

SCREENING STATEMENT

IN SUPPORT OF THE

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

FOR THE

PROPOSED VARIATION (CORE STRATEGY)

TO THE

LONGFORD TOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2009-2015

for: Longford Local Authorities
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Co. Longford



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Table of Contents

Section 1	Introduction.....	2
1.1	Background.....	2
1.2	Legislative Context.....	2
1.3	Stages of Appropriate Assessment	3
Section 2	Stage 1 Screening	4
2.1	Description of the Plan	4
2.2	Natura 2000 Sites in and within 15 km of the Plan Area	7
2.3	Assessment Criteria.....	10
2.4	Elements of the Plan with Potential to Give Rise to Impacts	10
2.5	Elements of the Plan that will ensure no Significant Effects occur	12
2.6	Other Plans and Programmes	13
2.7	Conclusions of Stage 1	14
Section 3	Finding of no significant effects report	15

List of Figures

Figure 2.1	Proposed Variation Zoning Map (excluding zonings covered by Local Area Plans)	6
Figure 2.2	Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the Plan Area Boundary	9

List of Tables

Table 2.1	Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the Plan area.....	7
Table 2.2	Other Plans & Projects	13

Section 1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Longford County Council has prepared a Core Strategy Proposed Variation to the Longford Town Development Plan (TDP) 2009-2015 under Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). This report is the Appropriate Assessment Screening for the Proposed Variation in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive¹. This report is divided into these three sections:

- Section 1 Introduction
- Section 2 Stage 1 Screening
- Section 3 Finding of no significant effects report

1.2 Legislative Context

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, better known as “The Habitats Directive”, provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Articles 3 to 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000. These are candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/ECC).

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites (Annex 1.1). Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA):

“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [Natura 2000] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public

If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the [Natura 2000] site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, Member States shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.”

This legislation is implemented in the Republic of Ireland by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. These new regulations consolidate the European Communities

¹ Directive 92/43/EEC

(Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 to 2005 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats)(Control of Recreational Activities) Regulations 2010, as well as addressing transposition failures identified in the CJEU judgements.

1.3 Stages of Appropriate Assessment

This Appropriate Assessment has been prepared in accordance with the following guidance:

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities.* Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009.
- *Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, European Commission Environment DG, 2000.
- *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*: European Commission, 2000

AA comprises up to four stages:

Stage One: Screening

The process which identifies the likely impacts upon a Natura 2000 site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.

Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment

The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts.

Stage Three: Assessment of Alternative Solutions

The process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.

Stage Four: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain

An assessment of compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

The Habitats Directive promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensatory measures. First, the plan should aim to avoid any impacts on European sites by identifying possible impacts early in the plan-making process and writing the plan in order to avoid such impacts. Second, mitigation measures should be applied, if necessary, during the AA process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain. If the plan is still likely to result in impacts on European sites, and no further practicable mitigation is possible, then it must be rejected. If no alternative solutions are identified and the plan is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI test) under Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, then compensation measures are required for any remaining adverse effect.

In the case of this report, it is found that the proposed Variation only requires Stage 1 assessment.

Section 2 Stage 1 Screening

2.1 Description of the Plan

2.1.1 Introduction

Part 1 of the Core Strategy Proposed Variation No. 1 document provides an explanation regarding the requirement for the variation, what the variation consists of, what it is required to contain and outlines how the variation will impact on other planning policy documents. Part 1 does not form part of the Variation and is for explanatory purposes only.

Part 2 of the Core Strategy Proposed Variation No. 1 document outlines the actual Core Strategy that will be inserted into the Town Development Plan (TDP) 2009-2015. It replaces key elements contained in Section 2.3 of the existing TDP.

Part 3 of the Core Strategy Proposed Variation No. 1 document replaces Appendices 1, 2 and 3 (Zoning Maps) of the existing TDP. It should be noted that no residential zoning changes are proposed as part of the Core Strategy Variation and that the revised zoning maps (Figure 2.1) are simply to provide an improved and greater level of legibility.

2.1.2 Core Strategy

The Longford County Development Plan (CDP) 2009-2015 includes a Core Strategy for the entire County (Variation No.1). Through this mechanism and supplementary policy, the CDP aims to ensure that the role of the Town is promoted and protected and that the role of Longford Town as a Principal Town, as assigned by the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines, is endorsed. In this regard the overall Settlement Strategy for the entire County, contained as part of the CDP, acknowledges Longford Town's position and places it at the top of the Settlement Hierarchy.

