



SEA of the Longford Town

Local Area Plan

SEA Statement

Longford County Council

Final report

Prepared by LUC

May 2025

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SEA of the Longford Town Local Area Plan

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

1.1 This report forms the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement to accompany the Longford Town Local Area Plan (LAP) as published in May 2025. The preparation of the SEA Statement fulfils the plan adoption requirements of the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC [See reference 1], as transposed into national legislation through S.I. No. 435 of 2004 [See reference 2], as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 [See reference 3] (i.e. the SEA Regulations).

1.2 Article 9 of the SEA Directive and Regulation 16(2) of the SEA Regulations require plan-makers to report on how the findings of the SEA and the results of the associated consultation have been integrated into the plan. This requires the preparation of an SEA Statement following the publication of the plan. This SEA Statement summarises:

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Longford Town LAP (**Chapter 2**);
- How the Environmental Report has been taken into account (**Chapter 3**);
- How submissions and observations received in response to the consultation on the Environmental Report have been taken into account (**Chapter 4**);
- The reasons for choosing the Longford Town LAP, as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with (**Chapter 5**); and
- The measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the Longford Town LAP (**Chapter 6**).

1.3 This SEA Statement will be made available to the Environmental Authorities and the public alongside the published Longford Town LAP.

1.4 Appendix D demonstrates how this SEA Statement complies with the requirements of the SEA Directive and SEA Regulations.

Longford Town Local Area Plan

Context for the Longford Town Local Area Plan

1.5 Longford Town is in the centre of County Longford and is the principal town of the county, with established employment areas and substantial administrative and retail functions.

1.6 Located on the banks of the Camlin River, the land within the town core is predominately flat, with a pronounced rise towards the south-east. A spur of the Royal Canal enters the town to the south-west. Agricultural and amenity land in close proximity to the town centre significantly contributes to the character of the settlement. On the western outskirts of the town are significant areas of land which are subject to substantive flooding.

1.7 Longford Town is strategically positioned as a portal to the Northern and Western Region, with the town well served by transport links in the form of the Dublin to Sligo rail line, and several strategic roads including the N4 (Dublin – Sligo) and N5 (Dublin – Castlebar/Westport), 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 town, as well as attract new businesses and industries to the locality.

1.8 Longford Town has 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 Area Plan

1.9 The current Longford County Development Plan (CDP) [See reference 4] 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 (CPO) 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 CDP states that the LAP will be informed by a Local Transport Plan (LTP) to be prepared for Longford Town (adopted July 2023).

1.10 Other CPOs specific to Longford Town are as follows:

- Support the role and function of Longford Town as the principal economic driver and focus of investment for the county (i.e. a 'Key Town' as identified by the RSES) (CPO 4.7 – 4.9).
- Support and prioritise regeneration opportunities in Longford Town including enhanced accessibility and sustainable mobility; town centre improvements; developing the town as a tourism hub; regeneration at the River Camlin, the Camlin Quarter, the Ballyminion area; improved linkages; and wider regeneration (CPOs 6.62 – 6.80).
- Promote regional-scale employment in the Primary Economic Growth Centre of Longford Town and promote the town's role as a key hub for employment, enterprise, tourism and innovation (CPOs 8.26 – 8.33).
- Improve the retail and high-street environment of Longford Town (CPOs 8.76 – 8.79).
- Protect the character of the Architectural Conservation Area in Longford Town (CPOs 11.27 – 11.29).

- Encourage a residential density of 35-40 units/ha in Longford town centre (CPO 16.17).

Scope and content of the Longford Town Local Area Plan

1.11 The aim of the LAP for Longford Town is to guide the overall development of the town to 2031.

1.12 The Vision for the Longford LAP is ***“to set out a framework for the sustainable physical development of Longford Town, ensuring the conservation and protection of the built and natural environment, while providing in an equitable manner for all our people within the Town”***.

1.13 The Vision for Longford Town is underpinned by 12 strategic aims which are designed to provide a level of focus and direction to the objectives set out in the document. The strategic aims of the Longford Town LAP are:

- **Core Strategy Compliance:** to support the sustainable long-term growth of Longford Town in accordance with the Core Strategy of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 (or any succeeding plan), the provisions of the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031.
- **Residential Sustainability and Placemaking:** to support and facilitate the development of integrated sustainable neighbourhoods that respond to the needs of changing demographics in terms of housing delivery.
- **Economic Development:** to encourage sustainable employment growth and economic activity and promote Longford Town as a local and regional centre of trade, business and tourism.
- **Tourism:** to encourage and provide for the continued expansion of the tourism sector by the continued sustainable development and enhancements of visitor attractions and activities capitalising on Longford Town’s natural and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.

- **Regeneration and Placemaking:** to tackle problems of population decline, lack of investment and physical dereliction in an integrated and cross cutting way, through several policy areas including integrated land use, heritage led regeneration and socio-economic measures to address the physical, economic, social and environmental problems associated with dereliction and decay.
- **Social Infrastructure:** to facilitate and secure the provision of social infrastructure to support existing and new communities in Longford Town in a manner which provides flexibility to respond to varied and changing community needs.
- **Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure:** to contribute towards the protection and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity within the Local Area Plan boundary and to provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits.
- **Built and Cultural Heritage:** to conserve and manage Longford Town's unique heritage assets for the benefit of present and future generations and to promote such assets as generators of economic development and regeneration while adhering to best practice conservation principles and the relevant statutory obligations.
- **Infrastructure:** to ensure that the delivery of infrastructural services is guided by the principles of sustainable development in facilitating more efficient land use and physical development, whilst providing for the continued social and economic growth of the County.
- **Sustainable Transport:** to promote the use of and increased delivery of sustainable modes of transport within Longford Town, in order to contribute towards the achievement Ireland's carbon emission reduction requirements.
- **Climate Change:** to ensure Longford Town becomes a climate resilient town by promoting the economic, social and environmental benefits of low-carbon development, creating an integrated green infrastructure network, prioritising sustainable mobility and building at sustainable densities in appropriate locations.

