



Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Longford Town Local Transport Plan Non-Technical Summary

Longford County Council

Final report

Prepared by LUC

October 2023

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Land Use Consultants Limited

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Chapter 1

Non-Technical Summary

Introduction

1.1 Longford County Council commissioned LUC to undertake the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Longford Town Local Transport Plan (LTP).

1.2 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process is a requirement of the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC [See reference 1] which requires that an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes – in this case the Longford Town LTP – which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

1.3 The purpose of the Environmental Report is to:

- inform the development of the Longford Town LTP;
- identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects (both positive and negative) of implementing the Longford Town LTP and reasonable alternatives to the Longford Town LTP; and,
- provide an early opportunity for the statutory and non-statutory consultees to offer views on any aspect of the Environmental Report and accompanying Draft Longford Town LTP, through consultation.

1.4 This is the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the Final Environmental Report of the Longford Town Local Transport Plan (October 2023) and should be read in conjunction with that report.

Description of the Longford Town Local Transport Plan

Context for the Longford Town Local Transport Plan

1.5 County Longford is located in the Midlands of Ireland within the administrative boundary of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly. It is bordered by County Westmeath (south and east), Leitrim (north-west), Roscommon (west), and Cavan (north-east). Longford Town is in the centre of the county and is the principal town of the county, with established employment areas and substantial administrative and retail functions. The plan area is shown in **Figure 1.1**.

1.6 Given its Midlands location, County Longford is strategically positioned as a portal to the Northern and Western Region, with the county well served by transport links in the form of the Dublin to Sligo rail line, and several strategic roads which traverse the county, including the N4 and N5, both of which are components of the Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) Comprehensive Network. This high degree of accessibility has helped retain and enhance a range of enterprises within the County, as well as attract new businesses and industries to the locality.

1.7 Longford Town has a compact and walkable centre with a distinct layout, built heritage and strong identity. The industrial, administrative, transportation and military history of the town is reflected in this identity through the Camlin River, Royal Canal, Connolly Barracks and St. Mel's College and Cathedral.

Background to the Longford Town Local Transport Plan

1.8 The current Longford County Development Plan (CDP) [See reference 1] came into effect on 30th November 2021. The CDP sets out the statutory framework for land-use planning and sustainable development for the six-year period between 2021 and 2027. County Policy Objective 4.9 of the CDP states that the Council will prepare and implement a Local Area Plan (LAP) for Longford Town within two years from the adoption of the Longford CDP 2021-2027. The LAP will be informed by a LTP to be prepared for Longford Town.

1.9 The LTP for Longford Town aims to establish a strategic framework for the future development of transport infrastructure within Longford Town and its environs. The function of the LTP is to enhance accessibility and sustainable mobility within Longford Town centre, by improving links between the core and surrounding areas through the further integration of public transport, walking and cycling facilities.

Scope and content of the Longford Town Local Transport Plan

1.10 The aim of the LTP for Longford Town is to establish a strategic framework for investment in transport in Longford, which is to be fully reflected in the Draft LAP. The function of the LTP is to enhance accessibility and sustainable mobility within Longford Town centre, by improving links between the core and surrounding areas through the further integration of public transport, walking and cycling facilities. The Longford Town LTP does not contain any policies.

1.11 The Vision for the Longford LTP is ***“to ensure that Longford is an attractive place to live, work and visit through the appropriate integration of transport and land use, with a primary focus on ease of access for all by sustainable transport”*** (p.48).

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1.12 The Vision for Longford Town is supported by nine principles and eight objectives that guide the strategies set out in the document. The principles of the Longford Town LTP are:

- **Integrated transport planning, land use, and urban design:** Adopt an approach where transport decisions are also focused on enhancing the image, liveability, safety and cohesion of Longford.
- **People first:** Prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and public transport before private vehicles to create a balanced transport system and great places.
- **Maintaining and enhancing connectivity:** Maintain and enhance the capacity of the strategic rail, road and bus network, where possible.
- **Safe streets:** Ensure streets are safe for all users by reducing speeds, providing safe crossings and dedicated infrastructure.
- **Value for money:** Ensure proposals are assessed on their cost and ease of implementation in order to prioritise best value for money.
- **Vibrant and great for business:** Design streets to enhance businesses in Longford and maximise street life both day and night.
- **Efficient:** Reallocate street space as efficiently as possible to optimise other functions such as cycling, public transport, footpaths, outdoor dining and furniture.
- **Future focused and equitable:** Design streets which are flexible and adaptive to change and able to accommodate all ages, abilities, genders and incomes.
- **Evidence-based decision making:** Address traffic issues by reducing unnecessary trips and improving the attraction of alternative modes.

Guided by the principles above, the LTP identifies eight objectives to form an integrated strategy for the town that promotes positive outcomes from a movement and place perspective.

- **Permeability:** Improve permeability between neighbourhoods, enhancing attractiveness and promoting connectivity.

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- Active travel: Improve walking and cycling connections and routes to increase physical activity.
- Public transport: Encourage the use of public transport and reduce the environmental impact of transportation.
- Integration of land use and transport: Integration of existing and future land use and transport networks.
- Parking: Utilise existing on-street parking zones along certain streets to improve the public realm, support travel by sustainable modes and provide other functions such as wider footpaths, cycle parking, outdoor dining areas, new trees/planting, etc.
- Safety: Improve and enhance safety for all, especially for vulnerable road users.
- Traffic management: Reduce through traffic through interventions.
- Feasibility and value for money: Provide good value for money.

1.13 Based on the Vision, principles and objectives above, the Longford Town LTP sets out a number of focused transport strategies that provide detail about proposed interventions. These include strategies for walking, cycling, permeability, public transport, traffic management, car parking, feasibility and value for money, and an access strategy for Abbeycarton. The LTP also sets out maps of proposed schemes in relation to each of the transport strategies, an assessment of the proposed schemes, and a plan for implementation of the LTP. The detail of these schemes is outlined in **Appendix A** of the Environmental Report.

Stage of the Longford Town Local Transport Plan

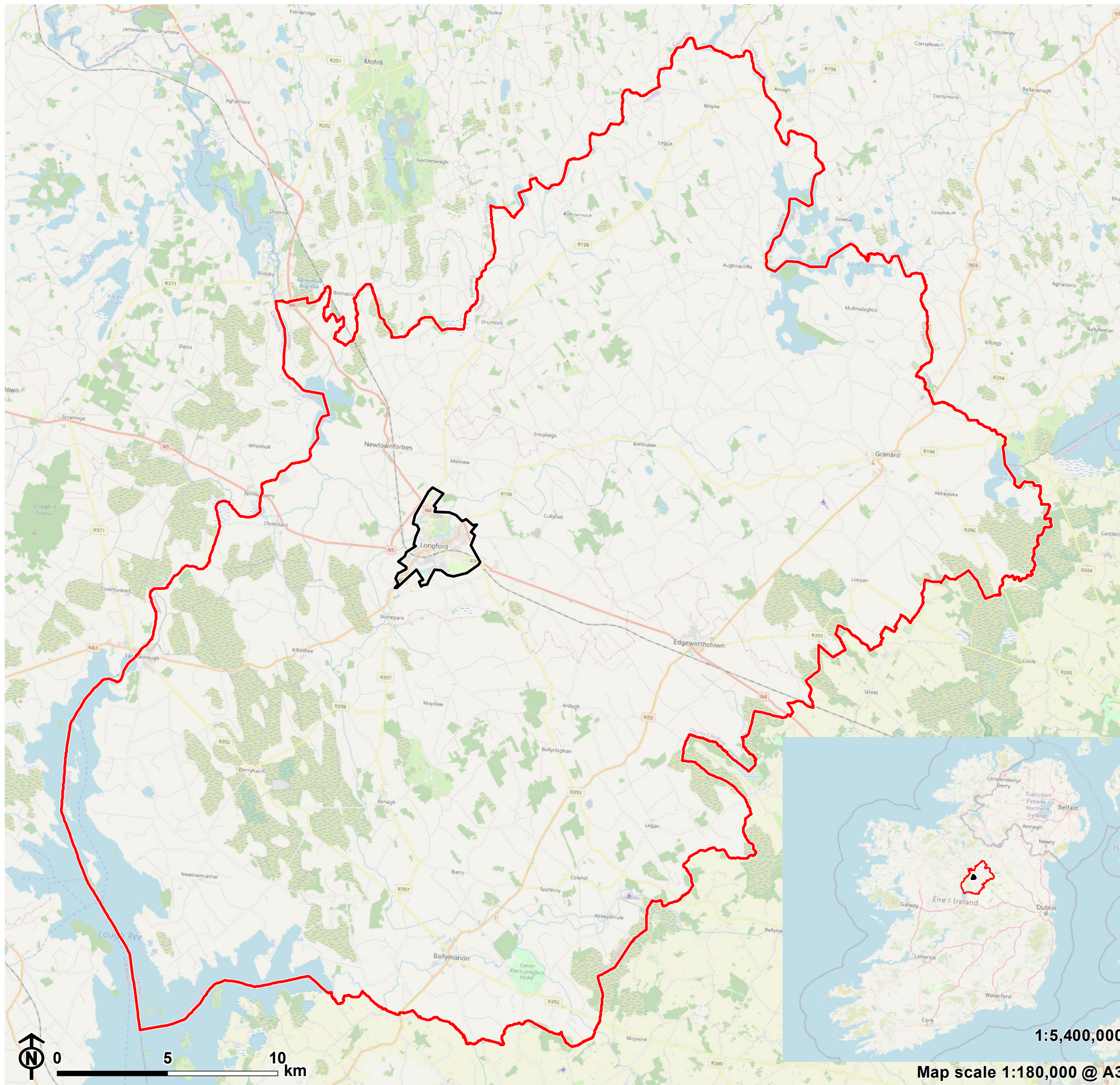
1.14 The Draft LTP was published for public consultation from Friday 14 July to Tuesday 15 August 2023 inclusive. The LTP has been revised to take into

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account the submissions and observations received during the public consultation period. It is expected that the LTP will be adopted in October/November 2023.

Figure 1.1: Location

- Longford County
- Longford Town LTP Study Area



Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.15 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process is a requirement of the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC [\[See reference 2\]](#) which requires that an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes (P/P), including land-use plans, which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. The purpose of SEA, as defined in Article 1 of the SEA Directive is *‘to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans...with a view to promoting sustainable development’*.

1.16 In Ireland, the SEA Directive has been transposed into national legislation through:

- S.I. No. 435 of 2004 (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 [\[See reference 3\]](#), as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011) [\[See reference 4\]](#) (i.e. the SEA Regulations).
- S.I. No. 436 of 2004 (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 [\[See reference 5\]](#), as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011) [\[See reference 6\]](#).

1.17 The objective of this SEA is to ensure that the environmental effects of the proposed Plan are identified during its development, providing the opportunity for negative environmental effects to be avoided, mitigated or compensated and for positive environmental effects to be enhanced, where opportunities arise. In this way, environmental considerations can be integrated into the preparation of the Longford Town LTP.

Links to Appropriate Assessment

1.18 SEA does not stand alone in environmental assessments of plans and programmes, including the Longford Town LTP. There is a high level of overlap between the SEA process and the Appropriate Assessment (AA) process, in particular relating to biodiversity, human health, water, etc (see **Figure 1.2**).

1.19 Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive [See reference 7] is transposed for certain plans in Ireland by S.I. No. 477/2011 (European Communities (Birds and Nature Habitats) Regulations, 2011 [See reference 8], as amended by S.I. No. 293 of 2021) [See reference 9], and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended [See reference 10]. All plans and projects that, either individually or in combination with other plans, are likely to have a significant effect on any site in the Natura 2000 network (i.e., those designated as Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas, collectively referred to as 'European sites'), require an AA to determine whether these effects will adversely affect the integrity of these sites. If the effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant, or uncertain then the plan or project must undergo Stage 2 AA.

1.20 Screening for Appropriate Assessment of the Draft Longford Town LTP was prepared in February but updated in July 2023 to reflect the most recent version of the LTP. Due to the similar nature and geographical extent of the Longford Town LTP and the County Longford Active Travel Strategy, a combined Screening Report of both plans was prepared. It was determined that an AA is not required as the plans establish the strategic framework for future development and as such will not directly result in the provision of development in Longford. The Longford Town LTP proposes schemes through its strategies which will inform the forthcoming Local Area Plan for the town and will not directly result in development. Therefore, it is concluded that there will be no Likely Significant Effects and as such an AA is not required. However, the process of AA remains applicable at the project level for any new transport project proposed and at the plan level for the making of land use plans, such as masterplans.

Figure 1.2: Links between the SEA, AA and plan preparation processes



SEA methodology

Stages in SEA process

1.21 The SEA of the Longford Town LTP comprises the following principal stages:

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- **Screening (completed):** Determine whether the Draft Longford Town LTP is likely to result in significant environmental effects.
- **Scoping (completed):** Consultation with the Environmental Authorities on the scope and level of detail to be considered in the assessment; and finalisation of the Scoping Report taking into account the submissions and observations received from the Environmental Authorities.
- **Draft Environmental Report and Non-Technical Summary (completed):** An assessment of the likely significant impacts on the environment as a result of implementation of the Draft Longford Town LTP.
- **Consultation (completed)** on the Draft Environmental Report and this Non-Technical Summary.
- **Final Environmental Report (current stage):** Preparation of a Final Environmental Report that is consistent with the finalised Longford Town LTP.
- **SEA Statement (next stage):** Identifying how environmental considerations and consultation responses have been integrated into the final Longford Town LTP.