The Core Strategy included in the Proposed Variation for the TDP is consistent with the Core Strategy which has been assessed as part of the full SEA of the County Development Plan Core Strategy Variation. It includes:

- Population targets;
- A quantification of the requirements for zoning of lands for residential purposes;
- Details of existing and future distribution of population within a defined settlement hierarchy.

The proposed Core Strategy for the TDP also includes provisions relating to water services which will further contribute towards the protection and management of the environment already provided for by the existing Plan. This includes the protection of human health, biodiversity and flora and fauna and water quality and the provision of appropriate water services.

2.1.3 Zoned Land Changes

There are no zoning changes proposed as part of the Variation. The revised zoning maps are simply to provide an improved and greater level of legibility.

2.1.4 Population Targets

The population target provided for by the existing Town Development Plan is 9,583 up to 2016, a growth of 1,961 from the 2006 population of 7,622.

The population target provided for under the Core Strategy Variation is 10,747 (a growth of 3,125 from the 2006 population).

This population target change is provided for by the County Development Plan Core Strategy Variation and has already been assessed as part of the Appropriate Assessment of that Variation. It is therefore not considered as part of this AA screening.

In addition, it is noted that in terms of meeting the population targets as prescribed, the Planning Authority is concerned, particularly given that there are issues with regard to portions of the residentially zoned lands currently not developed within the Town boundary, including that some form part of agricultural landholdings and some are unlikely to be made available for the market, particularly given that they have remained undeveloped over several previous Longford Town Plan periods. In this regard and despite the indication as part of the Core Strategy Table that 85 hectares of undeveloped residentially zoned land is identified within the Town boundary, it is the opinion of the Planning Authority that less than the required 65 hectares is actually readily available to the market for development purposes.

2.1.5 Water and Sewerage Facilities

2.1.5.1 Water Supply

Lough Forbes Water Treatment Plant (WTP) currently provides water for the Longford Central RWSS which serves Longford Town and the surrounding areas. It is currently operating at design capacity after the completion of the Short Term Upgrade of the Plant which resulted in an improved quality of water supply. Following the confirmation of abstraction order for increased abstraction from Lough Forbes, the Council require approval from DECLG to commence the planning of the Long Term Upgrade of Lough Forbes WTP to cater for projected demand in the Longford Central RWSS. The Council have engaged with DECLG in order to progress the Long Term Upgrade of Lough Forbes WTP.

2.1.5.2 Wastewater

Longford WWTP has a treatment capacity for a population equivalent of 20,000. The current population equivalent for the Plant is approximately 17,000p.e. This figure takes into account the wastewater sludges imported from WWTPs from nearby villages/towns and deposited to the inlet works. It is expected that this practice will stop at the end of 2013 on completion of upgrades of these WWTPs bringing down the current loading of Longford WWTP to approximately 14,000p.e. However if you take account of a block booking of 3,000p.e which currently exists, the actual used up capacity for Longford WWTP will be approximately 17,000p.e. at the end of 2013. Taking into account potential future capacity requirements, the Water Services Department of the Council are appointing consultants and will submit a plan for the upgrade of the WWTP to the Department in 2013 with a view towards ensuring the undertaking of any upgrade works required