- **Implementation and Monitoring:** to ensure development occurs in tandem with the delivery of supporting physical and social infrastructure, in an orderly and efficient manner and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

SEA and the Longford Town Local Area Plan

1.14 The SEA process is a requirement of the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC, as transposed into national legislation through the SEA Regulations, which requires that an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes, 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'*.

1.15 SEA of the Longford Town LAP was undertaken in compliance with the SEA Directive and SEA Regulations. Throughout the course of the development of the Longford Town LAP, the SEA sought to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the LAP and to propose measures to avoid, reduce or offset any significant adverse effects and to enhance any beneficial effects.

1.16 The main requirements of the SEA of the Longford Town LAP comprise:

- **Scoping:** 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:** An assessment of the likely significant impacts on the environment as a result of implementation of the Longford Town LAP.
- **Consultation** on the Draft Environmental Report.

- **Evaluation** of the submissions and observations received on the Draft Environmental Report.
- **Addendum Environmental Report:** An assessment of the material alterations to the Longford Town LAP.
- **Consultation** on the **Addendum Environmental Report**.
- **Evaluation** of the submissions and observations made on the **Addendum Environmental Report**.
- **Final Environmental Report:** Preparation of a Final Environmental Report that is consistent with the finalised Longford Town LAP.
- **SEA Statement (current stage):** Identifying how environmental considerations and consultation responses have been integrated into the final Longford Town LAP.
- **Monitoring (next stage):** Undertaking periodic monitoring of the associated effects of the Longford Town LAP.

1.17 Table 1.1 overleaf shows the links between the plan preparation and environmental assessment processes (i.e. SEA and Appropriate Assessment). The processes started at the same time and the consultations ran jointly which enabled better integration of the SEA findings into the LAP.

Table 2.1: Corresponding plan-preparation and environmental assessment processes

Longford Town Local Area Plan	Strategic Environmental Assessment / Appropriate Assessment
Commence preparation of the LAP	Scoping Report (March 2023) Consultation: 28th March to Thursday 27th April 2023 Final Scoping Report (May 2023) Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (June 2024)
Draft LAP (September 2024)	Draft Environmental Report (June 2024) Draft Non-Technical Summary (June 2024) Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement (June 2024)
Consultation on the Draft LAP, Draft Environmental Report, and Draft Non-Technical Summary and AA: Friday, 6th September 2024 until Friday, 18th October 2024	
Addendum LAP (February 2025)	Addendum Environmental Report (January 2025) Addendum Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Report (January 2025)
Consultation on the Addendum LAP and Addendum Environmental Report: Wednesday, 5th February until Wednesday, 5th March 2025	
Final LAP (June 2025)	Final Environmental Report (May 2025) Final Non-Technical Summary (May 2025) Final Natura Impact Report (May 2025) SEA Statement (June 2025) AA Conclusion Statement (June 2025)
Monitoring of adverse effects	

1.18 In accordance with Article 8 of the SEA Directive, and Regulation 15 of the SEA Regulations, Longford County Council has taken into account the findings

of the Environmental Report and the consultation responses in coming to its decision on the final form of the Longford Town LAP and its adoption (expanded on in **Chapters 3** and **4** of this SEA Statement).

Chapter 2

How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Longford Town Local Area Plan

2.1 SEA does not stand alone in environmental assessments of plans and programmes, including the Longford Town LAP. 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. Therefore, this chapter details how environmental considerations from both the SEA and AA have been integrated into the Longford Town LAP.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

2.2 It is important that any plan takes into account the environmental circumstances in which it is to be implemented. To provide the context for the SEA of the Longford Town LAP, and in compliance with the SEA Directive, the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and its evolution without the Longford Town LAP were considered, along with the environmental characteristics likely to be significantly affected.

2.3 The key environmental issues and opportunities relevant to the Longford Town LAP as identified through the analysis of baseline conditions are presented in **Appendix A**. The key environmental issues helped to inform the scope of the assessment of the Draft LAP in terms of the extent to which the environmental topics identified in the SEA Directive should be considered. In this instance, none of the SEA topics were scoped out of the assessment.

2.4 The environmental issues also informed the development of the Environmental Protection Objectives (EPOs) used to guide the assessment of the Draft LAP. The EPO Framework is presented in **Appendix B**.

2.5 The SEA was undertaken iteratively, such that at each stage of the LAP's preparation, the environmental effects of the options for the plan were assessed. The assessment of the LAP was undertaken by testing its compatibility with the EPOs. The findings from the SEA were presented in SEA matrices, which included colour coding symbols showing scores of each component of the LAP against each of the EPOs along with a concise justification for the score given. The use of colour coding in the matrices allowed for likely significant effects (both positive and negative) to be easily identified.

2.6 A Draft Environmental Report was prepared in June 2024 to appraise the options proposed in the Draft LAP. The Draft Environmental Report clearly set out the SEA conclusions for the Draft LAP, highlighting likely significant effects, and making recommendations for mitigating potential negative effects identified. The assessment of significant effects included 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.