Stage 1: Screening

1.22 In deciding whether the Longford Town LTP is likely to have significant environmental effects, regard was had to the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive, as also set out in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. The Screening process comprised three principal steps – applicability, screening and determination:

- **Step 1: Applicability:** The first step in the Screening process was to determine if the Longford Town LTP falls within the scope of the SEA Directive. The Longford Town LTP does fall within the scope of the SEA Directive (and therefore proceeded to Step 2: Screening) as it:
 - is being prepared by Longford County Council;

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- is required to be prepared by administrative provisions, i.e. through policy objectives in the RSES and Longford CDP; and
- would fall under the ‘transport’ category covered by the SEA Directive and transposing legislation and will set the framework for the future consent of development projects listed in the EIA Directive.
- **Step 2: Screening:** The next stage in the Screening assessment was to determine the characteristics of the LTP and to identify whether the LTP may give rise to significant effects. The following bullet points outline the factors that were considered in making this judgement:
 - The Longford Town LTP details a multi-modal framework to inform future transport infrastructure planning, investment and delivery in Longford Town. The LTP identifies strategies for the delivery of pedestrian and permeability improvements; cycle routes; public transport; car parking; bicycle parking; traffic management; and the delivery of transport infrastructure at Abbeycartron.
 - The Longford Town LTP is being prepared to fulfil Regional Policy Objective (RPO) 8.6 of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region 2019-2031 which requires a LTP for Longford Town to be prepared. The preparation of the LTP also fulfils County Policy Objective (CPO) 4.9 of the adopted Longford County Development Plan which states that the Council will prepare and implement a LTP to inform the LAP for Longford Town.
 - The effects of the Longford Town LTP are expected to generally be long-term, although any built development projects will also have shorter term construction impacts. ‘Strategies’ that would not result in built development, such as those relating to provision of additional bus services will have reversible impacts, but proposals resulting in built development will be permanent.
 - Developing an accessible and inclusive transport network in Longford Town is likely to result in positive, long-term cumulative effects at a county level.
 - The LTP covers Longford Town. However, there is the potential for the wider county to be affected and or other local authority areas,

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particularly on routes heavily utilised by those passing through Longford to and from other areas.

- The implementation of the Longford Town LTP is likely to result in an overall reduced risk to human health and the environment from reduced transport-related greenhouse gas emissions, increase in active modes of travel, and increase in the safety of the road network. However, improvements to the road network will inevitably result in risks to human health and the environment, for example through air pollution, noise disturbance or fuel spillage.
- The draft determination on the need for SEA of the Longford Town LTP, based on the review against the environmental significance criteria as set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive, is that SEA is required.
- Prior to finalising the determination on the need for SEA and in accordance with Article 9(5) of the SEA Regulations, the Environmental Authorities were notified of the draft determination that an SEA should be undertaken as part of the preparation of the Longford Town LTP, in recognition of the likely significant effects on the environment. One response was received from Geological Survey Ireland (see **Appendix E** of the Environmental Report).
- **Step 3: Determination:** The final determination on the need for SEA of the Longford Town LTP, based on the review against the environmental significance criteria as set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive and consultation feedback from Geological Survey Ireland and the Environmental Protection Agency, is that **SEA is required** as the purpose of the Longford Town LTP is to set a multi-modal framework to inform future transport infrastructure planning, investment and delivery in Longford Town. This will result in both positive and negative effects which could combine to result in cumulative effects. The LTP will also inform other plans, most notably the Longford Town LAP, however, this will be subject to a separate SEA and AA.

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1.23 The finalised Screening Report (June 2023) which takes into account the submissions received from the Environmental Authorities (see **Appendix E** of the Environmental Report) is available on the Council's website.

Stage 2: Scoping

1.24 The Scoping Report, prepared in February 2023, provided information for consideration in respect of the requisite content of the SEA. The main stages in carrying out scoping are as follows:

- Identifying plans, programmes, and environmental objectives of relevance to the LTP.
- Scoping of SEA Topics **[See reference 11]** relevant to the LTP.
- Identifying geographic, temporal and transboundary scope of the LTP.
- Collecting baseline information.
- Identifying sustainability issues and problems.
- Developing the Environmental Protection Objectives (EPO) Framework comprising environmental objectives, indicators and targets to allow the evaluation of impacts on the environment.
- Consulting on the scope of the SEA.

1.25 The EPO Framework presented in the Scoping Report is set out below; each primary bullet point constitutes an EPO objective and the sub-bullet points set out further guidance to help guide the appraisal of each objective. The EPO Framework is structured to encompass each SEA topic, however, some topics are covered in more than one EPO.

EPO Framework

EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna

- Conserve and enhance Longford's biodiversity including designated sites, habitats and protected species.
 - Does the LTP conserve and enhance designated and undesignated ecological assets, including promoting habitat connectivity; avoiding fragmentation; and adverse impacts on habitats and species from transport-related changes to air quality, water quality and quantity, noise levels and light levels?
 - Does the LTP maintain and enhance the nature network of ecological assets and green/blue spaces, taking into account the impacts of climate change?

EPO 2: Population and human health

- Create a healthy living environment, encourage healthy lifestyles and improve safety.
 - Does the LTP protect physical and mental health and wellbeing by preventing, avoiding and mitigating adverse health effects associated with air, noise, vibration, and light pollution from transport infrastructure?
 - Does the LTP promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging and facilitating active travel, such as walking and cycling?
 - Does the LTP improve road user safety and reduce the risk of accidents, such as through traffic calming measures or improved crossings?
 - Does the LTP facilitate access to key services, facilities and employment areas for all, including ensuring easily accessible and affordable public transport, particularly in more deprived areas?

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- Does the LTP minimise journey times for commuting?
- Does the LTP improve access to open spaces and recreational facilities to improve physical and mental health?

EPO 3: Air quality and climate change mitigation

- Improve air quality and minimise greenhouse gas emissions by reducing concentrations of harmful atmospheric pollutants and avoiding their emission.
 - Does the LTP reduce the need to travel by petrol or diesel vehicles?
 - Does the LTP improve air quality by minimising pollutant emissions from the transport sector?
 - Does the LTP help to address road congestion and its impact on air quality?
 - Does the LTP encourage a modal shift to sustainable modes of transport by supporting maintenance and expansion of public and active transport networks?
 - Does the LTP support the provision of facilities for electric vehicle charging?
 - Does the LTP encourage the use of sustainable construction methods and materials in the development of transport infrastructure, with a focus on reducing the embodied carbon in new transport infrastructure?

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

- Reduce the risk and effects of flooding, both now and in the future.
 - Does the LTP direct transport away from areas at highest risk of flooding and avoid inappropriate transport-related development in areas at risk of flooding, taking into account the effects of climate

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change and mitigate residual risks without increasing flood risk elsewhere?

- Does the LTP increase the resilience of transport systems to the effects of climate change, via flood resilient design?
- Does the LTP promote the use of SuDS, where appropriate?
- Does the LTP encourage the creation, management and enhancement of a coherent green and blue infrastructure (GBI) network?

EPO 5: Soil

- Conserve and enhance Longford's soil resources and geological sites.
 - Does the LTP avoid the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land?
 - Does the LTP conserve designated and undesignated geological assets?
 - Does the LTP direct new transport development to brownfield / previously developed land in preference to greenfield land, where appropriate?

EPO 6: Water

- Preserve and enhance the quality and quantity of waterbodies and groundwater.
 - Does the LTP maintain or improve the quality of waterbodies and groundwater by avoiding adverse impacts from pollution / changes to drainage?
 - Does the LTP minimise and mitigate runoff from new transport and active travel infrastructure?
 - Does the LTP minimise inappropriate development in groundwater Source Protection Areas?

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EPO 7: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

- Conserve and enhance the significant qualities, fabric, setting and accessibility of Longford's historic environment.
 - Does the LTP conserve designated and undesignated heritage assets, including their setting and their contribution to wider local character and distinctiveness, avoiding adverse effects on their significance from direct loss, damage, or detracting from their setting?
 - Does the LTP improve access to heritage assets and areas of historical and cultural interest?
 - Does the LTP support heritage-led regeneration of Longford Town?

EPO 8: Landscape

- Conserve and enhance Longford's landscape and townscape, ensuring transport and related development does not detract from the quality of views and local distinctiveness.
 - Does the LTP adversely impact, protect or enhance the townscape and visual amenity of Longford Town?
 - Does the LTP improve access to valued landscapes, townscapes and viewpoints, including by sustainable and active travel modes to reduce the impact of road traffic?
 - Does the LTP encourage the retention and planting of green infrastructure along transport corridors to protect landscape character and create a sense of place?

EPO 9: Material assets

- Use resources intelligently, optimising reuse and recovery of materials, minimising impacts on the transport network.

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- Does the LTP optimise existing infrastructure and provide new infrastructure sufficient to meet demand?
- Does the LTP reduce the energy demand from the transport sector and support moves to electrification of road and rail transport modes?

1.26 In accordance with Article 11 of the SEA Regulations, the competent authority preparing the LTP, in this case Longford County Council, is required to consult with Environmental Authorities on the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the Environmental Report. The report was issued to Environmental Authorities and neighbouring local authorities for their consideration for a four-week period from 13th February to 13th March 2023. Two consultation responses were received from Geological Survey Ireland and the Environmental Protection Agency which are detailed in **Appendix E** of the Environmental Report. The responses were reviewed and appropriate amendments made to the detail contained in the Final Scoping Report (June 2023) which is available on the Council's website.

Stage 3: Draft Environmental Report

1.27 The SEA Regulations require an Environmental Report to be prepared, in line with the completed Scoping Report. The Environmental Report contains the findings of the assessment of the likely significant effects on the environment resulting from implementation of the Draft Longford Town LTP. It reflects the requirements of the SEA Directive and the transposed SEA Regulations by providing the following information:

- An outline of the contents of the LTP and its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes (Chapter 1, Chapter 3 and Appendix B of the Environmental Report).
- The environmental characteristics of the study area, including any problems and issues identified and their likely evolution without the LTP (Chapter 4 and Appendix C of the Environmental Report).

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- Key environmental policy objectives set at the international, national and local levels that are relevant to the LTP (Chapter 3 and Appendix B of the Environmental Report).
- The EPO Framework and the criteria used to make judgements about the effects of the LTP (Chapter 2 of the Environmental Report)
- The likely significant effects of the LTP and reasonable alternative option (i.e. the alternative Abbeycartron Access Strategy which is based on the previous Local Area Plan) appraised against each of the Environmental Protection Objectives (EPOs) in the EPO Framework, taking into account mitigation (which may take the form of policy safeguards in national policy or other regulatory mechanisms) (Chapter 5 and 6 of the Environmental Report).
- Any difficulties encountered during the assessment process, including data limitations (Chapter 2 of the Environmental Report).
- How consultation comments have been taken into account, including those received during Screening and Scoping (Chapter 2 and Appendix E of the Environmental Report).
- Proposed monitoring framework for significant effects identified (including uncertain effects where these could become significant) (Chapter 7 of the Environmental Report).
- Appendices, including the consultation responses tables, and SEA matrices (Appendices of the Environmental Report).

1.28 The Environmental Report clearly sets out the SEA conclusions for the Draft Longford Town LTP and its reasonable alternative, highlighting any likely significant effects, and makes recommendations for mitigating potential negative effects identified. The assessment of significant effects includes likely secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short-medium-long term, permanent, temporary, positive and negative effects, as well as the interrelationships between each SEA topic, as set out in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations. This Non-Technical Summary accompanies the Environmental Report.

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Stage 4: Consultation

1.29 Public consultation was carried out on the Draft Longford Town Local Transport Plan (July 2023) and the accompanying Draft Environmental Report and Non-Technical Summary for a four-week period from Friday 14 July to Tuesday 15 August 2023 inclusive.

1.30 The Draft Environmental Report and associated Non-Technical Summary were published on Longford County Council's website for consultation during this period.

Stage 5: Evaluation

1.31 Three submissions were received and considered in response to the public consultation on the Draft LTP from Transport Infrastructure Ireland, the National Transport Authority and the Department of Transport. No consultation responses were received on the Draft Environmental Report. The LTP was subsequently updated to take account of the submissions.

Stage 6: Final Environmental Report

1.32 Where the LTP has been revised, these changes have been subject to further assessment in the Final Environmental Report. The Final Environmental Report and this Non-Technical Summary are consistent with the finalised LTP and will be made available on the Council's website in October/November 2023.

Stage 7: SEA Statement

1.33 An SEA Statement will be prepared identifying how each of the requirements in articles 16 and 17 of the SEA Regulations have been met

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during the SEA process. The finalised SEA Statement will be published after the Council adopts the LTP.

Assessment methodology

1.34 The Longford Town LTP and its reasonable alternative have been appraised against the objectives in the EPO Framework. The findings from the SEA are presented in SEA matrices in **Appendix D** of the Environmental Report, which include colour coded symbols showing the score of each component of the LTP against each of the SEA objectives along with a concise justification for the score given. The use of colour coding in the matrices allows for likely significant effects (both positive and negative) to be easily identified, as shown in **Table 1.1**.

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Table 1.1: SEA scoring of effects

SEA effect	Description of effect
++	Significant positive effect likely
++/-	Mixed significant positive and minor negative effects likely
+	Minor positive effect likely
+/-	Mixed minor effects likely
++/--	Mixed significant effects likely
-	Minor negative effect likely
--/+	Mixed significant negative and minor positive effects likely
--	Significant negative effect likely
0	No or negligible effect likely
?	Likely effect uncertain
N/A	Assessment criterion not applicable

1.35 The dividing line between environmental scores is often quite small. Where significant effects are distinguished from more minor effects this is because, using the appraisal questions and criteria and applying professional judgement, the effect of the option in relation to achievement of the EPO will be of such magnitude that it will have a noticeable and measurable effect compared with other factors that may influence the achievement of that objective.

1.36 Minor effects are still identified as these assist with the identification of cumulative and synergistic effects, can help identify opportunities for enhancements (e.g. enhancing a minor positive to make it significant) and also better enable the Council to make a more informed decision over the sustainability performance of options.

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1.37 Where a potential positive or negative effect is uncertain, a question mark has been added to the relevant effect (e.g., +? Or -?) and the effect is colour coded as per the potential positive, negligible or negative effect (e.g., green, white, pink, etc.). Schedule 2 of SEA Regulations identifies criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment which has guided the approach to scoring in the assessment.