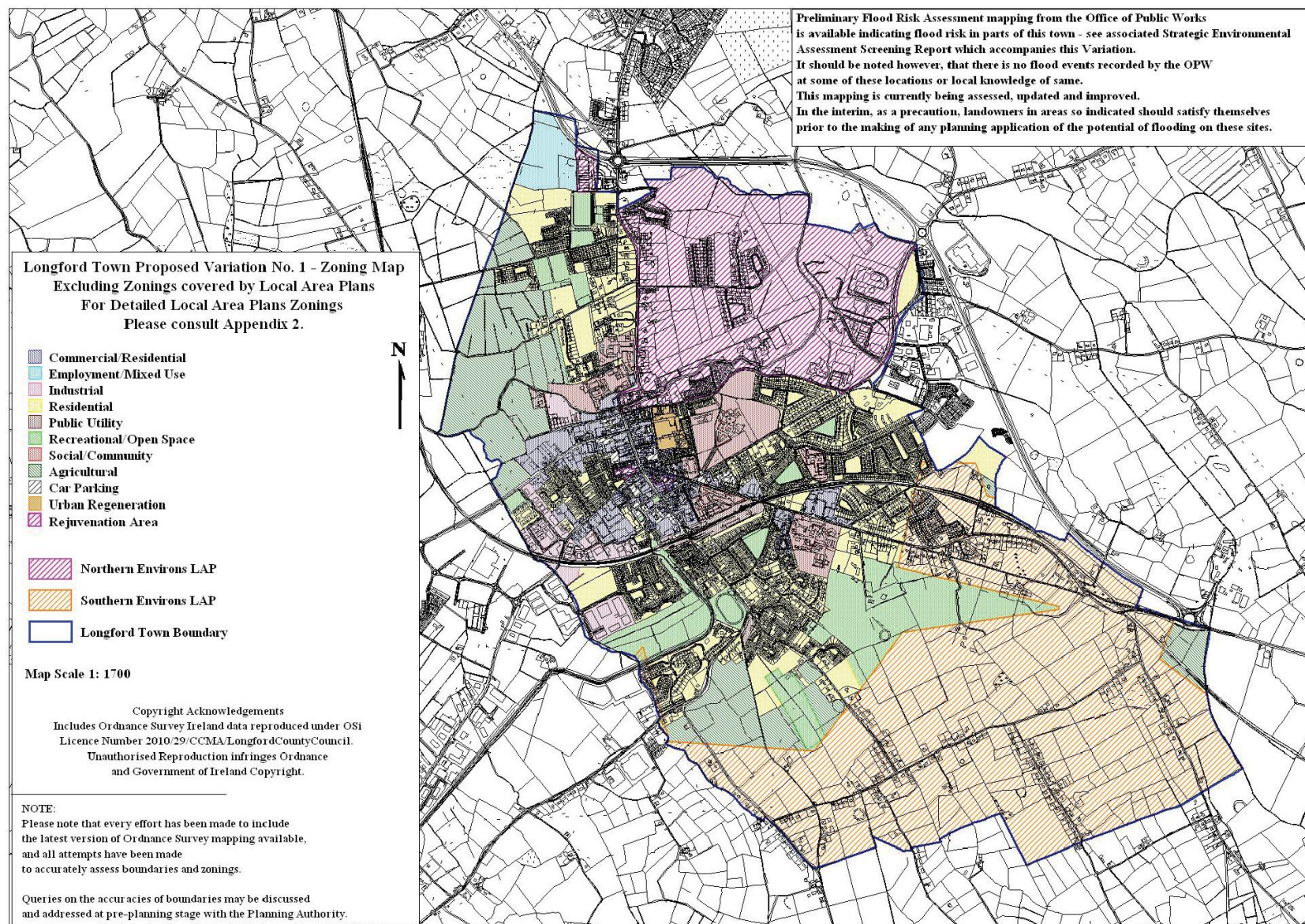


Figure 2.1 Proposed Variation Zoning Map (excluding zonings covered by Local Area Plans)

2.2 Natura 2000 Sites in and within 15 km of the Plan Area

2.2.1 SACs and SPAs

This section of the screening process describes the Natura 2000 sites within a 15km zone of impact of the plan area. A distance of 15km is currently recommended in the DoE document *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities* and as a precautionary measure, to ensure that all potentially affected Natura 2000 sites are included in the screening process. A map indicating the locations of the sites is given in Figure 2.3.

Tables 2.1 lists the Natura 2000 sites that are within 15 km of Longford town. The qualifying features for each site have been obtained through a review of the NPWS website.

Table 2.1 Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the Plan area

Site Name (Site Code)	Qualifying Interests	Approx distance
Brown Bog SAC (002346)	Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150]	2 km
Ardagullion Bog SAC (002341)	Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150]	15km
Clooneen Bog SAC (002348)	Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150] Bog woodland [91D0]	7km
Lough Ree SAC 440	Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355] Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i> -type vegetation [3150] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco Brometalia</i>)(*important orchid sites) [6210] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Alkaline fens [7230] Limestone pavements [8240] Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in British Isles [91A0] Bog woodland [91D0]	15 km
Lough Forbes Complex SAC (001818)	Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i> -type vegetation [3150] Active raised bogs [7110] Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150] Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in British Isles [91A0]	5km
Glen Lough SPA	Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038]	13km
Lough Ree SPA	Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050]	15km