2.7 Longford County Council considered the SEA findings and recommendations of the SEA process throughout the plan-making process. A Final Environmental Report was prepared in May 2025 to appraise the finalised LAP which documents where the recommendations of the SEA process have been taken into account in the final LAP (see **Chapter 3**).

Appropriate Assessment

2.8 Screening for AA of the Longford Town LAP, using the precautionary principle (without the application of mitigation measures), was prepared in February 2024. The findings of the Screening for AA determined that the

implementation of the Longford Town LAP could result in the following Likely Significant Effects:

- **Loss of functionally linked land** - in relation to the Lough Ree SPA and Lough Ree SAC.
- **Non-physical disturbance (off-site only)** – in relation to the Lough Ree SPA and Lough Ree SAC.
- **Air pollution** – in relation to the Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA, Lough Ree SPA, Lough Forbes Complex SAC and Lough Ree SAC.
- **Recreation pressure** – in relation to the Lough Ree SAC, Lough Forbes Complex SAC, Lough Ree SPA and Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA.
- **Changes to hydrology including water quality and quantity** – in relation to the Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA, Lough Ree SPA, Lough Ree SAC and Fortwilliam Turlough SAC.

2.9 Therefore, an Appropriate Assessment of the Longford Town LAP was undertaken in March/April 2024 and updated in May 2025 to reflect the finalised version of the LAP. The Appropriate Assessment identified that the above Likely Significant Effects will not, in light of mitigation and avoidance measures outlined in Chapter 4 of the Natura Impact Report, result in Adverse Effects on Integrity (AEol) of the European sites either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

2.10 The findings of the AA have been taken into account in this Environmental Report.

Chapter 3

How the findings of the Environmental Report have been taken into account

3.1 As explained in the previous chapter, the SEA process for the Longford Town LAP was undertaken iteratively, with the SEA reports prepared at each stage informing the preparation of the LAP. As part of the SEA process, an assessment of the environmental effects was made at each stage of the LAP's development. These findings helped Longford County Council to formulate the proposals for inclusion in the LAP.

3.2 The following paragraphs show how preparation of the SEA reports (which included the Environmental Report requirements set out in the SEA Regulations) corresponded with each stage of the LAP's preparation, and how the SEA informed the final Longford Town LAP.

Key stages in the SEA and its relationship with the Longford Town Local Area Plan

Scoping and LAP preparation

3.3 A Scoping Report was prepared in March 2023, and updated in May 2023 to take account of the consultation responses from the Environmental Authorities. The scoping stage of the SEA identified other relevant plans, programmes and Environmental Protection Objectives which could be affected by, or which could affect, the Longford Town LAP. The scoping stage also characterised the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and its evolution without the Longford Town LAP.

Draft Environmental Report and Draft LAP

3.4 The Draft Environmental Report was prepared in June 2024 and informed the Draft Longford Town LAP. The Vision, Strategic Aims and Objectives for the Longford Town LAP were appraised against the Environmental Protection Objectives, with the findings presented to the Council. The findings of the assessment helped to identify the options that may give rise to significant environmental effects, thereby enabling amendment or alternatives to be implemented.

Consultation on the Draft Environmental Report and Draft LAP

3.5 The Draft Longford Town LAP and Draft Environmental Report were published for consultation jointly from Friday 6th September 2024 to Friday 18th October 2024.

Addendum Environmental Report

3.6 A screening assessment of the alterations to the LAP, where proposed, was undertaken to determine their likely significant effects. Where likely significant effects were identified, an Addendum Environmental Report was prepared to accompany the Proposed Material Alterations to the LAP.

Consultation on the Addendum Environmental Report

3.7 Public consultation was carried out on the Addendum Environmental Report and Proposed Material Alterations to the LAP for a four-week period from 5th February to 5th March 2025.

Final Environmental Report and Final LAP

3.8 An assessment of the potential changes to the LAP was undertaken to identify where the amendments to the plan would alter the previously identified SEA findings. The Environmental Report was updated to document where the recommendations of the SEA process have been taken into account in the Final LAP:

Table 3.1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna recommendations

LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
NHB 04 Ensure screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA), in accordance with Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive is carried out with respect to any plan or project within or adjacent to the Royal Canal pNHA.	In line with the recommendation in the AA, objective NHB 04 could be strengthened to encompass any plan or project that is likely to have a significant impact on the Royal Canal pNHA as well as the River Camlin as this links to the Lough Forbes Complex SAC / Ballykenny Bog SPA: <i>NHB 04 Require screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA), in accordance with Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, to be carried out with respect to any plan or project which may have a likely significant impact on the River Camlin and Royal Canal pNHA.</i>	NHB 04 updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.
New objective (from recommendation in the AA)	<i>“Require an ecological appraisal, in addition to an Appropriate Assessment, for development not directly connected with or necessary to the management of European Sites, or a proposed European Site and which are likely to have significant effects on that site either individually or cumulatively”.</i>	New objective, NHB 05, included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA/AA, with alternative wording.

LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
New objective (from recommendation in the AA)	<i>“Ensure the provision of appropriate Riparian strips of not less than 10 meters from the top of the bank of all watercourses to enhance biodiversity and preserve the natural flood regime of the area. The full extent of the biodiversity protection zone should be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Council, based on site specific characteristics and sensitivities”.</i>	New objective, NHB 09, included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA/AA.
NHB 06 (previously NHB 05 in earlier draft) Prohibit any development that would be harmful to or that would result in a significant deterioration of habitats and/or disturbance of protected species within Longford town.	Additional mitigation provided in italics: NHB 06 Prohibit any development that would be harmful to or that would result in a significant deterioration of habitats and/or disturbance of protected species within Longford town. <i>Appropriate species surveys (e.g., bat surveys, bird surveys etc.) will be required for proposals to redevelop and reuse existing buildings, recognising that these structures can provide niche habitats and places of shelter for protected species.</i>	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.
NHB 12 (previously NHB 11 in earlier draft) Promote the protection and preservation of existing natural vegetation features and hedgerows and encourage the planting of native hedgerow and tree species. Existing feature vegetation (e.g. groups of trees, shrubs, hedgerows etc) should be integrated into any new development wherever possible.	Additional mitigation provided in italics: NHB 12 Promote the protection and preservation of existing natural vegetation features and hedgerows and encourage the planting of native hedgerow and tree species. Existing feature vegetation (e.g. groups of trees, shrubs, hedgerows etc) should be integrated into any new development, wherever possible. <i>Where the loss of the existing features is unavoidable, new</i>	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.

LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
	<i>biodiversity features should incorporate native species, and species of local provenance to replace existing hedgerows and trees.</i>	
NHB 21 (previously NHB 20 in earlier draft) Ensure that proposals for the lighting/flood lighting of waterways infrastructure, buildings or pedestrian/cycling routes along waterways incorporate bat friendly lighting schemes as set out in 'Bats and Lighting, Guidance Notes for: Planners, engineers, architects, and developers'.	Additional mitigation provided in italics: NHB 21 Ensure that proposals for the lighting/flood lighting of waterways infrastructure, buildings or pedestrian/cycling routes along waterways <i>minimise adverse impacts on protected species (e.g. bats, birds, otters, etc) and incorporate lighting schemes as set out in 'Bats and Lighting, Guidance Notes for: Planners, engineers, architects, and developers'.</i>	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.
NHB 17 (previously NHB 16 in earlier draft) Protect the important stands of trees from damage / removal.	The objective could be strengthened as follows: <i>NHB 17 Support a presumption against tree felling, topping, lopping or wilful destruction of mature trees as part of development proposals. Where a development proposal involves the felling, topping, lopping or threatens the destruction of a mature tree or trees, a tree survey will need to be included in the submission, carried out by a qualified Tree Specialist to justify the exceptional circumstances for their actions. The applicant must demonstrate the justification and rationale for removal of mature trees in terms of effect on ecology and landscape and demonstrate how replacement planting will compensate for loss of trees and woodland features. An assessment of potential tree roost</i>	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.

LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
	<i>features by a qualified and experienced ecologist may also be requested as part of such proposals.</i>	
NHB 25 (previously NHB 24 in earlier draft) Facilitate the control and eradication of invasive species within the Plan area.	The objective could be strengthened as follows: <i>NHB 25 Ensure that where the presence of invasive species is identified at the site of any proposed development or where the proposed activity has an elevated risk of resulting in the presence of these species, details of how these species will be appropriately managed and controlled will be required.</i>	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.
GI 01 Protect, enhance and further develop the Green Infrastructure network to provide a shared space for amenity, recreation and biodiversity to thrive and to strengthen links to the wider regional network.	Additional mitigation provided in italics: GI 01 Protect, enhance and further develop the Green Infrastructure network to provide a shared space for amenity, recreation and biodiversity to thrive and to strengthen links to the wider regional network. <i>This should be informed by appropriate ecological surveys and assessment.</i>	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation, and amended wording following material alterations.
GI 03 Integrate new and existing green infrastructure as an essential component of all new developments and to restrict development that would fragment, damage or prejudice the integrity of the green infrastructure network.	Additional mitigation provided in italics: GI 03 Integration new and existing green infrastructure as an essential component of all new developments and to restrict development that would fragment, damage or prejudice the integrity of the green infrastructure network. <i>Site specific ecology surveys should be carried out to inform proposed developments.</i>	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.

LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
Water Supply and Wastewater Services Objectives	A new objective could be included in the LAP as follows: <i>Require that all developments relating to water supply and wastewater treatment are subject to screening for Appropriate Assessment to ensure there are no likely significant effects on the integrity, defined by the structure and function, of any European sites and that the requirements of Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive are met.</i>	New objective, WS 15, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.

Table 3.2: Population and human health recommendations

LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
New objective in Chapter 7: Economic Development (Retail)	New objective recommendation to emphasise the need for regeneration of the town and to support the measures in the Local Transport Plan: <i>‘To support, promote and facilitate measures, such as town centre regeneration, implementation of the Longford Town Local Transport Plan to improve accessibility and public realm improvements and other town centre first initiatives over the plan period, to reduce retail and commercial vacancy in Longford town centre’.</i>	New objective, RET 03, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
MP 02 Promote the development and regeneration of the ‘Strategic Sites’ identified in the Longford Local Area	This objective could be strengthened as follows (new text in italics): MP 02 Promote the development and regeneration of the ‘Strategic Sites’ identified in the Longford Local Area Plan, <i>which contribute to the</i>	Not included in the LAP.

LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
Plan, to include on a Master Plan basis.	<i>regeneration, vibrancy, diversity, vitality, attractiveness, safety, liveability and compact growth of the town centre. In conjunction with this, proposed developments must demonstrate how they will interact within its context and the wider urban area through the preparation of masterplans.</i>	
Public Realm, Universal Design and Age Friendly Objectives	Although the promotion of healthy place-making is referred to in RES 10, a new objective could be included in the 'Public Realm, Universal Design and Age Friendly Objectives' as follows: <i>Support and encourage the principle of healthy place-making in Longford Town.</i>	New objective, PUA 02, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
Public Realm, Universal Design and Age Friendly Objectives	A new objective could be included in the LAP as follows: <i>'Support the development of public realm projects in Longford that enhance the aesthetics of the town's built and natural character and improve the overall ambience and visitor experience of the town'.</i>	New objective, PUA 03, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
CC 13 Create and develop well planned sustainable communities, where sustainable modes of travel are encouraged to local facilities, such as education, work and commercial activity.	This objective could be revised to refer to low-carbon communities, climate adaptation and mitigation as follows: <i>Support the development of sustainable low-carbon climate resilient communities and encourage a climate adaptation and mitigation approach to developments which will enable regeneration.</i>	CC 15 incorporates SEA recommended mitigation.

Table 3.3: Energy and climate change mitigation recommendations

LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
New objective for Chapter 7: Economic development	Recommendation for new objective as follows: <i>Support and promote economic and enterprise development and activity in a manner which contributes to the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainably town.</i>	New objective, ECON 12, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
New objective for Chapter 13: Energy, Communications and Waste	Recommendation for new objective as follows: <i>Protect environmental quality in Longford through the implementation of European, national and regional policy and legislation relating to air quality, greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management.</i>	New objective, EC 07, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
New objectives for Chapter 14: Climate Change	Recommendation for new objective as follows: <i>Promote sustainable patterns of development including development in sustainable locations.</i>	New objective, CC 14, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
New objectives for Chapter 14: Climate Change	Recommendation for new objective as follows: <i>Support the adaption of existing homes to reduce energy use, including Protected Structures and those located within Architectural Conservation Areas, providing there is no adverse impact on historic character or appearance.</i>	New objective, CC 19, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA, with alternative wording.
New objectives for Chapter 14: Climate Change	Recommendation for new objective as follows: <i>Support the delivery of facilities needed to divert waste away from</i>	New objective, CC 23, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.

LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
	<i>landfill and promote the prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery of materials (including heat from waste) with disposal to landfill as the final option.</i>	
New objectives for Chapter 14: Climate Change	Recommendation for new objective as follows: <i>Minimise resource and energy requirements for new developments through appropriate siting, design, and layout, making the most of natural systems both within and around buildings.</i>	New objective, CC 20, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
New objectives for Chapter 14: Climate Change	Recommendation for new objective as follows: <i>Promote and encourage positive community and/or co-operative led climate action initiatives and projects in Longford Town that seek to reduce carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency, enhance green infrastructure and encourage awareness on climate change issues.</i>	New objective, CC 24, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
New objectives for Chapter 14: Climate Change	Recommendation for new objective as follows: <i>Support high levels of energy conservation, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources in existing buildings, including retrofitting of appropriate energy efficiency measures in the existing building stock, and to actively retrofit Longford County Council's housing stock to a B2 Building Energy Rating (BER) in line with the Government's Housing for All Plan retrofit targets for 2030</i>	New objective, CC 21, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
New objectives for Chapter 14: Climate Change	Recommendation for new objective as follows:	New objective, CC 22, is included in the LAP

LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
	<i>Support Energy Master Plans prepared by Sustainable Energy Communities in Longford Town.</i>	as recommended in the SEA.
New objectives for Chapter 14: Climate Change	Recommendation for new objective as follows: <i>Encourage innovation and facilitate the development of pilot schemes in Longford Town that support climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.</i>	New objective, CC 25, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
CC 07 Encourage the development of local renewable and low carbon energy sources in Longford Town both retrofitting and as part of new development proposals in accordance with the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy (LARES).	Objective could be strengthened by (additional text in italics): CC 07 Encourage the development of local renewable, low carbon, <i>and zero-carbon</i> energy sources in Longford Town <i>through</i> retrofitting and as part of new development proposals, <i>which meet the highest feasible environmental standards during construction and occupation</i> , in accordance with the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy (LARES).	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.
CC 09 Support and promote the use of biodiversity techniques, such as green roofs and walls and the integration of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) into all new development schemes.	Objective could be strengthened by (additional text in italics): CC 09 Support and promote the use of biodiversity techniques, such as green roofs and walls and the integration of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) / <i>Nature Based Solutions</i> into all new development schemes.	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.
CC 16 (CC 14 in an earlier draft) Support the delivery of Longford Town as a 'Decarbonisation Zone'.	The objective could be strengthened to: <i>'CC 16 Support the delivery of the 'Decarbonisation Zone' in Longford Town and associated implementation plan promoting measures to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and improve</i>	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.

LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
	<i>general environmental conditions in this area</i> '.	

Table 3.4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation recommendations

LAP Objective	SEA recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
SW 05 Incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage in all new developments. Note attenuation is not SUDS.	This objective could be updated to refer to minimising hard surfaces and incorporating GI as well as incorporating SuDS: <i>Minimise flood risk arising from pluvial (surface water) flooding in Longford Town by promoting the use of nature-based solutions including sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), minimising extent of hard surfaces/paving, and smart solutions such as innovative green infrastructure.</i>	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.
FR 02 Require that development proposals within the 'Constrained Land Use' zone shall be accompanied by a detailed Flood Risk Assessment, carried out in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines and Circular PL 2/2014 (or as updated), which shall assess the risks of flooding associated with the proposed development.	The objective could be strengthened to: FR 02 Require that development proposals within the 'Constrained Land Use' zone shall be accompanied by a detailed Flood Risk Assessment, carried out in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines and Circular PL 2/2014 (or as updated), <i>and consider the potential impacts of climate change in the application of these guidelines. Applicants should have regard to the most up-to-date Flood Mapping as presented on</i>	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.