1.38 The prediction and evaluation of effects of options in the Longford Town LTP relies heavily on the EPO Framework – every option will be appraised for their likely impacts in relation to achievement of the EPO objectives. In line with the SEA Regulations, the following characteristics of effects will be predicted and evaluated: probability, duration, frequency, reversibility, the cumulative nature of effects, the transboundary nature of effects, the risk to human health of the environment, the magnitude and spatial extent of the effect, the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected, and effects on areas or landscapes with recognised national, European Union or international protection status.

Difficulties encountered and data limitations

1.39 Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations states that the Environmental Report should identify any difficulties encountered during the assessment process. The main difficulties and data gaps encountered were as follows:

- Although preliminary results from the 2022 Census have been released, the full 2022 Census data will not be available until the end of 2023. Therefore, reference is made to the 2016 Census data, where more up-to-date data is not available. As more up-to-date data is released from the 2022 Census, this will be used to inform the SEA as appropriate. The Environmental Report and this NTS were updated in June 2023 to take account of the 30 May 2023 statistical release.

1.40 No other specific data limitations or difficulties were encountered during the SEA process.

Sustainability context for development in Longford Town

Policy context

1.41 The Longford Town LTP is greatly influenced by other plans / programmes and by broader environmental objectives. The LTP must conform to environmental protection legislation and the environmental objectives established at international, European and national levels, as well as contributing to the goals of a wide range of other plans and programmes.

Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations requires, among other things:

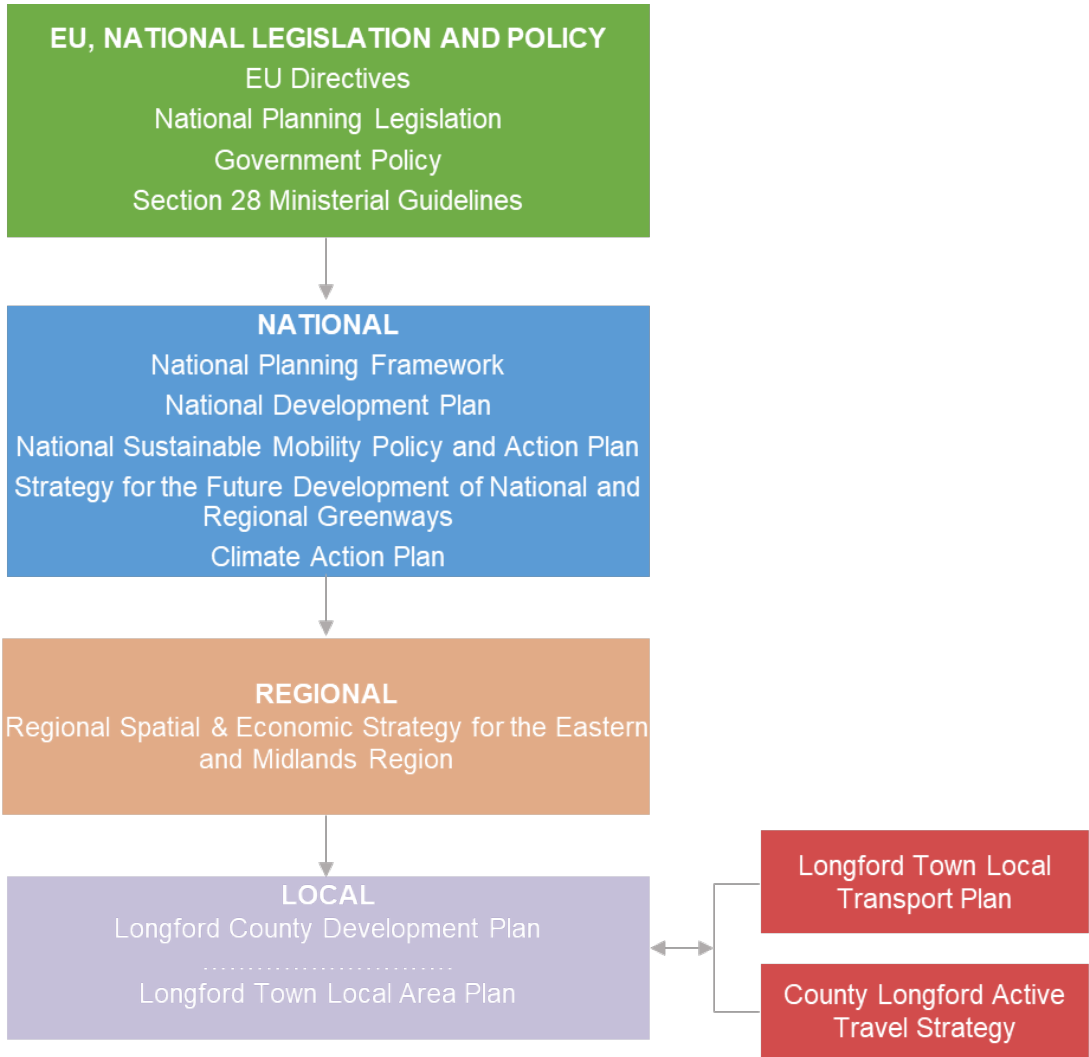
- *“an outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme...and relationship with other relevant plans or programmes”;*
and
- *the environmental protection objectives, established at international, European Union or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme...and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation”.*

1.42 A review of the key international, European and national legislation and plans of relevance to the Longford Town LTP is detailed in **Appendix B** of the Environmental Report. It should be noted that the Environmental Report has been prepared to be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed changes that may result from the implementation of the plan. It is not intended to be a register of all legislation / plans, but rather an examination of the key environmental protection objectives relevant to the Longford Town LTP. A summary of the most relevant plans is provided in **Chapter 3** of the Environmental Report.

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1.43 **Figure 1.3** illustrates the links and inter-relationships between the Longford Town LTP and other key relevant international, national, regional and local plans.

Figure 1.3: Policy context for the Longford Town Local Transport Plan



Environmental baseline information

1.44 Baseline information provides the context for assessing the sustainability of the proposals in the Longford Town LTP. It also provides the basis for identifying trends, predicting the likely effects of the document and monitoring its outcomes. The requirements for baseline data vary widely, but it must be relevant to environmental issues, be sensitive to change and should ideally relate to records which are sufficient to identify trends.

Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations requires information to be provided on:

"The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme.

The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.

Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to the Birds Directive or the Habitats Directive."

1.45 To fulfil the requirements of Schedule 2, **Chapter 4** of the Environmental Report, supported by **Appendix C** of the Environmental Report, sets out a description of the state of the environment at present (detailed in **Appendix C** by SEA topic area). The following sections outline the key issues / problems currently being faced in the study area; a description of the expected evolution of the environment without the LTP; and the corresponding Environmental Protection Objectives in the EPO Framework.

Key sustainability issues

Biodiversity, flora and fauna

1.46 Longford contains many areas of high ecological value including the Royal Canal pNHA in Longford Town. Development proposed in the Longford Town LTP has the potential to put pressure on these sites including through disturbance and damage from recreational use, air pollution, and loss of functionally linked habitat. Although designated sites represent the most valued habitats, the overall ecological network is important for biodiversity as a whole. Fragmentation and erosion of habitats and the ecological network in the town is an ongoing threat to biodiversity.

1.47 If the Longford Town LTP was not implemented, it is considered that adequate protection would be afforded to Longford's habitats and species through policies in the Longford County Development Plan (most notably through the policies in Chapter 12: Natural Heritage and the Environment, and in particular policies CPO 12.1- CPO 12.85) as well as through the statutory protection of certain habitats and species. However, without the Longford Town LTP it is possible that transport infrastructure could be sited inappropriately and adversely impact biodiversity sites, even if indirectly. The Longford Town LTP provides an opportunity to ensure that biodiversity is protected and enhanced through the transport and active travel system by:

- Locating active travel/transport infrastructure away from the most sensitive locations.
- Providing for new green and blue infrastructure which supports habitat creation and connections.
- Providing for habitat enhancement measures as part of active travel developments.
- Ensuring that active travel projects do not adversely affect the current condition of biodiversity sites but, where possible, contribute to their improvement.

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- There may also be indirect benefits for species from improved air quality due to the reduction in road traffic and congestion.

Population and human health

1.48 Population growth and demographic change will place additional demand on the transport network (as well as on housing availability, education, health and social care facilities, etc.). The Longford Town LTP offers an opportunity to deliver an integrated and accessible transport system that improves access to services and facilities for all of Longford's population. As the older population of Longford is predicted to grow, the Longford Town LTP offers an opportunity to consider age friendly design, including design for dementia, and potential for increasing access to health services in development of transport proposals to better an older population.

1.49 High levels of car dependency amongst the population of Longford and HGV traffic travelling through the town contribute towards traffic congestion and a decline in air quality, particularly during peak commuter times. There is potential for the Longford Town LTP to reduce air and/or noise pollution by supporting a modal shift to active travel and public transport within the town, thereby improving the health and wellbeing of the population of Longford.

1.50 The most densely populated areas in Longford Town are generally in the centre, south and eastern parts of the town. These areas tend to coincide with higher levels of relative deprivation and unemployment, along with lower levels of educational attainment. The Longford Town LTP seeks to improve active travel infrastructure throughout the town and to key employment and education locations, thus removing one of the barriers to employment for many social groups.

1.51 Lack of safe and accessible cycling and walking networks discourage active travel in the town. In the 2016 Census, Longford Town recorded the highest number of people in Ireland who stated that their health was 'bad' or 'very bad' (2.9%) **[See reference 12]**. The LTP has an important role to play in

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improving health of the residents of Longford Town through improving access to services and facilities (including health facilities), encouraging active travel modes such as walking and cycling, reducing transport-related air and noise pollution, and reducing spatial connectivity inequalities that impact health.

1.52 In the absence of the Longford Town LTP, the policies in the Longford County Development Plan would apply, however, without the Longford Town LTP, these sustainability issues would be less well addressed, and the opportunities identified above may not be fully exploited.

Climatic factors

1.53 There is a need to significantly reduce the Longford's greenhouse gas emissions to help meet international and national greenhouse gas reduction targets. The effects of climate change in Longford are likely to result in extreme weather events (e.g., intense rainfall and flooding, prolonged high temperatures and drought) becoming more common and more intense. Climate change is therefore likely to affect habitats and species and how people live, work and play. In the absence of the Longford Town LTP, the actions outlined in the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and the policies of the Longford County Development Plan will apply which seek to respond to the Climate Emergency by reducing energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions, including transport-related emissions; improving energy efficiency of buildings; maintaining and enhancing green infrastructure; and supporting low carbon and renewable energy generation (Climate Change policies CPO3.1 -CPO3.19).

1.54 The Longford Town LTP provides an opportunity to adapt and mitigate to climatic factors by promoting sustainable development of transport infrastructure, for example by locating transport infrastructure in sustainable locations that would not be significantly impacted by flooding (or likely to increase flooding elsewhere) and ensuring it is designed to be flood resilient; reducing the need to travel by private car; creating and enhancing green and blue infrastructure networks; incorporating Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) as part of new transport and active travel schemes; identifying suitable

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locations for new public EV charging infrastructure; and through low carbon design of new transport infrastructure and the use of renewable energy for electricity in electric vehicles.

Air

1.55 In the absence of the Longford Town LTP, the legally binding ceilings for emissions of air pollutants would continue to apply set by the EU Air Quality Directive [See reference 13], as well as the policies in the Longford County Development Plan which support the preservation of ‘best ambient air quality’ in the county, the promotion of alternative and sustainable transport methods to maintain good air quality, and the retention and planting of green infrastructure as a means of air purification and filtering (Air Quality policies CPO12.104 - CPO12.108). However, the Longford Town LTP provides an opportunity to improve air quality and reduce emissions by minimising traffic growth, supporting a modal shift towards public transport, walking and cycling, and providing electric vehicle charging infrastructure to support the uptake of electric vehicles in preference to petrol/diesel vehicles.

1.56 Without targeted action through the Longford Town LTP, it is likely that traffic congestion and high levels of car dependency will continue to increase in the town centre and may worsen with the rising population, exacerbating air quality issues, particularly at commuter times.

Soil

1.57 There are several vacant sites in Longford, however, the extent of infill / brownfield land and vacant and derelict buildings is likely to be reduced in the future as the regeneration of Longford Town progresses. The town contains one Geological Site, St. Mel’s Cathedral, which should not be lost or compromised as new development occurs. There are several notable construction projects that are either planned, programmed or underway in Longford, which will require significant amounts of mineral resources in the future, including the

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N4/M4 Mullingar to Longford (Roosky) Upgrade which will pass Longford Town and the Royal Canal Way.

1.58 In the absence of the Longford Town LTP, the policies in the Longford County Development Plan would apply. These support the protection of Geological Sites, the reuse of brownfield land, the remediation of contaminated land, and the protection of high-quality agricultural soils (Soil Protection policies CP012.115-CPO12.124). However, the Longford Town LTP provides an opportunity to ensure that transport development and active travel infrastructure is located and designed to take into account the sensitivities of the soil environment and geological sites of value. Furthermore, the Longford Town LTP will support the regeneration of Longford Town's infill/brownfield land by outlining the sustainable transport elements of the regeneration programme.

Water

1.59 The River Camlin is failing to meet the WFD objective of 'good' ecological and chemical status. Without the Longford Town LTP, it is possible that transport developments and active travel interventions could be located in areas that could lead to further water quality issues and risks to the natural environment. The water environment has the potential to be both directly and indirectly affected by the Longford Town LTP, with transport and active travel development potentially contributing to the pollution of nearby watercourses and groundwater and adversely affecting drainage of surface water. However, existing safeguards, such as the Water Framework Regulations, would help to reduce the potential for this to occur. Policies in the County Development Plan also seek to protect and enhance water quality (Water Quality and Groundwater Protection Policies CPO12.92 – CPO12.103).

1.60 The Longford Town LTP provides an opportunity to ensure that transport and active travel development is located and designed to take into account the sensitivities of the water environment. Without the Longford Town LTP, these sustainability issues would be less well addressed, and the opportunities may not be fully exploited.

Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

1.61 There are many heritage assets and areas of historical and cultural interest in Longford that could be adversely affected by poorly located or designed transport development or active travel interventions. The increasing occurrence of extreme weather events means that all cultural asset structures, particularly those in a ruinous or dilapidated condition, are susceptible to the effects of climate change. Air pollution can also contribute to the degradation of heritage assets. Increasing transport levels from the projected population increase can have a range of direct and indirect effects on heritage assets including effects from noise and air pollution from busy traffic in close proximity to culturally significant areas which may make them less appealing to visit or decrease their visual amenity.

1.62 In the absence of the Longford Town LTP, the statutory protection of important heritage assets, such as the protection of RPS and ACA designations through the Planning and Development Act and the National Monuments Acts would continue to apply, as well as the policies in the Longford County Development Plan (Built and Cultural Heritage Policies CPO 11.1 - 11.57) which support the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings and the promotion of access to and understanding of heritage assets in Longford.

1.63 However, the Longford Town LTP provides opportunities to protect these assets (including their settings) from inappropriate transport and active travel development. It is likely that the maintenance and management of existing transport infrastructure, and the delivery of any new transport infrastructure, would be required to consider the potential effects on any nearby heritage assets and historic areas, and to incorporate elements that help to enhance their setting. A key element of the regeneration of Longford Town will be the creation of enhanced accessibility and sustainable mobility within the town. Improving the public transport and active travel connectivity of Longford Town, as proposed in the Longford Town LTP, could help enhance the accessibility of

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historic areas and heritage assets for people from all backgrounds, including local people and tourists. This would help to promote the importance of these assets and areas and could subsequently lead to new investment, such as through an increase in the number of visitors, that would help to preserve heritage assets and areas for future generations to enjoy. Furthermore, the Longford Town LTP provides an opportunity to reduce the need to travel by diesel and petrol vehicles; to accelerate a shift from private car to active and public transport; and to decarbonise road vehicles, all of which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and traffic congestion, thereby helping to reduce degradation of heritage assets and improve their settings.

Landscape

1.64 Major new development projects, including those relating to transport infrastructure, renewable and non-renewable energy development, and regeneration and public realm enhancements have the potential to influence both positive and negative landscape / townscape change. In the absence of the Longford Town LTP, the policies in the Longford County Development Plan will apply which seek to conserve and enhance the uniqueness of each LCT; preserve important views; support public realm improvements; encourage the redevelopment of infill / brownfield land in preference to greenfield sites; support the regeneration of key strategic sites in Longford Town; and develop the green and blue infrastructure network (Landscape Character policies CPO14.1 – CPO14.37; Regeneration policies CPO6.62 – 6.85; and Green Infrastructure policies CPO13.1 – CPO13.35).

1.65 The Longford Town LTP offers an opportunity to ensure that the variation in landscape character is taken into account in the design and siting of transport developments and active travel interventions, and that opportunities for the protection and enhancement of the landscape are maximised. The LTP provides an opportunity to improve urban and rural connectivity and therefore deliver improved access to valued landscapes, townscapes and viewpoints, including by sustainable and active travel modes to reduce the impact of road traffic. The LTP provides an opportunity to reduce petrol and diesel vehicles on

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the roads which would help to minimise the adverse effects that busy roads can have on landscape and townscape character, including through noise, air and light pollution. Furthermore, the LTP provides an opportunity to promote the creation and enhancement of active travel corridors which would benefit visual amenity value in Longford Town. Without the LTP, the sustainability issues would be less well addressed, and the opportunities may not be fully exploited.

Material assets

1.66 Longford Town experiences high levels of car dependency and ownership with low levels of public transport usage, poor train frequencies, limited bus services and connectivity, fragmented and poor cycling facilities, and traffic/parking issues along Main Street.

1.67 In the absence of the Longford Town LTP, the policies in the Longford County Development Plan would apply (Transport policies CPO5.1 – CPO5.80). These support measures to reduce dependency on cars; improve traffic and travel management; develop active travel networks; support a modal shift from private car use to walking, cycling and public transport; and to direct new development to sustainable locations which limits the need to travel and offer a choice of transport modes. However, without targeted action at the local level, it is anticipated that car dependency will continue to increase with the rising population. The Longford Town LTP provides an opportunity to develop an accessible and inclusive transport network that supports the needs of the population of Longford Town by:

- Reducing dependency on cars in favour of increased walking, cycling and public transport use.
- Supporting a modal shift from private car use to public transport and active travel.
- Reducing road accidents and creating a sense of safety for all transport network users.

SEA findings of the Longford Town Local Transport Plan

1.68 This section presents a summary of the SEA findings for the appraisal of the Longford Town LTP's Vision, nine principles, eight objectives, eight strategies for transport development and its reasonable alternative, all of which were assessed against the EPO Framework presented in **Chapter 2** of the Environmental Report. This section also outlines the potential secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short-medium-long term, direct and indirect effects which are likely from the implementation of the Longford Town LTP. The detailed SEA matrices for the proposed plan and reasonable alternative are presented in **Appendix D** of the Environmental Report.

SEA findings of the reasonable alternative

1.69 As outlined in **Chapter 2** of the Environmental Report, reasonable alternative scenarios must meet the following considerations:

- Take into account the geographical scope, hierarchy and objectives of the LTP – **be realistic.**
- Be based on socio-economic and environmental evidence – **be reasonable.**
- Be capable of being delivered within the LTP's timeframe and resources – **be implementable.**
- Be technically and institutionally feasible – **be viable.**

1.70 One of the reasonable alternatives considered was the 'do-nothing' scenario i.e. no change to existing transport infrastructure or transport services in Longford Town. However, this was discounted as a reasonable alternative as both the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region (RSES) 2019-2031 [**See reference 14**] (Regional Policy Objective 8.6)

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and Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 [See reference 15] (County Policy Objective 4.9) (see **Chapter 3** of the Environmental Report) require the preparation of a Local Transport Plan for the town.

1.71 Therefore, the reasonable alternative considered in the Environmental Report is the:

- Alternative access strategy for Abbeycartron based on the previous Local Area Plan layout.

Alternative Access Strategy for Abbeycartron

1.72 The proposed development lands at Abbeycartron are zoned for residential use with a small area for education zoned in the northwest part of the site. In order to facilitate access to these lands, an alternative Access Strategy based on the previous Local Area Plan layout was considered which provides access for all modes of transport through the site.

1.73 The alternative Access Strategy includes a number of new roads through the lands, creating links at Battery Road roundabout/Druid Glen in the northwest, Great Water Street across the River Camlin in the southwest, and two links at Ballinalee Road/Templemichael Industrial Estate in the east. This would create a number of new road crossings across the River Camlin. The scheme also includes new pedestrian/cycle routes along the River Camlin and between Abbeycartron Lane and the Mall, and additional permeability routes throughout the site.

1.74 The results of the appraisal findings for this reasonable alternative are provided in **Table 1.2**.

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Table 1.2: Summary of SEA effects of the alternative Abbeycartron Access Strategy

Environmental Protection Objective	Alternative Abbeycartron Access Strategy
1. Biodiversity, flora and fauna	+/-?
2. Population and human health	++/--
3. Air quality / climate change mitigation	--/+
4. Flood risk / climate change adaptation	--?
5. Soil	--
6. Water	--?
7. Cultural heritage	-?
8. Landscape	--/+?
9. Material assets	++/--

1.75 A mixed effect (significant positive / significant negative) is identified for **EPO 2: Population and human health** for the alternative Abbeycartron Access Strategy. The scheme proposes new pedestrian/cycle links along the River Camlin ensuring good links with the surrounding area and providing additional permeability routes to connect with the Mall. New roads throughout the scheme will also incorporate cycle infrastructure. These interventions are likely to encourage walking and cycling for new and existing residents of Abbeycartron and improve access to services, facilities and employment opportunities for sustainable travel modes. This will encourage healthy lifestyles by promoting active travel. However, a significant negative effect is also identified for this EPO as the new access roads which provide four new access points will make the area extremely permeable for vehicles which is likely to increase residents' exposure to noise/air/vibration/light pollution related to the increased volume of traffic in the area. This will be mitigated to some extent by the proposed active

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travel elements of the strategy, and the close proximity of zoned education facilities, however it is likely that new residents will still rely on the use of private vehicles for some journeys as they are located on the periphery of Longford Town.

1.76 An uncertain significant negative effect is identified for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation**. The alternative Access Strategy proposes a number of new roads traversing the site, including three new road river crossings across the River Camlin. The River Camlin has a high probability of fluvial flood events and this scale of development on greenfield land has the potential to exacerbate flood risk with the introduction of more impermeable surfaces within the plan area.

1.77 An uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / significant negative) is identified for **EPO 8: Landscape** in relation to the alternative Abbeycartron Access Strategy. The impact on Longford's existing landscape and townscape will depend largely on the detailed design of the alternative Access Strategy and its associated residential development, therefore the effects are uncertain, however, due to the scale of the transport element of the proposal, it is likely that the scheme will have an adverse effect on the landscape of Longford Town's rural edge. The Access Strategy provides new pedestrian and cycle links which will improve urban and rural connectivity, as well as enhancing access to valued landscapes and viewpoints including to the River Camlin and the Mall. However, the additional volume of traffic at connections points on Battery Road, Great Water Street and Templemichael/Ballinalee Road, associated with the new road and new population, has the potential to increase adverse effects on the character of these areas, including through noise, air and light pollution.

1.78 The effects for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna**, **EPO 5: Soil**, **EPO 6: Water**, **EPO 7: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage** and **EPO 9: Material assets** were assessed to be the same as the preferred approach Abbeycartron Access Strategy.

Conclusion on why the preferred approach was chosen in light of reasonable alternative

1.79 Table 1.2 provides a summary of the SEA effects for the reasonable alternative. Longford County Council took into account the SEA findings when deciding on the preferred approach for the Longford Town LTP. The preferred approach was chosen in light of the reasonable alternative as it would result in the most positive effects against the SEA topics. However, the SEA findings were not the only factors considered when determining a preferred approach to take forward in the proposed LTP. Factors such as public opinion, deliverability and conformity with legislation were also considered when selecting the preferred approach for the proposed LTP. Taking all of these factors into consideration, Longford County Council rejected the reasonable alternative appraised during the SEA process as a preferred approach.

SEA findings of the Vision, principles, objectives and strategies of the Longford Town LTP

1.80 Table 1.3 overleaf provides a summary of the SEA effects for the Longford Town LTP for each SEA topic.

Table 1.3: Summary of the SEA findings for the Longford Town Local Transport Plan

	1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna	2: Population and human health	3: Air quality and climate change mitigation	4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation	5: Soil	6: Water	7: Cultural heritage	8: Landscape	9: Material assets
Vision	+/-?	++	++	+/-?	+/-?	+/-?	+/-?	+/-?	++
Principle 1: Integrated transport planning, land use and urban design	+/-?	++	++	+/-?	+/-?	+/-?	+/-?	++/-?	++
Principle 2: People first	+/-?	++	++	?	?	?	+	+	++
Principle 3: Maintaining and enhancing connectivity	+/-?	+/-	+/-	?	?	?	+/-?	+/-?	++
Principle 4: Safe streets	+	++	+	0	0	0	+	+	+
Principle 5: Value for money	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+
Principle 6: Vibrant and great for business	+	++	++	?	?	?	+	++	+
Principle 7: Efficient	+	++	++	+	+	+	+	++	+
Principle 8: Future focused and equitable	+	++	++	+	?	+	+	+	+
Principle 9: Evidence-based decision making	+	++	++	?	?	?	+	+	++
Objective A: Permeability	+/-?	++	++	?	?	?	+	+	++
Objective B: Active travel	+/-?	++	++	?	?	?	+	+	++
Objective C: Public transport	+/-?	++/-	++/-	?	?	?	+	+	++
Objective D: Integration of land use and transport	+/-?	++	++	+/-?	+/-?	+/-?	+/-?	+/-?	++
Objective E: Parking	+	++	++	+	+	+	+	++	+
Objective F: Safety	+	++	+	0	0	0	+	+	+
Objective G: Traffic Management	+	++	++	0	0	0	+	+	++
Objective H: Feasibility and value for money	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+

	1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna	2: Population and human health	3: Air quality and climate change mitigation	4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation	5: Soil	6: Water	7: Cultural heritage	8: Landscape	9: Material assets
Pedestrian Strategy	+/-?	++	++	+	+	+/-?	+?	+?	++
Cycling Strategy	--/+?	++	++	--?	+	-?	+?	+?	++
Permeability Strategy	+/-?	++	++	--?	+	-?	+?	+?	++
Public Transport Strategy	+?	++/-	++/-	0	+	0	+?	+?	++
Traffic Management Strategy	+?	++	++	0	+	0	+?	+?	+
Car Parking Strategy	+?	++/-?	++/-?	0	+	0	+?	+?	+
Feasibility and Value for Money	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+?
Abbeycartron Access Strategy	+/-?	++/-	--/+	-?	--	--?	-?	+/-?	++/--

EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora

1.81 Uncertain mixed effects (minor positive / minor negative) are identified for the Vision, Principles 1-3, Objectives A-D, the Pedestrian Strategy and the Permeability Strategy. These have the potential to generate indirect benefits for species due a reduction in road traffic from people using new / improved pedestrian links, which will result in improved air quality, disturbance and potentially less roadkill. New footpaths and links may incorporate habitat enhancement measures as part of their delivery, thereby potentially contributing to the network of functionally linked habitats in Longford Town, although this is uncertain. There may be increased recreational pressures on the Royal Canal pNHA as F9, F11, PY7, PY10, and PY11 will improve access to the pNHA. Additionally, there may be species disturbance from the installation of lighting along the pedestrian routes.

