarse 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.

5.2.3.1 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 CO₂ into the atmosphere and further reduce areas of 'carbon sinks'.
- Geological Heritage - the protection of sites of geological importance within the county.

- 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.

5.2.4 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.

5.2.4.1 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 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:

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 Variation No.5 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.

5.2.5 Air Quality, Noise & Climate

5.2.5.1 Air Quality

Air quality legislation¹³ 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 promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development’.

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 ‘Air Quality in Ireland 2024’¹⁴ 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 Drogheda and its southern environs and Navan are located within Zone C in the ‘other cities and large towns’ zone¹⁵. 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
- PM₁₀ 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 (NO₂). There is need to

¹³ S.I. No. 739/2022 – Ambient Air Quality Standards Regulations 2022 - <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2022/si/739/made/en/print> and Directive (EU) 2024/2881 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2024 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (recast) - https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202402881

¹⁴ EPA, 2025: Air Quality in Ireland, 2024 - <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/air/air-quality-in-ireland-2024.php>

¹⁵ EPA, 2024: <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/default> (OpenStreet Maps)

protect and improve (as appropriate), air quality in County Meath, particularly in areas zoned for increased urban and transport related development.

5.2.5.2 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.549/2018, as amended)*, *County Meath Noise Action Plan 2024-2028* was prepared by MCC (2024). This *Noise Action Plan* is aimed at managing environmental noise from road, rail and industrial sources within Meath.

Noise Strategic Maps from EPA 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 Variation No.5, consideration should be given to protect, where relevant, any designated quiet areas in open country.

5.2.5.3 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 rivers¹⁶.

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 2025* sets out Ireland's national and sectoral targets in this regard. The purpose of the Climate Action Plan is to lay out a roadmap of actions which will ultimately lead us to meeting our national climate objective of pursuing and achieving, by no later than the end of the year 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy. It aligns with the legally binding economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings that were agreed by Government in July 2022.¹⁷

Ireland has annual GHG targets which are set at an EU level and need to be complied with in order to reduce the impact of climate change. These targets set out by the EU under *Regulation (EU) 2018/842 on binding annual greenhouse gas emission reductions by Member States from 2021 to 2030 contributing to climate action to meet commitments under the Paris Agreement and amending Regulation (EU) No. 525/2013*, have set a target of a 42% reduction in non-ETS (emissions trading scheme) sector GHG emissions by 2030 relative to 2005 levels. In order to help Ireland achieve these EU targets and the eventual goal of net zero by 2050 the Irish government has set national targets and carbon budgets. Impacts to climate as a result of GHG emissions are assessed against the relevant carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings as set out in CAP25.

As per the EU guidance document *Guidance on Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into Environmental Impact Assessment* (European Commission, 2013) the climate baseline is first established with reference to EPA data on annual GHG emissions

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 MCC *Climate Action Plan 2024-2029* identifies actions to decarbonise electricity generation, the built environment and transport and to move towards carbon neutrality for agriculture, forest and land use sectors.

5.2.5.4 Air Quality, Noise and Climate 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

¹⁶ GOI (2019).

¹⁷ Climate Action Plan 2025- <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/publications/climate-action-plan-2025/>

relatively new in the context of air quality control. The most important of these pollutants are NO₂, particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM₁₀), 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. Any new construction projects have potential during construction phase to result in temporary negative impacts on air quality and create noise pollution.

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 without snowfall could adversely impact upon towns 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 is important to improve resilience of existing and planned critical infrastructure, systems and procedures to the effects and variability of climate change. 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.

5.2.6 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 include 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.

5.2.6.1 Material Assets Issues

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

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

- 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.
- 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 CO₂, 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 Climate Change implications. There is a need to encourage a shift away from private cars usage and provide more reliable and connected modes of public transport. Promoting public transport, cycling and pedestrian activity, through the provision of quality and integrated public transport networks and infrastructure, can ensure traffic volumes and congestion on local road networks are minimised.
 - 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.

5.2.7 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.

MCC has prepared a Heritage Plan 2015-2020 which aims to identify priorities for action, establish a framework for the management of heritage at local level and increase awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of their heritage for all. The County Meath Heritage Forum, facilitated by the Heritage Office of MCC, has prepared a Draft Meath Heritage Strategy 2023-2030. The aim of the strategy is to identify key priorities and increase awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of the built, natural and cultural heritage of Meath for all.