LAP Objective	SEA recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
	<i>the Office of Public Works (OPW) maps.</i>	
New objective for Chapter 13: Flood Risk Management Objectives	Recommendation for new objective as follows: <i>Demonstrate that future development will not result in increased risk of flooding elsewhere, restrict flow paths, where compensatory storage / storm water retention measures shall be provided on site.</i>	New objective, FR 04, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.

Table 3.5: Air recommendations

LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
New objective (from recommendations in the AA)	Recommendation for new objective as follows: <i>'Promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/5/0/EC) and ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011) (or any updated/superseding documents).'</i>	New objective, CC 17, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA/AA.

Table 3.6: Water recommendations

LAP Objectives	SEA recommendations	Addressed in the LAP
Water Supply and Wastewater Services Objectives	<p>Recommendation for a new objective:</p> <p><i>Discourage the over concentration/proliferation of individual septic tanks and treatment plants to minimise the risk of groundwater pollution.</i></p>	New objective, WS 17, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
Water Supply and Wastewater Services Objectives	<p>Recommendation for a new objective:</p> <p><i>Ensure that all new development proposals include a Drainage Impact Assessment.</i></p>	New objective, WS 18, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
Water Supply and Wastewater Services Objectives	<p>Recommendation for a new objective:</p> <p><i>Work alongside Uisce Éireann to minimise the number and frequency of storm overflows of sewage to watercourses.</i></p>	New objective, WS 19, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
Water Supply and Wastewater Services Objectives	<p>Recommendation for a new objective (recommendation from the AA):</p> <p><i>“Promote the sustainable use of water and water conservation in existing and new developments within the town by encouraging demand management measures among all water users and requiring new developments to incorporate water conservation measures”.</i></p>	New objective, WS 13, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA/AA.
WS 11 Protect valuable groundwater sources and important surface water bodies from pollution through infiltration by domestic, agricultural or other sources of	<p>WS 11 could be strengthened as follows (recommendation from the AA):</p> <p><i>“Maintain, improve and enhance the environmental and ecological quality of surface waters and groundwater in Longford Town in conjunction with the EPA and in accordance with the River Basin Management Plan for</i></p>	Objective WS 11 updated to reflect recommended mitigation in the SEA/AA.

LAP Objectives	SEA recommendations	Addressed in the LAP
effluent/pollutant material.	<i>Ireland 2022-2027 and future cycles of this Plan”.</i>	

Table 3.7: Landscape

LAP Objective	SEA recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
EC 03 Seek the undergrounding of all electricity, telephone and television cables in the town centre.	Objective could be strengthened as follows: EC 03 Seek the undergrounding of all electricity, telephone and television cables in the town centre, <i>wherever possible, while taking into consideration landscape, residential amenity, and environmental considerations.</i>	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.

Table 3.8: Material assets recommendations

LAP Objectives	SEA Recommendations	Addressed in the LAP
New objectives for Chapter 7: Economic development	Recommendation for new objective as follows: <i>Support the development and expansion of enterprise and employment within Longford Town, and to co-operate with all stakeholders, landowners and relevant agencies to attract investment, while at the same time ensuring there is no resultant negative impact on the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre.</i>	New objective, ECON 06, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
New objective for Chapter 7: Economic Development (Retail)	Recommendation for new objective as follows: <i>The Council, in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Local Authorities, will continue to protect and promote the vitality and viability of Longford town centre,</i>	New objective, RET 06, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.

LAP Objectives	SEA Recommendations	Addressed in the LAP
	<i>including applying a 'town centre first approach' or sequential test for retail developments.</i>	
EC 02 Promote and facilitate the development and renewal of energy and communications networks, including broadband services, while protecting the amenities of the town.	Additional mitigation provided in italics: EC 02 Promote and facilitate the development and renewal of energy and communications networks, including broadband services, <i>while taking into consideration landscape, residential amenity, and environmental considerations.</i>	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.
New objective for Chapter 13: Energy, Communications and Waste Objectives	Recommendation for new objective as follows: <i>'Support local schools, town and community groups such as Longford Green Towns Initiative, Longford Tidy Towns through education and awareness programmes and where available, through the provision of grant aid.</i>	New objective, EC 09, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
EC 04 Adequately maintain existing recycling and bring bank facilities and assess their locations, and secure the provision of additional facilities at appropriate locations, as required, including in conjunction with development.	The objective could be reworded slightly as follows: EC 04 Adequately maintain existing recycling and bring bank facilities and assess their locations, and secure the provision of additional facilities at appropriate locations <i>that will not adversely affect residential amenity or environmental quality</i> , including in conjunction with development.	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.
Recommendation for new objective in Chapter 13: Energy, Communications and Waste Objectives	Recommendation for new objective as follows: <i>Require all commercial and residential developments to be provided with adequate internal and external space for the correct storage of waste and recyclable materials. This is particularly</i>	New objective, EC 08, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.