1.82 Uncertain mixed effects (minor positive / minor negative) are also expected for the Abbeycartron Access Strategy. There are no biodiversity sites in close proximity to the site, however, there may still be some adverse effects to habitats and species that exist on the rural land that is currently in agricultural use at the edge of Longford Town from development, associated travel and increased active travel in the area. Adverse effects may be minimised through retention of existing habitats and the incorporation of habitat enhancement measures through the delivery of the Strategy. Additionally, there may be both positive and negative indirect effects associated with the local air quality as the strategy proposes a new road which will introduce greater transport-related emissions, but also introduces a number of active travel routes which would reduce the need to travel by petrol/diesel vehicles.

1.83 For Principles 4 and 6-9 and Objectives E-G, **minor positive effects** are identified for this EPO as they also support the prioritisation of other modes of travel such as walking and cycling above private vehicle use which will result in indirect benefits for species from improved air quality. *Principle 7: Efficient* and *Objective E: Parking* support the reallocation of on-street parking for other uses

including new trees/planting, which will contribute to the network of functionally linked habitats in Longford Town.

1.84 For the Cycling Strategy, **uncertain mixed effects (significant negative / minor positive)** are identified in relation to EPO 1 for similar reasons as the Pedestrian and Permeability Strategies. However, a significant negative effect is identified as the Cycling Strategy aims to enhance the Royal Canal Greenway terminus as a destination for cyclists and walkers. This is likely to increase recreational pressure on the pNHA and may have adverse effects on biodiversity including disturbance to species, loss of habitat and habitat damage.

1.85 For the Public Transport Strategy, the Traffic Management Strategy and the Car Parking Strategy, **uncertain minor positive effects** are identified for EPO 1 as the schemes propose interventions along existing roads and street space, which are less likely to have adverse effects on habitats and species. Measures may incorporate habitat creation or enhancement measures such as street planting, although this is uncertain. However, these measures are also likely to result in indirect benefits for species from improved air quality due to the reduction in road traffic and congestion associated with the measures to support modal shift away from private vehicle use in Longford Town, such as the introduction of new bus routes, improved circulation from traffic calming measures, and reduced on-street parking.

1.86 Negligible effects are identified for *Principle 5: Value for Money, Objective H: Feasibility and Value for Money* and the Feasibility and Value for Money Strategy as these focus on cost effectiveness and will not necessarily determine the impacts of traffic interventions on habitats and species.

EPO 2: Population and human health

1.87 Significant positive effects are identified for the Vision, Principles 1, 2, 4, and 6-9, and Objectives A, B, D-G, The Pedestrian Strategy, the Cycling Strategy, the Permeability Strategy and the Traffic Management Strategy. All

the schemes and initiatives except the Traffic Management Strategy will promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging active modes of travel, and will improve the accessibility, safety and attractiveness of these modes within Longford Town. The multi-criteria analysis presented in the Longford Town LTP identified a number of specific routes that offered significant advantage by forming part of key route or desire line, or a key route to a school, or offering significant improvements in terms of safety. By promoting these active forms of travel, these initiatives and strategies will likely help facilitate the modal shift away from private vehicle use and reduce residents' exposure to associated pollution, protecting physical and mental wellbeing.

1.88 These schemes, alongside principle 2, 4, 6 and 7 and objective A and F, will also address the spatial connectivity inequality that currently exists in Longford Town by connecting previously disconnected areas and areas with relatively high levels of deprivation to local services and facilities, creating a cohesive and integrated town that is easier to navigate by active travel which will be particularly beneficial for less mobile people, including elderly people, infants and young children, disabled people and pregnant women, to access services and facilities. Improving active travel infrastructure in the areas with high levels of relative deprivation and unemployment, and lower levels of educational attainment, will help to reduce spatial connectivity inequalities that impact employment and education attainment.

1.89 For the Public Transport Strategy and Car Parking Strategy, Principle 3: *Maintaining and enhancing connectivity* and Objective C: *Public Transport*, **mixed effects** are identified for EPO 2. The principle, objective and the schemes included in the Public Transport Strategy would help improve access and connectivity to services, facilities and employment areas for Longford Town, and help reduce reliance on private vehicles, thereby reducing residents' exposure to associated pollution. PT1, PT4 and PT6 offer particular benefit in enabling the interchange with other transport modes, which includes provision of a new local bus route (PT6) that will enhance access to local services and employment opportunities within Longford Town by sustainable modes. However, Principle 3: *Maintaining and enhancing connectivity* also supports maintaining and enhancing the road network. As transport energy use remains dominated by fossil fuels, the release of greenhouse gases from private

vehicles and public transport including from rail transport, is still likely and therefore minor negative effects are expected to be combined with positive effects. The schemes in the Car Parking Strategy include the rationalisation of on-street parking along Main Street, Dublin Street (CP1) and Geraldine's Terrace (CP4) to facilitate cycling infrastructure. Other improvements such as changes to the parking regime (e.g. limiting stays to a maximum of two hours), improved pedestrian access to existing car parks and enhanced wayfinding aim to improve access to existing car parks within Longford Town. A significant positive effect is therefore identified as improving street space to create more space to pedestrian/cycling helps facilitate the modal shift away from private vehicle use. Additionally, the removal of on-street parking in key town centre locations is likely to reduce car use for unnecessary journeys into town. There may be some short-term inconvenience as existing private vehicle users adjust their travel behaviours. These interventions help support the modal shift away from private car use and towards sustainable and active modes of travel, promoting healthy lifestyles. Additionally, the schemes aim to improve traffic circulation within the town and existing car parks, reducing congestion in these areas and therefore people's exposure to associated air, noise and light pollution in these areas. However, a minor negative effect is also identified for the Car Parking Strategy as the continued use and improvement of some existing parking facilities may encourage private vehicle use for some journeys.

1.90 For the Abbeycartron Access Strategy, a **mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative)** is identified for EPO 2. The scheme proposes new pedestrian/cycle links along the River Camlin ensuring good links with the surrounding area and providing additional permeability routes to connect with the Mall. The scheme includes a new road between Battery Road roundabout and Abbeycartron Lane, providing access to Battery Road at two points which reduces the overall volume of vehicles that utilise any one entrance, thereby minimising traffic congestion and pollution. A new road is also proposed across the Camlin to link to the Templemichael Industrial Estate. The new roads will also incorporate designated footpaths and cycle infrastructure. These interventions are likely to encourage walking and cycling for new and existing residents of Abbeycartron and improve access to services, facilities and employment opportunities for sustainable travel modes. This will encourage healthy lifestyles by promoting active travel. However, a minor negative effect is

also identified for this EPO as the new access roads that will accommodate significant residential development are likely to increase residents' exposure to noise/air/vibration/light pollution related to the increased volume of traffic in the area. This will be mitigated to some extent by the proposed active travel elements of the strategy, and the close proximity of zoned education facilities, however it is likely that new residents will still rely on private vehicles for some journeys as they are located on the periphery of Longford Town.

1.91 Negligible effects are identified for *Principle 5: Value for Money, Objective H: Feasibility and Value for Money* and *Feasibility and Value for Money Strategy* as these will not necessarily determine the impacts of traffic interventions on population and human health.

EPO 3: Air quality and climate change mitigation

1.92 Significant positive effects are identified for the Vision, Principles 1, 2 and 6-9, Objectives A, B, D, E, the Pedestrian Strategy, the Cycling Strategy, the Permeability Strategy, and the Traffic Management Strategy. These interventions are likely to help facilitate the modal shift away from dependence on petrol / diesel private vehicles by increasing the attractiveness and accessibility of active travel and public transport, particularly for unnecessary journeys, thus lowering transport-related emissions and Longford's contribution to climate change. The Traffic Management Strategy and Objective G is expected to improve traffic circulation, reduce congestion and reduce through-traffic.

1.93 For *Principle 4: Safe Streets* and *Objective F: Safety*, **minor positive effects** are identified for this EPO. Improving road safety, particularly for vulnerable road users will encourage alternative travel modes such as walking and cycling. This may also help discourage private car journeys by implementing reduced speeds and improving infrastructure for crossing and pedestrian safety. The overall effect will be a reduction in the dependence on petrol / diesel private vehicles, thus lowering transport-related emissions and Longford's contribution to climate change.

1.94 For *Principle 3: Maintaining and enhancing connectivity, Objective C: Public transport*, the Public Transport Strategy and Car Parking Strategy **mixed effects** are identified for EPO 3. This principle, objective and the Public Transport Strategy will offer improved access by public transport and reduce dependence on private vehicle use, particularly where a new local bus route is offered for shorter journeys. This is likely to reduce dependence on petrol / diesel private vehicles and thus lower transport-related emissions and Longford's contribution to climate change. However, the principle also supports maintaining and enhancing the road network and, as transport energy use remains dominated by fossil fuels, the release of greenhouse gases from private vehicles and modes of public transport, most notably from rail transport, is still likely. The Car Parking Strategy supports the rationalisation of on-street parking on key roads in the town centre, supporting alternative modes of travel such as walking and cycling infrastructure (CP1 and CP4). This is likely to help encourage active travel modes within the town and will curb the convenience of parking to reduce unnecessary car journeys, thus reducing transport-related emissions. Similarly, reducing the maximum stay times in key existing car parks will likely reduce car use for longer stays in the town centre. However, a minor negative effect is also identified as the continued use and improvement of existing car parking facilities within Longford Town is likely to encourage private vehicle use for some journeys, thereby increasing transport-related emissions in the town.

1.95 The Abbeycartron Access Strategy is expected to result in a **mixed effect (minor positive / significant negative)** for EPO 3. The proposal includes a road between the roundabout on Battery Road and Abbeycartron Lane, a road connection to the Templemichael Industrial Estate, and a road connection south of Abbeycartron Lane. Traffic volumes and transport-related emissions at these points are expected to increase as the Access Strategy is supporting the development of a significant amount of zoned residential development and education facilities. While the Access Strategy incorporates sustainable transport infrastructure, including cycle infrastructure and new connections between Abbeycartron Lane and the Mall, there are still likely to be high volumes of traffic as the development is located on the settlement edge. As such a significant negative effect is expected as the scheme is likely to increase transport-related emissions along Battery Road and Abbeycartron Lane. At the

same time, new pedestrian and cycle links will help support the modal shift away from private vehicle use and reduce unnecessary car journeys thus lowering transport-related emissions and Longford's contribution to climate change.

1.96 Negligible effects are identified for the Feasibility and Value for Money Strategy, *Principle 5: Value for Money* and *Objective H: Feasibility and Value for Money* as these will not necessarily determine the impacts of traffic interventions on air quality and climate change mitigation.

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

1.97 Uncertain minor positive effects are identified for *Principle 7: Efficient*, *Principle 8: Future focused and equitable* and *Objective E: Parking* for EPO 4. Principle 8 aims to adapt streets that are flexible and adaptable to change which may include being designed to adapt to surface water or ground water flooding (e.g. through flood resilient design). Principle 7 and Objective E encourage the reallocation of on-street parking for other uses including trees/planting which will deliver positive effects for flood risk and climate change adaptation. This will enhance green infrastructure along selected streets and has the potential to include SuDS.

1.98 Uncertain mixed effects (minor positive / minor negative) are identified for the Vision, *Principle 1: Integrated transport planning, land use and urban design* and *Objective D: Integration of land use and transport*. These interventions support the appropriate integration of transport and land use, which may include locating transport infrastructure in sustainable locations that take into account flood risk, delivering green and blue infrastructure as part of new transport projects, and incorporating Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) as part of new transport and active travel schemes. However, depending on the design and location of infrastructure, there may be potential adverse effects in relation to flooding. Therefore, the effects are uncertain.

1.99 Uncertain effects are identified for Principles 2, 3, 6 and 9, and Objectives A-C. These interventions seek to encourage the use of active travel or public transport but do not identify the location of proposed new infrastructure.

Therefore, it is uncertain whether the proposals may be in areas at high risk of flooding, or on high quality agricultural land, or whether they will affect the quality of waterbodies / groundwater. The effects will depend on the location and design of permeability interventions.

1.100 A minor positive effect is identified for the Pedestrian Strategy. The majority of pedestrian schemes largely avoid the areas of highest flood risk in Longford Town. The Pedestrian Strategy requires improvements to existing footpaths to include upgrading their surface and improving drainage. This is likely to help reduce the risk and effects of flooding within Longford Town, particularly along pedestrian routes.

1.101 Uncertain significant negative effects are identified for the Cycling Strategy and the Permeability Strategy. A number of interventions in the associated schemes are located in areas within Longford Town that are at the highest risk of flooding (e.g. new cycle routes and permeability routes which will require new infrastructure). Whilst primarily located along existing road routes, the development of new infrastructure and new connections could be at risk of flooding (e.g. C24 along the River Camlin).

1.102 The Abbeycarton Access Strategy is expected to have an **uncertain minor negative effect** for EPO 4. The redevelopment area is located in close proximity of the River Camlin, which has a high probability of river flood events, and some new links cross the river. Without appropriate mitigation, new development on greenfield land has the potential to exacerbate flood risk with the introduction of more impermeable surfaces within the plan area. This Access Strategy proposes the development of a number of new roads on greenfield land, as well as new paths, some of which cross the River Camlin. This is likely to introduce impermeable surfaces in an area at high risk of flooding, thereby potentially increase the severity and risk of flooding within the plan area.

1.103 Negligible effects are identified for the remaining strategies, principles and objectives as they are unlikely to affect the flood risk or climate adaptation of Longford Town.

EPO 5: Soil

1.104 Minor positive effects are identified for *Principle 7: Efficient, Objective E: Parking*, the Pedestrian Strategy, the Cycling Strategy, the Permeability Strategy, the Public Transport Strategy, the Traffic Management Strategy and the Car Parking strategy. For the Pedestrian, Cycling and Public Transport strategies, interventions are expected to improve access to St. Mel's Cathedral Geological Site, via upgraded pedestrian routes, new cycle links and a new bus route with nearby bus stops. These schemes, principles and objectives are also likely to have indirect positive effects on the regeneration of Longford's Town and the development of infill/brownfield land by supporting the sustainable transport elements of Longford Town's regeneration programme.