Site Name (Site Code)	Qualifying Interests	Approx distance
	Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053] Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) [A067] Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004] Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193]	
Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (004101)	Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395]	5km

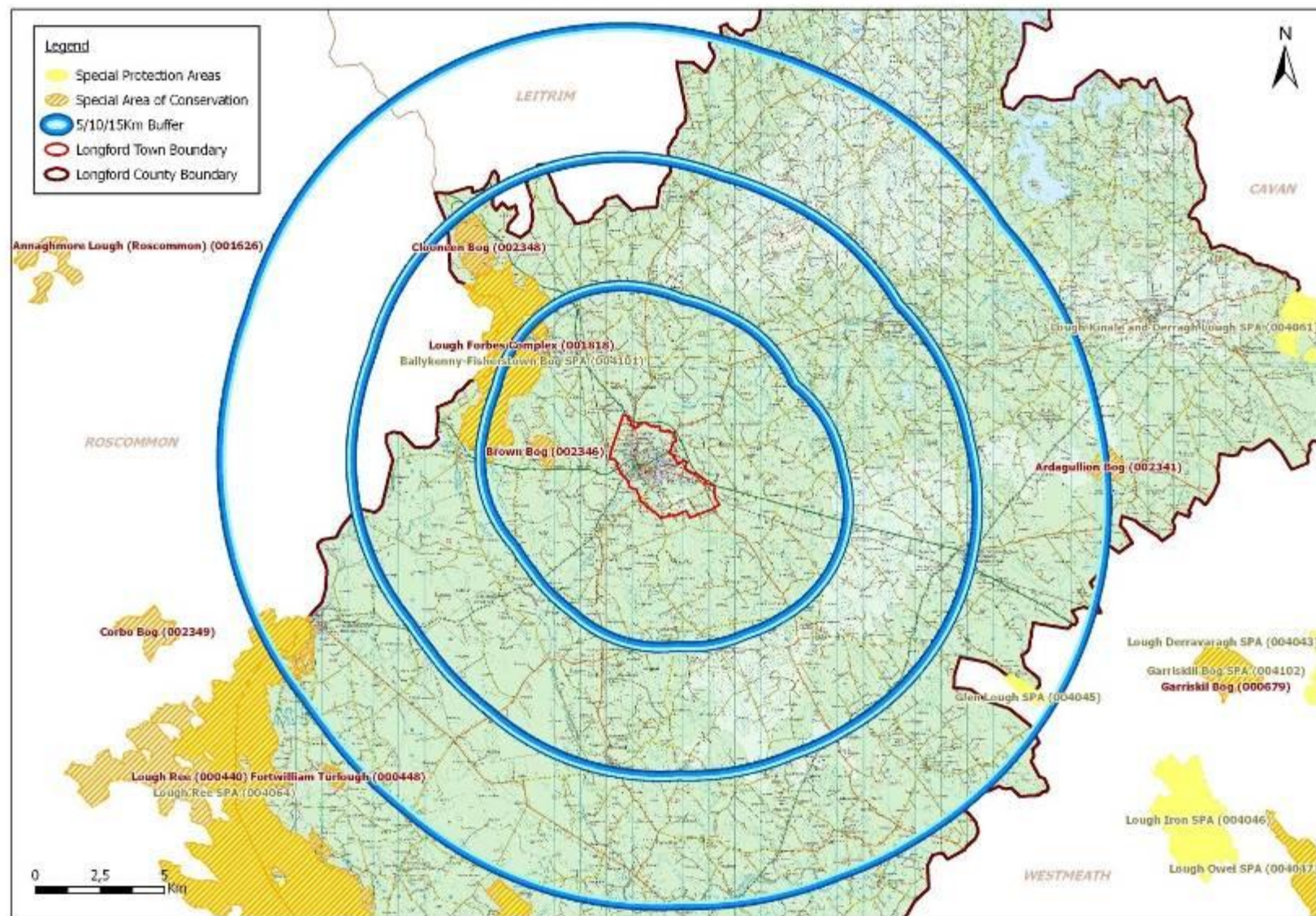


Figure 2.2 Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the Plan Area Boundary