Furthermore, there are approximately 1,600 archaeological recorded monuments in the RMP for County Meath.

5.2.7.1 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.

5.2.8 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 2015-2025¹⁸ 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.

5.2.8.1 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 arising from the Variation No.5 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 – new developments along the coast are having visual impacts on the coastline.

¹⁸ National Landscape Strategy: <https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2015/07/N-Landscape-Strategy-english-Web.pdf>

6 Strategic Environmental Objectives

The SEA Directive requires that ‘the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.’

A series of Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) have been prepared based on the SEOs in the Environmental Report for the existing Development Plan revised in line with current guidance for Variation No.5 (refer to [Table 6.1](#)). The SEOs provide a basis for the assessment of the environmental effects of the Variation No.5 and are framed in such a manner as to enable the Variation No.5 to be fully assessed in environmental terms.

SEOs are distinct from the objectives within the CDP, 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.

Table 6.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) for Variation No.5 to the MCC CDP

Theme	Objective
Biodiversity (Flora & Fauna) (B)	(B_1) Ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annex habitats and species and no adverse impact on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function.
	(B_2) Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate restore the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites and protected species.
	(B_3) Ensure the Plan does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and rehabilitation objectives in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027
Population & Human Health (PHH)	(PHH_1) Provide high quality residential, community, working and recreational environments with access to sustainable transport options.
	(PHH_2) Protect human health and well-being.
Soils & Geology (SG)	(SG_1) Safeguard land and soil resources from pollution and degradation.
Water Quality (W)	(WQ_1) Protect and where necessary improve and maintain 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 to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding.
Air Quality, Noise & Climate (AN)	(AN_1) Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality and noise emissions through the reduction of emissions.
	(AN_2) Contribute towards climate adaptation and mitigation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with National targets, including Ireland's commitment to realising a climate neutral economy by 2050.
Material Assets (MA)	(MA_1) Make best use of existing infrastructure, contribute towards the protection of public assets and infrastructure and promote the sustainable development of new infrastructure to meet the needs of the county's and Meath's population. Ensure new developments are served with adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure

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	with sufficient capacity (drinking water, wastewater, waste and transport) that does not present a danger to human health.
	(MA_2) Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery
	(MA_3) Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.
Cultural Heritage (CH)	(CH_1) Protect, conserve and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).
	(CH_2) Protect, conserve 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 the landscape character including coastal character within Meath, minimise the loss of historic landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows and scenic views.
	(LV_2) Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape & visual designations as identified in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and Louth County Development Plan 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.

In April 2025 the *National Planning Framework (NPF) First Revision* was adopted to address evolving challenges in relation to climate change, housing, regional development and population growth. In July 2025 following the approval of the Revised NPF, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage published the *NPF Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines* in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. The *NPF Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines* will replace the *Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, published in December 2020.

Local authorities are now required to update development plans to reflect on the national targets given by the Department. *The NPF Housing Growth Requirement Guidelines* requires sufficient zoning in County Meath to deliver 2,942 units annually up to 2035. This figure reduces to 1,362 from 2035 to 2040. The County Development Plan is mandated to be consistent with the *National Planning Framework* and the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy*. Accordingly, Draft Variation 5 is required to integrate the updated housing figures into the Core Strategy to ensure consistency with the planning hierarchy. Therefore, a ‘do-nothing’ scenario is not viable alternative.

As required by Section 3.0 of the NPF Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines, local authorities must initially assess the current adopted development plan and review the Core Strategy, related settlement strategies and zoning objectives against the objectives of the NPF Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines.

The approach taken in the preparation of Draft Variation No.5 involved an initial assessment to determine the remaining lands zoned for residential use to cater for the new housing figures, with the potential for an additional supply over the remaining duration of the development plan to be evaluated, focusing specifically on the identification of land suitable for residential development.

Thereafter a 3 phase assessment was followed

- The first phase considered lands that have been built out, the planning history of zoned lands and activation sites, and the availability of/or potential for servicing.
- The second phase was a quantitative and qualitative assessment that considered aspects to ensure that lands zoned can and will deliver the target of 2,942 units annually.