1.105 For the Vision, *Principle 1: Integrated transport planning, land use and urban design* and *Objective D: Integration of land use and transport*, **uncertain mixed effects (minor positive / minor negative)** are identified in relation to EPO 5. These interventions are supportive of the appropriate integration of transport and land use, which may include locating transport infrastructure in sustainable locations that take into account the sensitivities of the soil environment. They will potentially encourage the development of brownfield / previously developed land within the built-up area of Longford Town. However, depending on the locations and design of transport infrastructure, there may be adverse effects on the soil environment. Therefore, effects are uncertain.

1.106 For Principles 2-3, 6, and 8-9 and Objectives A-C, **uncertain effects** are identified for EPO 5: Soil. These interventions seek to encourage the use of active travel or public transport but do not identify the location of proposed new infrastructure. Effects on the soil environment will depend on the location of transport interventions.

1.107 The Abbeycartron Access Strategy is expected to have a **significant negative effect** in relation to EPO 5: Soil. The proposed scheme is located on greenfield land at the edge of the existing built-up area of Longford Town. The development of transport infrastructure to support the zoned development will result in the loss of this greenfield land.

1.108 Negligible effects are identified for the remaining objectives and principles and for the Feasibility and Value for Money Strategy as these measures are not expected to affect the soil resource of the plan area.

EPO 6: Water

1.109 Minor positive effects are identified for *Principle 7: Efficient*, *Principle 8: Future focused and equitable* and *Objective E: Parking*. Principle 7 and Objective E support the reallocation of on-street car parking for other uses including trees and planting which is likely to benefit the water environment. Principle 8 aims to adapt streets that are flexible and adaptable to change which may include being designed to adapt to surface water or ground water flooding.

1.110 For Principles 2-3, 6 and 9 and Objectives A-C, **uncertain effects** are identified in relation to EPO 6. These interventions seek to encourage the use of active travel or public transport but do not identify the location of proposed new infrastructure. Effects on the water environment will depend on the location and design of transport interventions.

1.111 For the Vision, *Objective D: Integration of land use and transport* and the Pedestrian Strategy, **uncertain mixed effects (minor positive / minor negative)** are identified for EPO 6. These support the appropriate integration of transport and land use, and the Pedestrian Strategy requires improvements to existing footpaths to include upgrading their surface and improving drainage. This is likely to positively affect the drainage of surface water from pedestrian routes. However, the development of new/upgraded footpaths over/near waterbodies, such as the River Camlin and Royal Canal, may have adverse effects on the quality of water bodies and groundwater.

1.112 For these reasons, **uncertain adverse effects** are identified for the Cycling Strategy, the Permeability Strategy and the Abbeycartron Access Strategy in relation to EPO 6. These schemes include interventions that are located next to or traversing waterbodies within Longford Town, including the River Camlin and the Royal Canal. New road and/or pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, such as river crossings, may have adverse effects on the quality of water bodies and groundwater during their construction.

1.113 For the remaining principles, objectives and strategies, **negligible effects** are identified for EPO 6 as these interventions and schemes are not expected to deliver schemes that will affect the water quality of waterbodies in Longford Town.

EPO 7: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

1.114 Minor positive effects are identified for the Vision and the majority of the Principles and Objectives of the Longford Town LTP in relation to EPO 7. A key element of the regeneration of Longford Town will be the creation of enhanced accessibility and sustainable mobility within the town. Sustainable transport interventions will have a positive effect on the accessibility of heritage assets within Longford Town. Additionally, indirect positive effects are likely due to the reduced need to travel by diesel and petrol vehicles which will minimise greenhouse gas emissions and congestion, thereby helping to reduce degradation of heritage assets and improve their settings. Additionally, improved street environments (e.g. *Principle 6: Vibrant and great for business*, *Principle 7: Efficient* and *Objective E: Parking*) will encourage street life and improve access to heritage assets for local people and tourists. The minor positive effects for the Vision, *Principle 1: Integrated transport planning, land use and urban design*, *Objective D: Integration of land use and transport*, and *Principle 3: Maintaining and enhancing connectivity* are combined with minor negative effects as, depending on the design and location of the proposals, there may be adverse effects on the historic environment due to new transport infrastructure development and land use change.

1.115 For all of the strategies except the Feasibility and Value for Money and the Abbeycartron Access Strategy, **uncertain minor positive effects** are identified in relation to EPO 7. In most cases, the proposed schemes will improve sustainable access to historic assets and areas of Longford Town by improved walking links, cycling routes, and new public transport. A key element of the regeneration of Longford Town is the creation of enhanced accessibility and sustainability mobility through the town. Indirect positive effects are also likely as reducing greenhouse gas emissions and congestion in these areas will minimise the degradation of heritage assets and improve their settings.

1.116 For the Abbeycartron Access Strategy, an **uncertain minor negative effect** is identified. The development site is located in close proximity to the Battery Road Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) and therefore the development of new infrastructure in this area, and the associated increase in traffic expected in this area, has the potential to have adversely affect the setting of the ACA and the listed features in the area, although this will depend on the design of traffic interventions.

1.117 Negligible effects are identified for *Principle 5: Value for Money, Objective H: Feasibility and Value for Money* and the Feasibility and Value for Money Strategy as these focus on the feasibility and value for money that projects can deliver and not expected to affect the historic environment of Longford Town.

EPO 8: Landscape

1.118 Significant positive effects are identified for *Principle 1: Integrated transport planning, land use and urban design, Principle 6: Vibrant and great for business, Principle 7: Efficient, Objective A: Permeability and Objective E: Parking*. Principle 1 supports good urban design that focuses on image, liveability, safety and cohesion of Longford Town. A focus on urban design is likely to help promote retention and planting of green infrastructure alongside transport interventions, although this is uncertain, and help create a sense of place. Additionally, improved liveability and cohesion has the potential to offer

improved urban and rural connectivity and better access to valued landscapes, townscapes and viewpoints by sustainable and active travel modes. Similarly, the other principles and objectives support good urban design such as improved street design and reallocation of car parking space in favour of trees/planting. The minor positive effect for *Principle 1: Integrated transport planning, land use and urban design* is combined with a minor negative effect as there may be adverse effects on the landscape due to new transport infrastructure development and land use change.

1.119 For the Vision and the majority of remaining principles/objectives, **minor positive effects** are identified in relation to EPO 8: Landscape. These interventions will support the modal shift away from private vehicle use and thereby help minimise the adverse effects that busy roads can have on landscape and townscape character, including through noise, air and light pollution. Additionally, improved sustainable transport connectivity will enhance urban and rural connectivity for active travel modes and ensure better access to valued landscapes, townscapes and viewpoints. The minor positive effects for the Vision, *Objective D: Integration of land use and transport*, and *Principle 3: Maintaining and enhancing connectivity* are combined with minor negative effects as, depending on the design and location of the proposals, there may be adverse effects on the landscape due to new transport infrastructure development and land use change.

1.120 Uncertain minor positive effects are identified for EPO 8: Landscape for all the strategies and associated schemes, with the exception of the Feasibility and Value for Money Strategy and the Abbeycartron Access Strategy. The proposed strategies set out a number of improvements that will enhance active travel and public transport access throughout Longford Town's built-up area, which is likely to enhance the townscape of the town by improving access to valued landscapes, townscapes and viewpoints, and reducing the adverse impacts that busy roads can have on the character of the town, including through noise, air and light pollution. The proposed schemes will also improve urban and rural connectivity between Longford Town and the surrounding landscape. Effects are uncertain as they will depend on the detailed design of interventions.

1.121 For the Abbeycartron Access Strategy, an overall **uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative)** is identified for this EPO. The impact on Longford's existing landscape and townscape will depend largely on the detailed design of the Access Strategy and its associated residential development, therefore the effects are uncertain, however, due to the scale of the proposed Access Strategy, it is likely that the scheme will have an adverse effect on the landscape of Longford Town's rural edge. The Access Strategy provides new pedestrian and cycle links which will improve urban and rural connectivity, as well as improving access to valued landscapes and viewpoints including to the River Camlin and the Mall. However, the additional volume of traffic along Battery Road, associated with the new road and new population, has the potential to increase adverse effects on the townscape character of Battery Road, including through noise, air and light pollution.

1.122 A **negligible effect** is identified for the *Principle 5: Value for Money, Objective H: Feasibility and Value for Money* and the Feasibility and Value for Money Strategy as these measures focus on the feasibility and value for money that projects can deliver and are not expected to influence the landscape / townscape of Longford Town.

EPO 9: Material assets

1.123 Positive effects are identified for all of the Vision, Principles, Objectives and Strategies set out in the Longford Town LTP. Each sets out a priority that will contribute to the development of a suitable and sustainable transport system that will meet the needs of the population of Longford Town. For the Vision and several of the principles, objectives and strategies, this includes the implementation of infrastructure and measures that support sustainable and active travel modes such as walking and cycling, reducing dependency on petrol / diesel vehicles and reducing energy demand from the transport sector. Additionally, these measures are likely to mitigate additional pressure on the road network as the population of Longford continues to grow.

1.124 As such, **significant positive effects** are identified for the Vision, Principles 1-3 and 9, Objectives A-D and G, the Pedestrian Strategy, the Cycling Strategy, the Permeability Strategy and the Public Transport Strategy. These measures are considered to offer direct effects that will enhance the transport network in Longford Town by creating an integrated system, and prioritising walking, cycling and public transport. These measures are likely to help meet the needs of the growing population of Longford Town and help facilitate the modal shift away from private vehicle use, reducing pressure on the local road network and supporting a reduction in energy demand from the transport sector. For similar reasons, **minor positive effects** are also identified for the remaining principles and objectives, the Traffic Management Strategy and the Car Parking Strategy, as these will also contribute to the creation of an overall more sustainable transport system, although these are not considered to be of the same scale.

1.125 Uncertain minor positive effects are also identified for *Principle 5: Value for Money* and *Objective H: Feasibility and Value for Money* as these focus on delivering value for money for transport proposals. As such, it is likely they will optimise the re-use of existing infrastructure and intelligent use of resources, although this is uncertain.

1.126 An **overall mixed effect (significant positive / significant negative)** is identified for the Abbeycartron Access Strategy. The Abbeycartron Access Strategy will provide essential transport infrastructure to support the zoned residential development of the area. This will provide road, cycle and walking infrastructure for the growing population of Longford Town in a key redevelopment area. The inclusion of high-quality pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, and new permeability routes will help support the modal shift away from private vehicles for new and existing residents, supporting a reduction in energy demand from the transport sector. However, supporting the Access Strategy will require development of new infrastructure, such as construction of new roads, which will require the significant use of resources.

Duration of effects

1.127 The Longford Town LTP sets out a strategic framework for the future development of transport infrastructure within Longford Town and its environs from 2023 to 2029. Effects may be experienced in the short-term (defined in this SEA as up to 2024), medium term (defined in this SEA as up to 2026) or long-term effects (defined as over the whole plan period and beyond). The implementation of the ‘strategies’ will be prioritised in order of best value for money. Chapter 8 of the Longford Town identifies ‘Priority 1’ and ‘Priority 2’ schemes and their timeframe for implementation. Priority 1 schemes will be delivered in the short-term, while Priority 2 schemes will be implemented once Priority 1 schemes have been completed, which, depending on the type of scheme, may be implemented in either the short, medium or long term.

- 14 pedestrian crossing proposals are identified as Priority 1 which are likely to be implemented in the short-term (W8-W15, W19, W26-W30) while nine pedestrian crossing proposals are Priority 2 schemes (W1-W4, W6, W7, W20-W22) which are likely to be implemented in the short/medium term due to their ease of implementation.
- Seven footpath improvement schemes are identified as Priority 1, three of which will be delivered in the short-term (F10, F11, F13) and four in the medium term (F4, F5, F9, F12). Seven footpath improvement schemes are identified as Priority 2 which are likely to be implemented in the medium term (F1-F3, F6-F8, F14).
- 22 cycle route schemes (11 Priority 1 [C1-C5, C7, C13, C16, C18, C19, C21] and 14 Priority 2 [C6, C8-C12, C14-C15, C17, C-20-C25]) will be delivered in the medium term. Route C6 Northern Environ Connector which will be delivered in the long term as it relies on the development of the Abbeycartron Access Strategy.
- All 15 bicycle parking schemes (eight Priority 1 and seven Priority 2) are easily implemented at low cost and therefore will be delivered in the short-term.
- Seven walking and cycling permeability schemes are identified as Priority 1, four will be delivered in the short term (PY7, PY4, PY1, PY3) and three

in the medium term (PY9, PY17, PY16). Of the six Priority 2 permeability schemes, two will be delivered in the short term (PY15, PY2) while the remaining four will be delivered in the medium term (PY8, PY10, PY11, PY19).

- Three public transport schemes (PT1, PT4, PT5) are identified as Priority 1 schemes, with PT1 and PT5 being delivered in the short term, and PT4 being delivered in the medium term. PT2, PT3 and PT6 are all classed as Priority 2 schemes which will be implemented in the medium term.
- Two traffic management schemes, TM1 and TM2, are identified as Priority 1 which will be delivered in the medium term. TM3-TM8 are classed as Priority 2 schemes, however, these will be implemented in the short term due to their low cost for implementation, with the exception of TM3 which will be delivered in the medium term.
- Seven car parking schemes are identified as Priority 1 which will be implemented in the short term (CP2, CP3, CP5-CP9). CP1 and CP10 are identified as Priority 2 and deliverable in the medium term, while CP4 is likely to be delivered in the short term.

1.128 The effects of these schemes in the short-term are mostly related to the initial impacts from implementing the schemes and developing new transport infrastructure. Depending on the scheme, such works could have negative effects on biodiversity, health, wellbeing and amenity of local communities (possible closure of paths, diversion of traffic, removal of car parking spaces, noise generation from construction), the soil and water environments, and the landscape. However, these impacts are temporary in nature and some may be minimised through good design and adherence to the policies in the Longford County Development Plan.