2.3 Assessment Criteria

2.3.1 Is the Plan Necessary to Management of Natura 2000 Sites?

Under the Habitats Directive, Plans that are directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site do not require AA. For this exception to apply, management is required to be interpreted narrowly as nature conservation management in the sense of Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive. This refers to specific measures to address the ecological requirements of annexed habitats and species (and their habitats) present on a site (s). The relationship should be shown to be direct and not a by-product of the plan, even if this might result in positive or beneficial effects for a site (s). The Proposed Variation includes measures that will benefit the protection of Natura 2000 sites; however its primary purpose is not the nature conservation management of the sites, but to provide for development. Therefore, the Proposed Variation is not considered to be directly connected with or necessary to the management of Natura 2000 sites.

2.4 Elements of the Plan with Potential to Give Rise to Impacts

2.4.1 General

The Longford Town Development Plan 2009-2015 has already been subject to screening for Appropriate Assessment:

'In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, Longford Town Council has undertaken an Appropriate Assessment Screening of the effects of the implementation of the Plan on Natura 2000 sites. It was concluded from the assessment that the Longford Town Development Plan would not result in likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. Therefore, a full Appropriate Assessment was required.'

Longford Town Development Plan 2009-2015

The present assessment examines only those impacts that will arise through the changes to the Plan brought about by the Core Strategy Variation. The assessment process identifies whether the changes brought about by the Core Strategy Variation are likely to cause any direct, indirect or secondary impacts (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 network sites. During this assessment a number of factors were taken into account including the sites' conservation objectives and known threats. The overall aim of the assessment is to attempt to predict the consequences that can be *reasonably* foreseen by implementation of a policy or objective.

As the Longford Town Development Plan 2009-2015 as a whole has previously been screened for compliance with the Habitats Directive, policies and objectives are included in the plan which will serve to protect the Natura 2000 network. These policies also apply to the any changes brought about by the Proposed Variation.

2.4.2 Direct, Indirect or Secondary Impacts

In general, any development that may result from implementation of the Plan, such as construction of housing, roads, water and wastewater infrastructure, gas, electricity and telecommunications infrastructure could lead to a number of impacts depending on where development is sited, the scale of development and types and quantities of emissions. In practice and as outlined in the EU document *"Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC"*, and the national guidance document *'Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities'*, impacts that could potentially occur through the implementation of the strategy can be categorised under a number of headings:

- Loss/Reduction of habitat area
- Disturbance to key species

- Habitat or species fragmentation
- Reduction in species density
- Changes in key indicators of conservation value such as decrease in water quality and quantity
- Climate Change

Loss/Reduction of habitat area

Implementation of the Proposed Variation will not result in any direct loss or reduction in area of any European designated site. The changes brought about by the Proposed Variation will not lead to any developments that would have an indirect impact on any European designated site. In addition, the Plan area is sufficiently distant from any Natura site that supports groundwater dependant habitats such as Brown Bog SAC, Ardagullion Bog SAC and Clooneen Bog SAC to ensure that there is no hydrogeological connectivity between the Plan area and the sites. Implications for surface water dependant sites are considered further on in this section of the report. Therefore, development within the plan area will not result in any indirect drainage impacts on the Natura 2000 network.

Disturbance to key species

Disturbance of key species such as Greenland White-fronted Goose and Whooper Swan can occur where development takes place close to nesting and feeding sites or where recreational pressure increases along river banks and upland areas. Given the distance between Longford town and the Natura sites designated for such species - Glen Lough SPA, Lough Ree SPA and Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (see Table 2.1), it is unlikely that implementation of the Proposed Variation will lead to impacts through disturbance.

Habitat or species fragmentation

Habitat and species fragmentation can occur through the breaking up of habitats resulting in interference with existing ecological units or when construction introduces a barrier to the free movement of species from one habitat to another. The Proposed Variation will not lead to any development that would result in habitat or species fragmentation within any Natura 2000 site.

Reduction in species density

Increased disturbance, loss of habitat and habitat fragmentation can all lead to reduction in species density. As outlined in the previous sections, implementation of the Proposed Variation will not result in a loss or fragmentation of habitats or disturbance of species. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Variation will not result in the reduction in species density within any Natura 2000 site.