LAP Objectives	SEA Recommendations	Addressed in the LAP
	<i>important in relation to shared bin spaces such as apartment developments.</i>	
Recommendation for new objectives for Chapter 13: Sustainable Transport Objectives	Recommendation for new objective as follows: <i>Support and facilitate the implementation of the pedestrian, cycle, public transport, car parking, traffic management, and permeability 'Priority Schemes' set out in the Local Transport Plan. Proposals for new development will be required to demonstrate how they will integrate with the provisions of the Local Transport Plan.</i>	New objective, ST 30, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
ST 02 supports compliance with the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, including Sustainable Transport, Sustainable Public Transport, Cycling and Walking County Policy Objectives.	The objective could be strengthened as follows: ST 02 Comply with the relevant sections of Chapter 5: Transport, Infrastructure, Energy & Communications of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, including Sustainable Transport, Sustainable Public Transport, Cycling and Walking County Policy Objectives and the <i>Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2019)</i> .	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.
ST 14 Support the NTA in the provision of new and upgraded bus stops.	This objective could be strengthened to incorporate other stakeholders and infrastructure as follows: <i>'Engage and cooperate with the Department of Transport, National Transport Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Irish Rail, Local Link and other stakeholders to improve the provision of public transport and public transport facilities in Longford'.</i>	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.

3.9 The Final LAP and its accompanying Final Environmental Report were published in June 2025. This SEA Statement will be made available alongside the Final LAP.

Chapter 4

How the opinions expressed in response to consultation on the SEA have been taken into account

4.1 Consultation has been an integral part of the SEA of the Longford Town LAP and has comprised three key stages:

- Consultation with the Environmental Authorities and adjoining local authorities on the Scoping Report; and
- Formal public consultation on the Draft Longford Town LAP and the accompanying Draft Environmental Report and Non-Technical Summary.
- Formal public consultation on the Addendum Environmental Report and Proposed Material Alterations to the LAP.

Consultation with the Environmental Authorities on the Scoping Report

4.2 In accordance with Article 9(5) and Article 11 of the SEA Regulations, a Scoping Report was prepared in March 2023 and issued to the Environmental Authorities and adjoining local authorities for their consideration for a four-week period from 28th March to Thursday 27th April 2023.

4.3 Two consultation responses were received in response to the Scoping Report from Geological Survey Ireland and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Geological Survey Ireland

4.4 Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) welcomed the inclusion of the St Mel's Cathedral County Geological Site and the inclusion of groundwater in the baseline information for 'Soil' and 'Water' in the Environmental Report. GSI recommended using their data sets, which were used when conducting the SEA of the Longford LAP.

Environmental Protection Agency

4.5 The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) highlighted the suite of SEA guidance documents available. These documents were referred to throughout the SEA process and during preparation of the SEA reports.

4.6 The EPA also recommended using the State of the Environment Report – Ireland's Environment 2020 [See reference 5] and the Environmental Sensitivity Mapping Tool [See reference 6] during the SEA. These were principal sources of information used throughout the SEA to determine the baseline and key environmental issues for each SEA topic.

4.7 The EPA state that the plan should ensure that it aligns with national commitments on climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as relevant sectoral, regional and local adaptation plans. The EPO framework contains EPOs which address climate change mitigation and adaptation which were used to assess the Local Area Plan. Relevant sectoral, regional and local adaptation plans were included in the policy review, which were be used to inform the SEA process.

4.8 The EPA advised consultation with:

- Environmental Protection Agency;
- Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
- Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications, and

- Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.
- any adjoining planning authority whose area is contiguous to the area of a planning authority which prepared a draft plan, proposed variation or local area plan.

4.9 In accordance with the SEA Regulations, the report was issued to the outlined statutory consultees as well as any adjoining planning authority whose area is contiguous to the area of the planning authority which is preparing the plan should also be notified of the SEA.

Consultation on the Draft Environmental Report

4.10 Public consultation was carried out on the Draft Longford Town Local Area Plan and the accompanying Draft Environmental Report and Non-Technical Summary for a six-week period in between 6th September 2024 to 18th October 2024. The Draft Environmental Report and associated Non-Technical Summary were published on Longford County Council's website for consultation during this period.

4.11 In total, 34 submissions regarding the Draft Longford Town LAP were received. Of these, five submissions included comments relating to the Draft Environmental Report.

Submission LLAP1 (Environmental Protection Agency)

4.12 The EPA requested certain requirements for the assessment of alternatives, assessment of environmental effects, mitigation measures, monitoring to be included in the SEA and future amendments to the Plan. The

EPA also recommended using the State of the Environment Report – Ireland’s Environment 2020 and provides guidance on preparing SEA Statements.

4.13 The Draft SEA of the Longford Town LAP includes the content outlined by the EPA. The Environmental Report continued to follow the guidance in the following iterations of the SEA (final Environmental Report). This Environmental Reports considers and includes reference to the State of the Environment Report 2024.

Submission LLAP6 (Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly)

4.14 Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly consider that the SEA Environmental Report would benefit from having a clear conclusion statement on the outcome of the overall SEA process as part of this report which does not appear to be provided. The SEA Environmental Report and its accompanying Non-Technical Summary provide a summary as to how the SEA process has influenced the development of the LAP. This SEA Statement, to accompany the finalised SEA Environmental Report reports on how the findings of the SEA and the results of the associated consultation have been integrated into the LAP.

Submission LLAP19 (Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications)

4.15 A list of Geological Survey Ireland’s (GSI) publicly available datasets relevant to planning and SEA processes, was provided alongside the response submission. Relevant data from the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications had been used to inform the Longford Town LAP and has informed the final Environmental Report and SFRA.