1.129 Many of the schemes proposed in the Longford Town LTP are likely to be implemented in the short to medium term. Therefore, permanent positive effects on air quality from lower transport-related emissions are expected to be experienced in the short term with continuing effects in the medium to long term. The effects on residents' health from improved air quality and greater levels of physical activity from active travel are likely to be experienced in the

short term with positive effects continuing in the medium to long term. Similarly, positive effects may be experienced in the short to long term as a result of reduced death and injury from the implementation of the schemes relating to improving crossings, traffic management and improved footpaths. Levels of deprivation in the town are likely to improve in the short to medium term as schemes are developed which connect previously disconnected areas and areas with relatively high levels of deprivation to local services and facilities, with permanent positive effects in the long-term.

1.130 There may be medium to long-term, permanent positive effects for the historic environment and landscape from the enhanced accessibility and sustainability mobility through the town. Improving and developing new active travel infrastructure, enhancing traffic management systems, and delivering new public transport schemes is likely to encourage indigenous and inward investment, which will contribute towards the regeneration of Longford Town. These effects are also likely to be experienced in the medium to long term.

Secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects

1.131 As specified in the SEA Regulations, there is a requirement to consider secondary, cumulative, synergistic, and indirect effects of the implementation of the Longford Town LTP. Secondary (or indirect) effects are effects that are not a direct result of a proposal but occur away from the original effect or as a result of a complex pathway. Cumulative effects occur where two or more insignificant effects combine to form a significant effect. Synergistic effects occur as the result of interactions between individual effects producing a total effect greater than the sum of each of the individual effects. Secondary, cumulative or synergistic effects may be either positive or negative.

1.132 The secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects of the strategies and schemes of the Longford Town LTP are summarised in the following paragraphs.

- **1. Biodiversity, flora and fauna:** It is anticipated that there will be a cumulative mix of beneficial and adverse effects on biodiversity from implementation of the LTP. For example, development of transport infrastructure could lead to direct loss of habitat or both direct and indirect disturbance on species and habitats. However, elements of the LTP such as the schemes relating to reallocating car parking spaces for other uses including for trees/planting and improving public realm could provide opportunities for planting and biodiversity enhancement / net gain. The clear focus within the LTP on improving air quality and reducing traffic volumes / encourage uptake of active travel modes would also likely result in less pollution deposition and less disturbance as well as potentially less direct road kill. There is also a potential for sites designated for nature conservation to benefit from less pollutant deposition and less disturbance.

- **2. Population and human health:** It is anticipated that the LTP will have a cumulative beneficial effect on health, wellbeing and equalities by providing greater access to services and employment opportunities, as well as greater opportunities for active travel. There is also a clear emphasis on reducing traffic congestion and vehicle speeds while improving pedestrian crossings throughout the town, thus improving safety for all road users. Improvements to air quality and a reduction in noise levels will also benefit health and wellbeing. Improving active travel infrastructure to schools and areas of employment may also result in beneficial synergistic effects on the level of deprivation in the town. Similarly, improving connectivity to open spaces and recreational areas (e.g. the Mall) may also result in positive synergistic effects on levels of engagement in physical activity. Improving and developing new active travel infrastructure, enhancing traffic management systems, and delivering new public transport schemes is likely to encourage indigenous and inward investment, which will contribute towards the regeneration of Longford Town, thereby resulting in positive secondary effects to social cohesion and the local economy.

- **3. Air pollution and climate change mitigation:** It is considered that the LTP will have an overall cumulative beneficial effect on air quality and climate change mitigation. This beneficial effect will be derived from a clear focus on reducing traffic in the town and enabling a switch to public

transport or more active modes of travel which will reduce transport-related emissions and improve air quality.

- **4. Flood risk and climate change adaptation:** It is considered that the LTP could have cumulative mixed beneficial and adverse effects in terms of flooding. Development of infrastructure could lead to an increase in impermeable area and contribute to increased flood risk by increasing runoff. However, opportunities may be provided for increasing permeable areas such as through the development of green infrastructure or the implementation of SuDS as part of transport proposals.
- **5. Soil:** It is anticipated that there will be a cumulative mix of beneficial and adverse effects on soil, agricultural resources, geology, and brownfield land from implementation of the LTP. For example, the development of transport infrastructure could lead to loss of soil and agricultural resources through encroachment (e.g. at Abbeycartron), while opportunities may also be provided to improve access to geological sites (e.g. many interventions proposed will improve access to St. Mel's Cathedral Geological Site). There may also be beneficial secondary effects on the soil environment as the development of a cohesive and integrated sustainable transport network will encourage the redevelopment of infill/brownfield land which will support Longford Town's regeneration programme.
- **6. Water:** It is anticipated that there will be a cumulative mix of beneficial and adverse effects on the water environment. Development of infrastructure could lead to an increase in adverse effects on the quality of water bodies and groundwater, particularly in relation to the construction of proposals which are located along or traverse waterbodies. However, opportunities may be provided to incorporate green infrastructure as part of transport proposals which will have beneficial effects for the water environment.
- **7. Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage:** There is potential for both positive and negative, direct and indirect cumulative impacts on nationally and locally designated heritage assets, and their unique settings. This is in addition to cumulative effects on undesignated and unknown assets, which are also important. However, well-designed transport infrastructure could present opportunities to

enhance the quality of visual amenity of heritage assets by managing public access to or from the historic features and through the historic areas of Longford Town.

- **8. Landscapes and townscapes:** There is potential for both positive and negative, direct and indirect cumulative impacts on landscapes and townscapes, including their settings. For example, adverse effects could be derived from the development of transport infrastructure introducing new features in the landscape. However, transport proposals present opportunities for positive placemaking by reducing traffic volumes and congestion and improving opportunities for active travel which will generate activity and vitality in the town, helping to define the character of different areas. Increased connectivity by active travel and public transport could result in more people being able to access and explore Longford's unique landscape and townscape, with additional cumulative benefits for health and wellbeing.
- **9. Material assets:** It is anticipated that the LTP will have a cumulative beneficial effect on material assets as the measures outlined in the LTP will help create a more sustainable transport system, reducing energy demand from the transport sector and helping to meet the needs of Longford Town's growing population.

Mitigation and recommendations

1.133 The proposals in the Longford Town LTP (in a similar way to other plans and projects from any sector) will have to demonstrate compliance with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes, including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate.

1.134 The following paragraphs set out potential effects in relation to each SEA topic and the County Policy Objectives (CPOs) included in the Longford County Development Plan [See reference 16] which are likely to provide mitigation measures for adverse effects, or enhancement of positive effects.

1.135 The following paragraphs also set out the recommendations made in the Draft Environmental Report to strengthen the mitigation provided in the LTP and where these recommendations have been incorporated in the finalised LTP.

Biodiversity, flora and fauna

1.136 There may be adverse effects on habitats and species from the measures included in the Longford Town LTP in relation to species disturbance from new infrastructure and increased recreational pressures at designated sites. Mitigation at project-level is likely to be provided by adherence to the following policies of the Longford County Development Plan:

- Development management standards (DMS) 16.201 – 16.203 set out the criteria that the Council will consider when assessing development proposals in relation to natural heritage.
- CPO 12.10 sets out the requirement for the clear demonstration of no significant effects from the appropriate level of assessment for development on/adjacent to designated sites, including pNHA (i.e. the Royal Canal pNHA). CPO 12.17 requires Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) for development which may impact protected species and non-designated habitats of biodiversity value.
- CPO 12.19 – 12.23 provide measures for the protection of non-designated sites, including the requirement for the appropriate level of ecological assessment for proposals. Non-designated sites include locally important landscapes or landscape features which form part of a network of habitats essential for wildlife.
- CPO 12.57 – 12.71 provide measures to protect biodiversity and for nature conservation. For example, CPO 12.63 requires mitigation measures in cases where it is evident that biodiversity is likely to be affected. Measures could be establishment of wildlife areas/corridors/parks, tree planting, wildflower meadows/marshes and other areas.
- CPO 12.72 – 12.81 provide particular protection for trees, woodlands and hedgerows.

- CPO 12.113 aims to control lighting in urban and rural areas to minimise impacts on habitats and species.

Recommendations made in the Draft Environmental Report and where these have been incorporated in the LTP

- **Recommendation:** Measures included within the Longford Town LTP should support the retention and planting of green infrastructure, where appropriate, as part of transport infrastructure developments which will support habitat creation.
- **Incorporated in the LTP:** (p.49) *“Beyond the core guiding principles, the LTP also aims to support...The retention and planning of green infrastructure, where appropriate, as part of transport infrastructure developments to support habitat creation...”*

Population and human health

1.137 There may be adverse effects for population and human health where transport infrastructure is likely to increase exposure to noise/air/vibration/light pollution from petrol / diesel vehicles in particular areas, or where measures will potentially continue to promote private vehicle use. Mitigation at project-level is likely to be provided by the following CPOs of the Longford CDP:

- CPO 7.1 – CPO 7.8 support healthy placemaking including supporting public health policy, ensuring all levels of disability are catered for, and cycling and walking are promoted. These measures are likely to enhance the positive effects of the Longford Town LTP.
- CPO 12.109 – CPO 12.114 provide mitigation measures for noise and light pollution.

Recommendations made in the Draft Environmental Report and where these have been incorporated in the LTP

- **Recommendation:** Measures within the Longford Town TLP should take account of accessibility needs for all, including those with reduced mobility or disability.
- **Incorporated in the LTP:** (p.49) *“Beyond the core guiding principles, the LTP also aims to support...new transport infrastructure development that takes account of the accessibility needs for all, including those with reduced mobility or disability”.*

Air quality and climate change mitigation

1.138 There may be adverse effects on air quality and climate change from some of the measures included in the Longford Town LTP. Mitigation at project-level is likely to be provided by the following policies of the Longford CDP:

- CPO 12.104 – 12.108 provide measures for improving air quality in County Longford.
- CPO 12.91 assesses new development in terms of its potential impact on existing adjacent developments, existing land uses and/or the surrounding landscape to mitigate adverse effects on the amenities of the area.

1.139 Mitigation is also provided in the Longford CDP through the proposed climate actions that will be undertaken by Longford County Council:

- A5.1 – A5.5 requires the installation of EV charging points.
- A5.9 prioritises public transport providers with the lowest CO₂ emissions across the fleet.

Recommendations made in the Draft Environmental Report and where these have been incorporated in the LTP

- **Recommendation:** The Longford Town LTP should support the uptake of electric vehicle usage (i.e. through electric vehicle charging points) and support the transition to an electric fleet of public buses.
- **Incorporated in the LTP:** (p.49) *“Beyond the core guiding principles, the LTP also aims to support...the uptake of electric vehicle usage (i.e. through electric vehicle charging points) and supporting the transition to an electric fleet of public buses”.*
- **Recommendation:** Measures included within the Longford Town LTP should support the retention and planting of green infrastructure, where appropriate, as part of transport infrastructure developments which will improve air quality along transport routes.
- **Incorporated in the LTP:** (p.49) *“Beyond the core guiding principles, the LTP also aims to support...the retention and planning of green infrastructure, where appropriate, as part of transport infrastructure developments to...improve air quality...”.*

Flood risk and climate change adaptation

1.140 There may be adverse effects in relation to flooding where interventions are located in areas within Longford Town with higher risk of flooding. Measures for new transport and active travel infrastructure should support flood resilient design, the incorporation of Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and green infrastructure.

1.141 Mitigation at project-level is likely to be provided by the following policies of the Longford CDP:

- CPO 5.106 – 5.120 set out standards for flood risk management in County Longford.

Recommendations made in the Draft Environmental Report and where these have been incorporated in the LTP

- **Recommendation:** Measures within the Longford Town LTP should support flood resilient design of new transport and active travel infrastructure, including incorporation of Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and planting of green infrastructure.
- **Recommendation:** Measures included within the Longford Town LTP should support the retention and planting of green infrastructure, where appropriate, as part of transport infrastructure developments which will support drainage of surface water.
- **Incorporated in the LTP:** (p.49) *“Beyond the core guiding principles, the LTP also aims to support...the retention and planning of green infrastructure, where appropriate, as part of transport infrastructure developments to...support drainage of surface water...”*

Soil

1.142 There may be adverse effects on soil resource from measures within the Longford Town LTP. Mitigation is likely to be provided by the following policies of the Longford CDP:

- CPO 12.115 – CPO 12.123 provide measures for soil protection.

Recommendations made in the Draft Environmental Report and where these have been incorporated in the LTP

- **Recommendation:** Measures included within the Longford Town LTP should support the retention and planting of green infrastructure, where appropriate, as part of transport infrastructure developments which will support soil quality.
- **Incorporated in the LTP:** (p.49) *“Beyond the core guiding principles, the LTP also aims to support...the retention and planning of green infrastructure, where appropriate, as part of transport infrastructure developments to...support soil quality”.*

Water

1.143 There may be adverse effects on the water quality of water bodies within Longford Town from some of the measures included in the Longford Town LTP. Mitigation is likely to be provided by the following policies of the Longford CDP:

- CPO 12.92 – 12.103 provide water protection measures for water quality and groundwater.

Recommendations made in the Draft Environmental Report and where these have been incorporated in the LTP

- **Recommendation:** Measures included within the Longford Town LTP should support the retention and planting of green infrastructure, where appropriate, as part of transport infrastructure developments which will support the water environment.

- **Incorporated in the LTP:** (p.49) *“Beyond the core guiding principles, the LTP also aims to support...the retention and planning of green infrastructure, where appropriate, as part of transport infrastructure developments to...support drainage of surface water...”*

Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

1.144 Measures within the Longford Town LTP may result in adverse effects in relation to the historic environment of Longford Town. Mitigation at project-level is likely to be provided by the following policies of the Longford CDP:

- DMS 16.190 – 16.200 set out development management criteria that Council’s will consider development proposals against, in relation to Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas and Archaeology.
- CPO 6.31 – 6.34 support heritage-led urban regeneration which are likely to enhance the positive effects of the Longford Town LTP on the historic environment.
- CPO 11.1 – 11.13 provide measures to protect and enhance architectural heritage.
- CPO 11.14 – 11.26 provide protection measures for structures included on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS).
- CPO 11.27 – 11.30 provide protection measures for the Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) within Longford.
- CPO 11.31 – 11.35 support the protection and enhancement of historic gardens, demesnes or designed landscapes.
- CPO 11.47 – 11.57 provide protection for known and unknown archaeological heritage in Longford.