Changes in key indicators of conservation value such as decrease in water quality and quantity

The Plan area is sufficiently distant from any Natura site that supports groundwater dependant habitats such as Brown Bog SAC, Ardagullion Bog SAC and Clooneen Bog SAC to ensure that there is no hydrogeological connectivity between the Plan area and the sites. Therefore, development within the plan area will not result in any decrease or flow of groundwater to these sites. In addition, the specific changes brought about by the Proposed Variation will not lead to any developments that would have an impact on any European designated site through changes in water quality or quantity.

The proposed Variation does not include any new zoning for development; however, any development within Longford Town during the lifetime of the plan may lead to greater pressure on drinking water and waste water services. In parallel to the plan and the proposed variation, the Water Services Department of the Council department are progressing upgrade works on Lough Forbes WTP and the Longford WWTP. Impacts from the abstraction of water will be addressed through compliance with environmental and ecological legislative requirements and the promotion of water conservation.

Longford County Council was granted a licence by the Environmental Protection Agency on the 25/9/2008 to discharge treated waste water from the Longford WWTP to the River Camlin. A review of documentation related to this licence indicates that the plant is fully compliant with the requirements of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations, 2001 (S.I. No. 254 of 2001) against the three basic parameters reported (BOD, SS & COD). The River Camlin flows through the

designated Lough Forbes Complex SAC. The closest point at which the Camlin enters the SAC is approximately 5 km downstream of the primary discharge location, with the river continuing to pass through the SAC designated area until it enters Lough Forbes. Areas of callows (winter-flooded grassland) along the Camlin River are included within the SAC. These wet grasslands are included for their botanical interest as well as for the waterbirds that they support. The EPA inspector's report for the discharge licence concluded that given the distance downstream to the SAC, and the fact that during winter months the flow (and hence the available dilution) in the river will be higher, there is not considered to be any potential for a likely significant impact on the SAC, based on current emission rates. Upgrade works are proposed to install a pipeline to divert the primary discharge into the River Shannon. Any proposed upgrade works will require a review of the discharge licence accompanied by an assessment for compliance with the Habitats Directive.

Climate Change

The Plan will not result in any emissions to air that would contribute to climate change.

2.5 Elements of the Plan that will ensure no Significant Effects occur

From the outset, policies that will contribute to the protection of Natura 2000 sites in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive have been included by the plan makers in the Longford Town Development Plan. A number of new policies have been included as part of the Core strategy Variation, as well as amendments to existing policies in order to reflect changes to legislation and to ensure continued compliance with legislation. In particular, the plan includes commitments by Longford Town Council to protect designated sites as follows (amendments shown in red text):

Policy NHB 6:

It is the policy of the Council to protect sites designated in National and European legislation, and in other relevant International Conventions, Agreements and Processes. This includes sites proposed to be designated or designated as:

- Special Areas of Conservation under the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora).
- Special Protection Areas under the Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds).

Both the Birds and Habitats Directives have been transposed in Irish law by Ministerial Regulation. **The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011** are the most important of these because they provide for the protection measures and management regime that apply to SPAs and SACs.

No projects giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects)^[1].

^[1] Except as provided for in Section 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:

- (a) no alternative solution available,
- (b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and
- (c) adequate compensatory measures in place.

The Proposed Variation includes a new policy to the TDP which will serve to ensure compliance with the Habitats Directive and recent changes brought about by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. This policy replaces policy NHB 15 and states that:

Where relevant, projects arising from this plan will be screened by the Council, in cooperation with the applicant for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

In addition, the following new policies are proposed to be introduced to the plan to ensure compliance with the Habitats Directive and the protection of the Natura 2000 network for any upgrade works to the Lough Forbes:

Subject to compliance with the provisions of the Habitats Directive and the Habitats Regulations 2011, the Council will continue to progress the Long Term Upgrade of Lough Forbes Water Treatment Plant

It is the policy of the Council to consider the provision of improved and additional wastewater services in appropriate locations/ having regard to the need to control the impact of wastewater on receiving waters. To this effect, the Water Services Department of the Council are appointing consultants and will submit a plan for the upgrade of the WWTP to the Department in 2013 with a view towards ensuring the undertaking any upgrade works required. All upgrade works will be screened by the Council for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

2.6 Other Plans and Programmes

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires an assessment of a plan or project to consider other plans or programmes that might, in combination with the plan or project, have the potential to adversely impact upon Natura 2000 sites. Table 2.4 lists plans or programmes that have the potential to interact with the LAP to cause in-combination effects to Natura 2000 sites. The plans or projects are listed according to a spatial hierarchy of International, National, Regional/Local Projects and Plans. As outlined in the previous sections, the Proposed Variation is unlikely to have a negative impact on the Natura network of sites. Therefore, there is little potential for in-combination impacts with other plans and programmes to arise.