This second phase of assessment focused on the granular detail of land parcels insofar as:

- Whether the land parcels identified in Stage 1 of this assessment are fully serviced from a water, sewerage, transport and power perspective to be built out in their entirety;

- Whether the lands identified as part of the Stage 1 of this assessment included landowners with fully serviced zoned lands for extended periods of time that have not attempted to develop their lands for residential purposes and have not engaged with the Local Authority in the previous or existing development plan period;
 - Whether any landowners of the parcels identified in Phase 1 have expressed their desire to have their land re-zoned for other purposes as part of the RZLT consultation process, and therefore do not intend to develop their land;
 - The percentage of existing planning permissions that are likely to translate to delivered units over the next two years;
 - Housing delivery trends in settlements over the past 5 years.
- The third phase of this assessment identified the quantum of additional lands required to be zoned as part of this variation in order to increase the likelihood of delivering 2,942 units. The assessment was guided by the NPF Housing Growth Requirements to ensure that zoning for an additional provision of up to 50% was factored into the land zoning identification process.

Having regard to the above reasonable alternatives are assessed against the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) (refer to Section 6 of this Report), established for the assessment of Variation No.5 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

Two reasonable alternatives for the objectives of Variation No.5 have been identified and assessed as set out in [Table 7.1](#). The potential effects of the reasonable alternatives on the SEOs categorised as follows:

- Potential Positive Environmental Impact (indicated by '+')
- Potential Negative Environmental Impact (indicated by '-')
- Potential Positive and Negative Environmental Impacts (indicated by '+/-').
- Uncertain Environmental Impact ((indicated by '?').
- Neutral, No or Insignificant Environmental Impact (indicated by '0')

7.3 Reasoning for Selection of the Preferred Alternative

Alternative 2 is selected as the preferred approach as it has the greatest potential to deliver the required residential units in a sustainable manner throughout the county, making best use of existing and planned infrastructure, and which for the most part most-part expands on existing, emerging and planned development in the settlements.

Alternative 2 allows for section of the most suitable lands and places a balanced emphasis environmental factors, minimising likely significant effects.

Table 7.1 Assessment of Alternatives for Variation No.5

Reasonable Alternative Description	SEO	Environmental Assessment	Environmental Evaluation
<p>Alternative 1</p> <p>Restricted Delivery of Units</p> <p>This alternative could achieve the required residential units by limiting delivery within Tier 1 Settlements only. This would entail additional zoning of existing rural areas or whitelands</p>	B_1	0	<p>This alternative will lead to some positive environmental effects especially in terms of growth within the main settlements and making best use of existing infrastructure.</p> <p>This alternative will restrict growth in other settlements, where there is equal requirement for residential units and where there are some better placed and better serviced lands than in the additional zoned lands that would be required in the Tier 1 settlements.</p> <p>With the required zoning of additional lands in restricted areas, this alternative would likely have a negative impact on local diversity, land / soils, and have uncertain impacts on water, air quality / climate, heritage and the landscape.</p>
	B_2	-	
	B_3	-	
	PHH_1	+	
	PHH_2	+/-	
	LSG_1	-	
	WQ_1	-	
	WQ_2	+/-	
	AN_1	+/-	
	AN_2	+/-	
	MA_1	+	
	MA_2	+	
	MA_3	+	
CH_1	+/-		
CH_2	+/-		
LV_1	+/-		
LV_2	+/-		
<p>Alternative 2</p> <p>Distributed Delivery of Units</p> <p>This alternative could achieve the required residential units by distributing the delivery within a wider range of settlements. This would minimise additional zoning of existing rural areas or whitelands.</p>	B_1	0	<p>This alternative will lead to positive environmental effects especially in terms of distributed growth on the best sites within settlements.</p> <p>This alternative will distribute growth across a wide range of settlements in the county – thereby making use of the best placed and best serviced lands available for consideration.</p> <p>With required zoning of some additional lands, this alternative would likely have uncertain impacts on lands / soils, water, air quality / climate, and heritage, and neutral impacts on protected features and the landscape.</p>
	B_2	-	
	B_3	-	
	PHH_1	+	
	PHH_2	+	
	LSG_1	+/-	
	WQ_1	+/-	
	WQ_2	+/-	
	AN_1	+/-	
	AN_2	+/-	
	MA_1	+	
	MA_2	+	
	MA_3	+	
CH_1	0		
CH_2	+/-		
LV_1	0		
LV_2	0		

8 Assessment of Effects of Draft Variation No. 5

8.1 Introduction

The Draft Variation No.5 to the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 has been subject to an assessment for potential effects arising from the implementation of the Variation 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. These SEOs are detailed in [Section 6](#) of this Report.