Recommendations made in the Draft Environmental Report and where these have been incorporated in the LTP

- **Recommendation:** Measures included within the Longford Town LTP should support the retention and planting of green infrastructure, where appropriate, as part of transport infrastructure developments which will enhance the setting of heritage assets.
- **Incorporated in the LTP:** (p.49) *“Beyond the core guiding principles, the LTP also aims to support...the retention and planning of green infrastructure, where appropriate, as part of transport infrastructure developments to...protect the setting and visual amenity of the landscape / townscape and historic environment”.*

Landscape

1.145 There may be adverse effects on landscape and townscape character and setting from transport interventions proposed in the Longford Town LTP. Mitigation is likely to be provided by the following policies of the Longford County Development Plan:

- DMS 16.204 requires landscape and visual impact assessments to be prepared by suitably qualified professionals for planning applications for development which may have significant impact on landscape character areas of medium or high sensitivity.
- CPO 13.1 – 13.8 sets out measures that protect green infrastructure and CPO 13.9 – 13.14 set out measures for the ongoing development and improvement of green infrastructure within Longford Town.
- CPO 14.1 – 14.8 provide measures for the protection and enhancement of landscape character within Longford, including the requirement for landscape and visual impact assessment for some development.

Recommendations made in the Draft Environmental Report and where these have been incorporated in the LTP

- **Recommendation:** Measures included within the Longford Town LTP should support the retention and planting of green infrastructure, where appropriate, as part of transport infrastructure developments which will enhance the setting and visual amenity of the townscape of Longford Town.
- **Incorporated in the LTP:** (p.49) *“Beyond the core guiding principles, the LTP also aims to support...the retention and planning of green infrastructure, where appropriate, as part of transport infrastructure developments to...protect the setting and visual amenity of the landscape / townscape and historic environment”.*

Material assets

1.146 There may be adverse effects associated with the use of resources for new transport development and active travel infrastructure. Policies and development management criteria throughout the Longford CDP are likely to provide mitigation in relation to the sustainable use of land, natural resources, energy and waste management.

Recommendations made in the Draft Environmental Report and where these have been incorporated in the LTP

- **Recommendation:** Any form of transport and active travel development should be undertaken as sustainably as possible, using sustainable design and construction processes and making use of processes such as circular economy and waste hierarchy principles.

- **Incorporated in the LTP:** (p.49) *“Beyond the core guiding principles, the LTP also aims to support...sustainable design and construction processes and making use of processes such as circular economy and waste hierarchy principles”.*

1.147 Despite mitigation measures, some residual uncertain adverse effects remain which will require monitoring.

Monitoring

1.148 Article 17 of the SEA Regulations requires that the competent authority (in this case Longford County Council) monitors the significant environmental effects of implementing the Longford Town LTP in order to identify, at an early stage, any unforeseen adverse effects due to the implementation of the proposed Plan and to take remedial action. Monitoring can also demonstrate the positive effects facilitated by the LTP. Reference has been made to the EPA’s Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment Statements and Monitoring **[See reference 17]** in devising the monitoring programme.

1.149 The occurrence of significant adverse environmental effects not predicted and mitigated by this assessment, which are directly attributable to the implementation of the Longford Town LTP, would necessitate consideration of these effects in the context of the plan and potential remediation action(s) and/or review of part(s) of the LTP.

1.150 Monitoring is based around indicators and targets which allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Environmental Protection Objectives identified in Chapter 2 of the Environmental Report and used in the evaluation. Given the position of the LTP in the land use planning hierarchy below the Longford County Development Plan, the measures that are proposed in the Monitoring Programme for the Longford Town LTP are derived and modified, where necessary from the Environmental Report of the Longford County Development Plan **[See**

reference 18]. Monitoring indicators and targets are also derived from the Longford Town LTP which sets out the projected modal split in commuting journeys to work and school/college, with increases in the share of sustainable modes.

1.151 Monitoring is an ongoing process, and the programme allows for flexibility and the further refinement of indicators and targets. The Monitoring Programme may be updated to deal with specific environmental issues – including unforeseen effects – as they arise.

1.152 Sources for indicators may include existing monitoring databases (including those maintained by planning authorities and national/regional government departments and agencies) and the output of lower-tier environmental assessment and decision making (including a review of project approvals granted and associated documents and the output of any EIA monitoring programmes).

1.153 The following paragraphs outline the indicators and targets which have been selected for monitoring the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the plan, if unmitigated.

EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora

■ Indicators:

- Changes in condition of European sites (improvement or deterioration).
- Number and extent of sites designated for nature conservation and their quality.
- Number of biodiversity enhancement schemes implemented through LTP schemes.

■ Targets:

- Increase in percentage of European sites in 'good' or 'improving' condition.

- Increase in number and extent of sites designated for nature conservation.
- Increase in transport-related proposals incorporating biodiversity enhancement measures.

■ **Sources:**

- Longford Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2024 (and subsequent iterations as relevant).
- DHLGH report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years).
- DHLGH National Birds Directive Monitoring Report for the under Article 12 (every 3 years).
- Consultations with the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

EPO 2: Population and human health

■ **Indicators:**

- Number of road fatalities and injury collisions in the town.
- Proportion of people commuting to work and school/college by sustainable modes of transport compared to the 2016 CSO figures.
- Proportion of people commuting to work and school/college by private vehicle compared to the 2016 CSO figures.
- Proportion of people reporting they are in 'very good' or 'good' health above the 2016 CSO figures.
- Length (km) of new and improved footpaths, cycle routes and permeability routes in the town.
- Longford Town's position within the Pobal HP Deprivation Index compared to the 2016 deprivation scores.
- Green infrastructure measures implemented through LTP schemes.

- Public transport patronage.
- Journey time reliability for public transport.

■ **Targets:**

- Reduction in the number of road traffic accidents that result in people being killed or injured.
- Increase in proportion of people commuting to work by walking (target of 22% by 2042), cycling (target of 11% by 2042), bus (target of 9% by 2042), rail (target of 3% by 2042).
- Increase in proportion of people commuting to school/college by walking (target of 39% by 2042), cycling (target of 10% by 2042), and bus (target of 18% by 2042).
- Reduction in proportion of people commuting by private vehicle to work (51% by 2042) and school/college (32% by 2042).
- Increase in length (km) of new and improved footpaths, cycle routes and permeability routes in the town.
- Longford Town's position within the Pobal HP Deprivation Index above the 2016 deprivation scores, with a reduction in the number of the areas classed as 'extremely disadvantaged', 'very disadvantaged' and 'disadvantaged'.
- Implementation of green infrastructure in schemes proposed in LTP.
- Increase in public transport patronage.
- Improved journey time reliability for public transport.

■ **Sources:**

- Health Information and Quality Authority Road Fatalities and Injury Collision Statistics.
- Pobal HP Deprivation Index.
- CSO data.
- Local authority data relating to number of transport schemes proposed.

EPO 3: Air quality and climate change mitigation

■ Indicators:

- Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 National Travel Survey levels of 74%
- NO_x, SO_x, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} as part of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring.
- Proportion of people commuting to work and school/college by sustainable modes of transport compared to the 2016 CSO figures.
- Proportion of people commuting to work and school/college by private vehicle compared to the 2016 CSO figures.

■ Targets:

- Decrease in proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 National Travel Survey levels.
- Improvement in Air Quality trends, particularly in relation to transport related emissions of NO_x and particulate matter.
- Increase in proportion of people commuting to work by walking (target of 22% by 2042), cycling (target of 11% by 2042), bus (target of 9% by 2042), rail (target of 3% by 2042).
- Increase in proportion of people commuting to school/college by walking (target of 39% by 2042), cycling (target of 10% by 2042), and bus (target of 18% by 2042).
- Reduction in proportion of people commuting by private vehicle to work (51% by 2042) and school/college (32% by 2042).

■ Sources:

- CSO data.
- Data from the National Travel Survey.
- EPA Air Quality Monitoring.

- EPA Annual National Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory reporting.
- Climate Action Regional Office.

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

■ Indicators:

- Area of built development in areas at risk of flooding.
- Green infrastructure measures implemented through LTP schemes.

■ Targets:

- No new built development in areas at risk of flooding.
- Implementation of green infrastructure in schemes proposed in LTP.

■ Sources:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- Internal monitoring of grants of permission.

EPO 5: Soil

■ Indicators:

- Area of new development on infill, brownfield and contaminated land compared to greenfield.
- Land use change.

■ Targets:

- Increase in proportion of new built development on infill, brownfield and contaminated land.
- Reduction in development on greenfield land.

- Achieve the 40% target for growth on infill land as per the National Planning Framework.

■ **Sources:**

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Geoportal.
- European CORINE Land Cover (updated every six years).
- Internal monitoring of grants of permission.

EPO 6: Water

■ **Indicators:**

- Status of water bodies.

■ **Targets:**

- No deterioration in the status of any surface water or affect the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good' ecological and chemical status.
- Implementation of the objectives of Ireland's Third Cycle Draft River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) 2022-2027 **[See reference 19]** by 2027 (and subsequent iterations as relevant).

■ **Sources:**

- EPA Monitoring Programme for WFD compliance
- Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission.

EPO 8: Landscape

■ **Indicators:**

- Number of transport developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations.

■ **Targets:**

- No transport developments permitted which result in significant avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations.

■ **Sources:**

- Internal monitoring of grants of permission.

EPO 9: Material assets

■ **Indicators:**

- Length (km) of new and improved footpaths, cycle routes and permeability routes in the town.
- Length (km) of new roads in the town.
- Number of electric vehicle charging points in Longford Town.
- Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 National Travel Survey levels of 74%

■ **Targets:**

- Increase in length (km) of new and improved footpaths, cycle routes and permeability routes in the town.
- Reduction in length (km) of new roads in the town.
- Increase in the number of electric vehicle charging points in Longford Town.
- Decrease in proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 National Travel Survey levels.

■ **Sources:**

- Internal monitoring of grants of permission.
- Internal monitoring of grants of permission.

Conclusion and next steps

1.154 This NTS and the full Environmental Report present an assessment of the Longford Town LTP and its reasonable alternatives against the SEA Environmental Protection Objectives which were developed at the Scoping stage of the SEA process.

1.155 Significant positive effects are expected for the Vision and many of the principles, objectives, strategies and associated schemes of the Longford Town LTP.

1.156 Significant positive effects are identified for **EPO 2: Population and human health** for elements of the LTP that are expected to promote healthy lifestyles by improving opportunities for active travel; reducing residents' exposure to pollution from traffic by helping facilitate the modal shift away from private vehicle use; improving access to services and facilities by sustainable modes; and addressing spatial inequalities by creating a more cohesive and integrated town. Significant positive effects are also identified for the majority of aspects of the Longford Town LTP for **EPO 3: Air quality and climate change mitigation**. In many cases, interventions are expected to support the modal shift away from vehicles in favour of more sustainable modes. This will reduce dependency on petrol / diesel private vehicles thus lowering transport-related emissions and Longford's contribution to climate change. Significant positive effects are also identified for the majority of proposals in relation to **EPO 9: Material assets** as the measures outlined in the LTP will help create a more sustainable transport system, reducing energy demand from the transport sector and helping meet the needs of Longford Town's growing population. Several principles and objectives are also expected to result in significant positive effects for **EPO 8: Landscape** as these measures are expected to contribute to improving urban design and helping to create a sense of place.

1.157 Unmitigated significant negative effects are identified for several strategies and their associated schemes. For the Cycling Strategy, a potential significant negative effect for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna** is

associated with the likely increased recreational pressures at the Royal Canal pNHA. Potential significant negative effects are identified for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation** for the Cycling Strategy and Permeability Strategy where schemes are located in areas of Longford Town with higher risks of flooding. A potential significant negative effect is identified for **EPO 5: Soil** for the Abbeycartron Access Strategy as the development of the scheme will result in significant loss of greenfield land.

1.158 Many of the adverse effects will be mitigated through good design and adherence to policies in the Longford County Development Plan, however, it is possible that some adverse effects may not be mitigated (e.g. the loss of agricultural land from the development at Abbeycartron).

1.159 A Monitoring Programme is proposed to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementing the Longford Town LTP in order to identify, at an early stage, any unforeseen adverse effects due to the implementation of the proposed LTP and to take remedial action.

Next steps

1.160 This Non-Technical Summary and Final Environmental Report will be published alongside the finalised LTP and made available on Longford County Council's website. An SEA Statement will be prepared identifying how each of the requirements in article 16 and 17 of the SEA Regulations have been met during the SEA process. The SEA Statement will be prepared after the publication of the Longford Town LTP.

LUC

October 2023

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Report produced by LUC

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Bristol

12th Floor, Colston Tower, Colston Street, Bristol BS1 4XE
0117 929 1997
bristol@landuse.co.uk

Cardiff

16A, 15th Floor, Brunel House, 2 Fitzalan Rd, Cardiff CF24 0EB
0292 032 9006
cardiff@landuse.co.uk

Edinburgh

Atholl Exchange, 6 Canning Street, Edinburgh EH3 8EG
0131 202 1616
edinburgh@landuse.co.uk

Glasgow

37 Otago Street, Glasgow G12 8JJ
0141 334 9595
glasgow@landuse.co.uk

London

250 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8RD
020 7383 5784
london@landuse.co.uk

Manchester

6th Floor, 55 King Street, Manchester M2 4LQ
0161 537 5960
manchester@landuse.co.uk

landuse.co.uk

Landscape Design / Strategic Planning & Assessment
Development Planning / Urban Design & Masterplanning
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