Table 2.2 Other Plans & Projects

International	
Directive	Purpose
EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)	Objectives seek to maintain and enhance the quality of all surface waters in the EU.
EU Freshwater Fish Directive (78/659/EEC)	Objectives seek to protect those fresh water bodies identified by Member States as waters suitable for sustaining fish populations. For those waters it sets physical and chemical water quality objectives for salmonid waters and cyprinid waters.
EU Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC)	This directive establishes a regime, which sets underground water quality standards and introduces measures to prevent or limit inputs of pollutants into groundwater.
EU Floods Directive (2007/60/EC)	The Floods Directive applies to river basins and coastal areas at risk of flooding. With trends such as climate change and increased domestic and economic development in flood risk zones, this poses a threat of flooding in coastal and river basin areas.
Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC)	This Directive has the objective of reducing water pollution caused or induced by nitrates from agricultural sources and preventing further pollution.
The Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC)	The primary objective is to protect the environment from the adverse effects of discharges of urban wastewater, by the provision of urban wastewater collecting systems (sewerage) and treatment plants for urban centres. The Directive also provides general rules for the sustainable disposal of sludge arising from wastewater treatment.
The Integrated Pollution Prevention Control Directive (96/61/EC)	Objective is to achieve a high level of protection of the environment through measures to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to reduce emissions to air, water and land from industrial sources.

National	
Plan	Purpose
National Development Plan 2007-2013	Objectives of the NDP are to promote more balanced spatial and economic development.
National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020	Objectives of the NSS are to achieve a better balance of social, economic and physical development across Ireland, supported by more effective planning.
Mid West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022	Policy document which aims to direct the future growth of the Mid West Region over the medium to long term and works to implement the strategic planning framework set out in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS)
	Local
Longford County Development Plan 2009-2015	Overall strategies for the proper planning and sustainable development of the administrative area of the relevant Local Authorities.

2.7 Conclusions of Stage 1

The likely impacts that will arise from the implementation of the Proposed Variation have been examined in the context of a number of factors that could potentially affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. On the basis of the findings of this Screening for Appropriate Assessment, it is concluded that the Plan:

- (i) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site; and
- (ii) will not have any significant impacts on the Natura 2000 network of sites

Therefore a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

Section 3 Finding of no significant effects report

Name of project or plan	Core Strategy Proposed Variation No. 1 To The Longford Town Development Plan 2009-2015
Name and location of Natura 2000 site	Brown Bog SAC Ardagullion Bog SAC Clooneen Bog SAC Lough Ree SAC Lough Forbes Complex SAC Glen Lough SPA Lough Ree SPA Ballykenney-Fisherstown Bog SPA
Description of the project or plan	<p>The Core Strategy included in the Proposed Variation for the TDP includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population targets; • A quantification of the requirements for zoning of lands for residential purposes; • Details of existing and future distribution of population within a defined settlement hierarchy. <p>The proposed Core Strategy for the TDP also includes provisions relating to water services which will further contribute towards the protection and management of the environment already provided for by the existing Plan. This includes the protection of human health, biodiversity and flora and fauna and water quality and the provision of appropriate water services.</p>
Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site?	No
Are there other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could affect the site?	No
The Assessment of Significance of Effects	
Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site.	The plan is not likely to affect the Natura 2000 network.
Explain why these effects are not considered significant.	See section 2.3 of the AA screening Assessment.
Data Collected to Carry Out the Assessment	
Who carried out the assessment?	Marian Coll, Ecologist with CAAS
Sources of data	Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Screening Report For Core Strategy Proposed Variation No. 1 To The Longford Town Development Plan 2009-2015 NPWS.ie EPA.ie
Level of assessment completed	Desktop
Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed?	See attached report
Overall Conclusion	Stage 1 Screening indicates that the Plan will not have a significant negative impact on the Natura 2000 network of sites. Therefore, a Stage 2 'Appropriate Assessment' under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC is not required.