8.2 Environmental Assessment of the Proposed Amendments set out in Draft Variation No.5

The provision of Draft Variation No.5 have been subject to environmental assessment as set out in [Table 8.1](#). Where potential for likely significant environmental effects arise these provisions have been identified for mitigation measures. It is noted that some provisions have screened in for Appropriate Assessment and these are discussed in further detail in the Natura Impact Report (NIR) which accompanies the Draft Variation. Likewise it is noted that the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) identified flood considerations on a number of lands (refer to Section 1.3 of this report) and again these are referenced in the following table and in the SRFA which accompanies the Draft Variation.

In the following table deleted text is shown in ~~strike through~~ and new is shown in [blue](#).

Table 8.1 Environmental Assessment of Draft Variation No.5

Draft Variation Amendment	Assessment of Environmental Effects	Mitigation Required or Not
<p>Proposed Amendment No. 1: Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 Volume 1 - Written Statement</p> <p>To update the County Development Plan to take account of the new housing targets set out in the National Planning Framework Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines published by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in July 2025 and issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.</p>	<p>Provides for update of text and tables in the development plan in accordance with the requirements of higher level plans, including the National Planning Framework (NPF) First Revision and the NPF Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines.</p> <p>No environmental assessment is required.</p>	
<p>In addition to updates as required to the text to the CDP Written Statement, Amendment 1 provides for the following updated/new objectives:</p> <p>Updated objective CS OBJ 3</p> <p>To ensure the implementation of the population, housing growth and household allocation set out in the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy, in so far as practicable. Meath County Council will monitor</p>	<p>Provides for update of reference to higher level plans.</p> <p>No environmental assessment is required.</p>	No

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Draft Variation Amendment	Assessment of Environmental Effects	Mitigation Required or Not
the number of units that are permitted and delivered as part of the implementation of this objective, in compliance with the Development Plan Guidelines 2022 and the NPF Implementation Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines 2025		
<p>Updated objective CS OBJ 8</p> <p>The existing Southern Environs of Drogheda Local Area Plan 2009 (The LAP) shall remain the statutory plan for the Southern Environs of Drogheda until such a time as it is replaced with a Joint Urban Plan for Drogheda in conjunction with Louth County Council having regard to the requirements of the Report of the Drogheda Boundary Review Committee (February 2017), the National Planning Framework, and the Eastern and Midland Region Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. This plan shall be read together with the County Development Plan 2020-2026 2021-2027. The County Development Plan 2020-2026 2021-2027 shall take precedence if a conflict arises between the Plans and the conflicting provision of the LAP shall cease to have effect.</p>	<p>Provides for correct of date reference.</p> <p>No environmental assessment is required.</p>	No
<p>Updated objective CS OBJ 11</p> <p>To support the implementation of the policies and objectives set out within the Maynooth and Environs Joint Local Area Plan 2025 – 2031 as prepare, as a priority, a Joint Vision and Local Area Plan for Maynooth in partnership with Kildare County Council within the lifetime of this Plan in accordance with the requirements of Regional Policy Objective 4.35 of the RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region. As part of the preparation of this Plan, a detailed infrastructure assessment, consistent with the Consolidated Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (incl. V1, V2 & V3) Chapter 2 methodology for a Tiered Approach to Zoning under Appendix 3 of the NPF will be undertaken.</p>	<p>Provides support for the implementation of the adopted Maynooth Local Area Plan. This plan was subject to SEA and AA during the plan-making process.</p> <p>No environmental assessment is required.</p>	No
<p>Updated objective SH OBJ 2</p> <p>To ensure the implementation of the population and housing growth allocations set out in the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy and in accordance with the NPF Implementation Housing Growth</p>	<p>Provides for update of reference to higher level plans.</p>	No

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Draft Variation Amendment	Assessment of Environmental Effects	Mitigation Required or Not
Requirements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025).	No environmental assessment is required.	
Updated objective SH OBJ 7 To prepare a Joint Vision and Local Area Plan for Maynooth in partnership with Kildare County Council within the lifetime of this Plan in accordance with the requirements of Regional Policy Objective 4.35 of the RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region. To support the implementation of the policies and objectives set out within the Maynooth and Environs Joint Local Area Plan 2025 – 2031	Provides support for the implementation of the adopted Maynooth Local Area Plan. This plan was subject to SEA and AA during the plan-making process. No environmental assessment is required.	No
Updated objective SH OBJ 20 To promote the development of vacant residential and regeneration sites in all development centres in the County, as appropriate, in accordance with the requirements of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended).	Provides for update to references within the objective. No environmental assessment is required.	No
New Objective INF OBJ 25B Planning applications for new developments in the potential Zone of Influence of a European site shall submit details of surface water management plans for construction and operation to ensure compliance with the water quality standards and to protect the water quality and flow regime of surface and groundwater resources.	Provides for environmental positive new surface water management measure (in accordance with SEA Scoping recommendation from Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage). No environmental assessment is required.	No
Proposed Amendment No. 2: Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 Volume 2 - Written Statement for Settlements In order to ensure consistency with the Written Statement of the Development Plan (Volume 1) and the revised housing targets, the Written Statements for the settlements that contain lands proposed for rezoning are required to be amended as part of this variation. The amendments primarily relate to adjustments to the household allocation for the relevant areas and projected population growth having regard to Census 2022 data and the new annual housing growth requirements for the county as set out in the NPF Implementation Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines 2025.	Provides for update of text and tables in the development plan in accordance with the requirements of higher level plans, including the National Planning Framework (NPF) First Revision and the NPF Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines. No environmental assessment is required.	No

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Draft Variation Amendment	Assessment of Environmental Effects	Mitigation Required or Not
<p>In addition to updates as required to the text to the CDP Written Statement, Amendment 1 provides for the following new objectives:</p> <p>New Objective DCE OBJ 23 (Dunboyne) Planning applications for development proposals on the lands that are subject to Spot Objective DCE OBJ 23 shall be accompanied by a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment carried out in accordance with the requirements of the “Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities.”</p>	<p>Provides for environmental positive new flood risk management measure.</p> <p>No environmental assessment is required.</p>	No
<p>New Objective DNS OBJ 14 (Dunshaughlin) Planning applications for development proposals on the lands that are subject to Spot Objective DNS OBJ 14 shall incorporate a minimum 10m wide riparian buffer strip measured from the top of the bank either side of the water course running through the lands to protect future development from flood related impacts.</p>	<p>Provides for environmental positive new flood risk management measure.</p> <p>No environmental assessment is required.</p>	No
<p>New Objective KIL OBJ 5B (Kilcock) Planning applications for development proposals on the lands that are subject to Spot Objective KIL OBJ 5B shall be accompanied by a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment carried out in accordance with the requirements of the “Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities.” Lands that are impacted by Flood Zone B and Climate Change shall be reserved for storage areas only and kept free from vulnerable land uses.</p>	<p>Provides for environmental positive new flood risk management measure.</p> <p>No environmental assessment is required.</p>	No
<p>New Objective NAV OBJ 38 (Navan) Planning applications for development proposals on the lands that are subject to Spot Objective NAV OBJ 38 shall be accompanied by a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment carried out in accordance with the requirements of the “Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities.”</p>	<p>Provides for environmental positive new flood risk management measure.</p> <p>No environmental assessment is required.</p>	No
<p>Proposed Amendment No.3: Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 Volume 2 - Maps for Settlements</p> <p>In order to ensure consistency with the National Planning Framework and accommodate revised housing</p>		Yes

Draft Variation Amendment	Assessment of Environmental Effects	Mitigation Required or Not
<p>targets for the County, it is proposed to amend land use zonings as shown on the County Development Plan Map Sheets. It is also proposed to amend the development / settlement boundaries accordingly to ensure any lands that have been identified for development within the lifetime of the Plan fall within the development boundary of the relevant settlement.</p> <p>The proposed rezonings are summarised below with details provided as to the existing and proposed land use zoning objectives for each individual area. The proposed rezonings are illustrated individually through updated land use zoning map sheets for the relevant settlements / areas with the proposed variations clearly marked on each sheet. Where no zoning changes are proposed in settlements under this Variation, the current map sheets remain in effect.</p> <p>Lands in 11 settlements have been identified for rezoning.</p>		
<p>Dunboyne, Clonee & Pace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Amendment 01 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from A2 Phasing – Post 2027 to A2 – New Residential 	<p>These serviced lands were identified for A2 Residential Development post 2027 in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.</p> <p>The lands adjoin existing residential development and the proposed amendment is not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects – other than potentially in relation to flood risk.</p> <p>Potential Flood Risk has been identified in the south-western portion of the site.</p> <p>The lands have screened in for Appropriate Assessment and are addressed further in the Natura Impact Report (NIR).</p>	Yes
<p>Southern Environs of Drogheda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Amendment 01 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from WL – Whitelands to A2 – New Residential ○ Rezoning of land from WL – Whitelands to G1 – Community Infrastructure ▪ Proposed Amendment 02 	<p>The Amendment 01 lands adjoin existing schools and the Dublin – Drogheda railway corridor. An indicative road route, which traverses the lands as included in the existing</p>	Yes

Draft Variation Amendment	Assessment of Environmental Effects	Mitigation Required or Not
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from WL – Whitelands to A2 – New Residential 	<p>County Development Plan, remains unchanged.</p> <p>The Amendment 01 is not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects – other than potentially on local biodiversity and in terms of the local landscape.</p> <p>The Amendment 02 lands adjoin existing residential development and other zoned lands and do not give to likely significant environmental effects.</p> <p>The Amendment 01 and 02 lands have screened in for Appropriate Assessment and are addressed further in the Natura Impact Report (NIR).</p>	
<p>Navan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Amendment 01 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from A2 Phasing – Post 2027 to A2 – New Residential ▪ Proposed Amendment 02 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from A2 Phasing – Post 2027 to A2 – New Residential ▪ Proposed Amendment 03 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from A2 Phasing – Post 2027 to A2 – New Residential ▪ Proposed Amendment 04 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from E1/E3 – Strategic Employment Zones to A2 Phasing – Post 2027 ▪ Proposed Amendment 05 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from A2 Phasing – Post 2027 to E1/E3 – Strategic Employment Zones 	<p>These serviced lands were identified for A2 Residential Development post 2027 in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.</p> <p>The lands adjoin existing residential lands and the proposed amendments 01-03 are not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects – other than potentially in relation to local biodiversity, surface water and potential flood risk.</p> <p>Amendments 04 & 05 relate to a switch of land use zoning on 2 adjoining areas of land (from A2 Phasing – Post 2027 to E1/E3 – Strategic Employment Zones and vice versa) and do not give to likely significant environmental effects.</p> <p>The Amendment 01 to 05 lands have screened in for Appropriate Assessment and are addressed further in the Natura Impact Report (NIR).</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Draft Variation Amendment	Assessment of Environmental Effects	Mitigation Required or Not
<p>Kilcock Environs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Amendment 01 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from A2 Phasing – Post 2027 to A2 – New Residential 	<p>These serviced lands were identified for A2 Residential Development post 2027 in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.</p> <p>The lands adjoin existing residential lands and the proposed amendment is not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects – other than potentially in relation to local biodiversity, surface water and potential flood risk.</p> <p>The lands have screened in for Appropriate Assessment and are addressed further in the Natura Impact Report (NIR).</p>	Yes
<p>Dunshaughlin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Amendment 01 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from A2 Phasing – Post 2027 to A2 – New Residential ▪ Proposed Amendment 02 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from A2 Phasing – Post 2027 to A2 – New Residential 	<p>These serviced lands were identified for A2 Residential Development post 2027 in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.</p> <p>The lands adjoin existing residential development and other zoned lands, and the proposed amendments are not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects – other than potentially in relation to local surface water and flood risk.</p>	Yes
<p>Enfield</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Amendment 01 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from A2 Phasing – Post 2027 to A2 – New Residential ▪ Proposed Amendment 02 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from A2 Phasing – Post 2027 to A2 – New Residential 	<p>These serviced lands were identified for A2 Residential Development post 2027 in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.</p> <p>The lands adjoin existing residential development and other zoned lands, and the proposed amendments are not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects – other than potentially in relation to local surface water and flood risk.</p>	Yes

Draft Variation Amendment	Assessment of Environmental Effects	Mitigation Required or Not
<p>Bettystown-Laytown-Mornington East-Donacarney-Mornington (East Meath)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Amendment 01 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from WL – White Lands to A2 – New Residential ▪ Proposed Amendment 02 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from RA – Rural Area to A2 – New Residential ▪ Proposed Amendment 03 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from RA – Rural Area to G1 – Community Infrastructure 	<p>The Amendment 01 lands are serviced lands that were identified as Whitelands in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.</p> <p>The lands adjoin existing residential development and other zoned lands, and are well located close to public transport options. The proposed amendment is not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects.</p> <p>The Amendment 02/03 lands are serviced lands that are identified as RA – Rural Area in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. The lands adjoin existing residential areas in the settlement and are not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects – other than potentially on local biodiversity.</p> <p>The lands have screened in for Appropriate Assessment and are addressed further in the Natura Impact Report (NIR).</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Duleek</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Amendment 01 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from RA – Rural Area to A2 – New Residential ▪ Proposed Amendment 02 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from RA – Rural Area to A2 – New Residential ▪ Proposed Amendment 03 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from A2 – New Residential to WL – White Lands 	<p>Amendment 01 and 02 are serviced lands are identified as RA – Rural in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.</p> <p>The lands directly adjoin existing residential development and other zoned lands, and are well located close to public transport options. The proposed amendment is not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects.</p> <p>Amendment 03 lands are identified as A2 – New Residential in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and it is proposed that these lands are re-zoned to Whitelands – and therefore, no environmental effects</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Draft Variation Amendment	Assessment of Environmental Effects	Mitigation Required or Not
	<p>arise – including potentially on Duleek Commons pNHA.</p> <p>The lands have screened in for Appropriate Assessment and are addressed further in the Natura Impact Report (NIR).</p>	
<p>Stamullen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Amendment 01 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from RA – Rural Area to A2 – New Residential 	<p>The Amendment 01 are serviced lands that were identified as RA- Rural Area in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.</p> <p>The lands directly adjoin existing residential development. The proposed amendment is not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects – other than the lands have screened in for Appropriate Assessment and are addressed further in the Natura Impact Report (NIR).</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Athboy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Amendment 01 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from A2 – New Residential to G1 – Community Infrastructure ▪ Proposed Amendment 02 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from A2 – New Residential to G1 – Community Infrastructure ▪ Proposed Amendment 03 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from RA – Rural Area to A2 – New Residential 	<p>The Amendment 01 and 02 lands are identified as A2 – New Residential in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. It is proposed to change the zonings to G1 – Community to reflect the established use. These proposed amendments are not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects – other than a positive effects in securing essential recreational facilities for the local population.</p> <p>The Amendment 03 are serviced lands that were identified as RA- Rural Area in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.</p> <p>The lands directly adjoin existing residential development. The proposed amendment is not likely to</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Draft Variation Amendment	Assessment of Environmental Effects	Mitigation Required or Not
	<p>give rise to significant environmental effects.</p> <p>The lands have screened in for Appropriate Assessment and are addressed further in the Natura Impact Report (NIR).</p>	
<p>Carlanstown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Amendment 01 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rezoning of land from RA – Rural Area to A2 – New Residential 	<p>The Amendment 01 are serviced lands that were identified as RA- Rural Area in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.</p> <p>The lands directly adjoin existing residential development in the settlement. The proposed amendment is not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects – other than the lands have screened in for Appropriate Assessment and are addressed further in the Natura Impact Report (NIR).</p>	<p>Yes</p>

8.3 Interactions

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.

8.4 Potential Cumulative Effects

The Variation No.5 could have a relationship with other plans and programmes. However, these plans and programmes will also have been subject to environmental assessment, including SEA and AA, for the purpose of preventing and mitigating potential negative environmental effects.

The assessment of cumulative effects concludes that the implementation of the Variation No.5 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 the Environmental Report is that, if unmitigated, a number of the provisions of the Draft Variation No.5 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 provisions of the Variation, focus primarily on biodiversity (including appropriate assessment), water (including flood risk), climate 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

The majority of the mitigation measures are achieved through the detailed environmental protective policies and objectives as set out in the existing Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. The Development Plan provides for sustainable planning and management control of all development in County Meath – including any development or works deriving from the Draft Variation.

The environmental protective policies and objectives of the Development Plan are detailed in [Tables 9.1A and 9.1B of Appendix 9.1](#) of the full Environmental Report.

During the Variation-making process a number of potential environmental considerations were identified during the assessment process and specific mitigation measures were proposed and are included in the Draft Variation. These include:

In relation to European sites and Surface Water Management during construction and operation for all new developments:

INF OBJ 25B

Planning applications for new developments in the potential Zone of Influence of a European site shall submit details of surface water management plans for construction and operation to ensure compliance with the water quality standards and to protect the water quality and flow regime of surface and groundwater resources.

In relation to Flood Risk Management on the Amendment 01 lands in Dunboyne:

DCE OBJ 23

Planning applications for development proposals on the lands that are subject to Spot Objective DCE OBJ 23 shall be accompanied by a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment carried out in accordance with the requirements of the “Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities.”

In relation to Flood Risk Management on the Amendment 01 lands in Dunshaughlin:

DNS OBJ 14

Planning applications for development proposals on the lands that are subject to Spot Objective DNS OBJ 14 shall incorporate a minimum 10m wide riparian buffer strip measured

from the top of the bank either side of the water course running through the lands to protect future development from flood related impacts.

In relation to Flooding on the Amendment lands in Kilcock:

KIL OBJ 5B

Planning applications for development proposals on the lands that are subject to Spot Objective KIL OBJ 5B shall be accompanied by a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment carried out in accordance with the requirements of the “Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities.” Lands that are impacted by Flood Zone B and Climate Change shall be reserved for storage areas only and kept free from vulnerable land uses.

In relation to Flooding on the Amendment lands in Navan:

NAV OBJ 38

Planning applications for development proposals on the lands that are subject to Spot Objective NAV OBJ 38 shall be accompanied by a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment carried out in accordance with the requirements of the “Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities.”

Table 9.1 Mitigation Measures (i.e. Policies and Objectives from the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027) for Potential Negative and / or Uncertain Environmental Effects of Draft Variation No.5

(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 &

Provision	Potential Negative SEO Effects	Potential Uncertain SEO Effects	Potential Neutral / Positive SEO Effects	Mitigation Measures (Refer also to Tables 9.1A & 9.1 B in Appendix 9.1 of the SEA Environmental Report)
Proposed Amendment No.3 (Proposed Zonings)				
Lands in 11 settlements have been identified for rezoning as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dunboyne ■ Southern Environs of Drogheda ■ Navan ■ Kilcock ■ Dunshaughlin ■ Enfield ■ Bettystown-Laytown-Mornington East – Donacarney – Mornington (East Meath) ■ Duleek ■ Stamullen ■ Athboy 	B (B1, B2, B3) WQ (WQ1, WQ2),	SG (SG1) AN (AN1, AN2) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)		Policies INF POL 7; INF POL 8; INF POL 12; INF POL 16; INF POL 17; INF POL 18; INF POL 20; INF POL 22; SOC POL 39; Objectives INF OBJ 7; INF OBJ 8; INF OBJ 11; INF OBJ 19; INF OBJ 20; INF OBJ 21; INF OBJ 25; INF OBJ 37; INF OBJ 38; HER OBJ 33; HER OBJ 34; HER OBJ 60; RUR DEV SO 2; DM OBJ 11;
				Policies INF POL 8; INF POL 22; HER POL 1; HER POL 3; HER POL 4; HER POL 14; HER POL 16; HER POL 17; HER POL 21; HER POL 26; HER POL 28; HER

<p>■ Carlanstown</p>		<p>PHH (PHH_1, PHH_2) MA (MA1, MA2, MA3)</p>	<p>POL 32; HER POL 35; HER POL 37; HER POL 40; HER POL 46 HER POL 48; HER POL 50; Objectives HER OBJ 3; HER OBJ 22; HER OBJ 28; HER OBJ 29; HER OBJ 49; HER OBJ 56; DM OBJ 11</p>
			<p>N/A</p>

9.3 Conclusion

The mitigation measures included with Draft Variation No. 5, 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 Variation. No further mitigation measures are required.

10 Monitoring Measures

Monitoring of the Variation 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.”*

However, as a Variation to the County Development Plan, once adopted, monitoring will be undertaken as part of the on-going monitoring and review of the Meath County Development Plan.

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.

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