Submission LLAP23 (Office of Public Works)

4.16 Office of Public Works state that Part 3 of the Plan Making Justification Test as set out in the Guidelines is that “A flood risk assessment to an appropriate level of detail has been carried out as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment as part of the development plan preparation process, which demonstrates that flood risk to the development can be adequately managed, and the use or development of the lands will not cause unacceptable adverse impacts elsewhere”.

4.17 Any updates or alterations to the policy objectives within the final LAP were screened to determine their likely significant effects. Where likely significant effects are identified, these were assessed accordingly in this SEA Environmental Report.

Submission LLAP26 (The Heritage Council)

4.18 The Heritage Council state that there was a need to ensure that all future policies drafted are individually assessed against the SEA objectives. The Heritage Council recommended that the SEA/AA guidance prepared by the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) be consulted when preparing the SEA/AA for the LAP.

4.19 The Appropriate Assessment and Natura Impact Report to accompany the Longford Town Local Area Plan was prepared with regard to the Guidance on Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (2021) produced by the Office of the Planning Regulator.

4.20 Chapter 5 of the SEA of the Longford Town LAP presents a summary of the SEA findings for the appraisal of the LAP’s Vision, 12 strategic aims and associated objectives. Any updates or alterations to the objectives within the final LAP were screened to determine their likely significant effects. Where likely significant effects are identified, these assessments were updated in this final

SEA Environmental Report in accordance with the updated Longford Town LAP. Any new objectives were assessed in this final SEA Environmental Report.

Consultation submissions / observations received in response to the SEA Addendum of the Proposed Material Alterations

4.21 Public consultation was carried out on the Addendum Environmental Report and Proposed Material Alterations to the LAP for a four-week period from 5th February to 5th March 2025.

4.22 Nine consultation responses were received by Longford County Council on the Material Alterations to the Draft Longford Town LAP. There was no specific reference to the SEA process in the responses. However, any updates to the wording and policies of the LAP in light of these recommendations were assessed in the next iteration of the SEA. All website links in the SEA were updated to the most recent versions.

Chapter 5

The reasons for choosing the Longford Town Local Area Plan as adopted, in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with

5.1 One of the critical roles of the SEA is to facilitate an evaluation of the likely environmental consequences of reasonable alternatives to the proposals in the Longford Town LAP. The reason for assessing alternatives is to determine if the significant adverse effects of the Longford Town LAP can be reduced or avoided. Therefore, the SEA must appraise not only the proposed strategies for transport and travel for inclusion in the plan but also ‘reasonable alternatives’ to these. This implies that alternatives that are not reasonable do not need to be subject to appraisal.

5.2 In order to be considered reasonable, the alternatives appraised by the SEA were required to meet the following criteria:

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

5.3 One of the reasonable alternatives considered was the ‘do-nothing’ scenario i.e. continued use of the existing Longford Town LAP 2016-2022. However, this was discounted as a reasonable alternative as the Longford County Development Plan (CDP) 2021-2027 [**See reference 7**] (see **Chapter 3** of the Environmental Report) requires the preparation of a Local Area Plan for the

town within two years from the adoption of the Longford CDP. A scenario which promotes the even development of zoned land was also considered. However, this was discounted as a reasonable alternative as it is not feasible to develop Tier 2 sites (not currently serviced with infrastructure) as quickly as Tier 1 sites (serviced land).

5.4 Therefore, the following reasonable alternatives considered in the Environmental Report are:

- **Alternative 1: Town Centre First Approach** – Develop Longford Town in line with the Draft Town Centre First Approach Strategy and the key priorities for growth of a ‘Key Town’ in the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (i.e. more consolidated and compact growth).
- **Alternative 2 - Dispersed growth** (less consolidated and compact).

5.5 A mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is identified for Reasonable Alternative 1 for **EPO 10: Material Assets** as a town centre first approach would regenerate brownfield land; reuse existing buildings; and be more efficient in terms of infrastructure provision and resource use. However, this may also result in more pressure on services and facilities, including infrastructure such as public transport, sewers and water supply. There will also be a need to develop some greenfield sites closest to the town which would be an inefficient use of resources.

5.6 A mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is identified for Reasonable Alternative 1 for **EPO 2: Population and human health** as it would promote higher density development in the town which would result in people living closer to services and facilities and boost the vitality of the area. Higher density living also promotes more active travel and greater levels of social inclusion as well as providing natural surveillance, which all enhance health, wellbeing and safety of Longford’s residents. In addition, the town centre first approach supports the development of a socially connected town with inclusive spaces and places which are accessible, age friendly, safe and welcoming, as well as the development of walkways and river access. However, more development in urban areas may increase pressure on existing services

and also result in reduced living conditions due to the density and less outdoor space.

5.7 Reasonable Alternative 1 would focus development in more urban areas, meaning greater reuse of buildings and less development of greenfield land. Although brownfield land has some biodiversity value, encouraging development on these sites over greenfield sites which often contain more habitats will have a positive effect on biodiversity. However denser development could also result in fewer green spaces in urban areas for biodiversity. As identified above, there will still be a need to develop sequential greenfield land. As such, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna**.

5.8 Reasonable Alternative 1 would reduce the need to travel by private vehicle to access services and facilities and would increase access to sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling. Positive effects are identified for **EPO 3: Energy / Climate Change Mitigation** and **5: Air** as this would result in decreased transport-related emissions and subsequently improve air quality. However, negative effects are also expected as the scale of development proposed in the town centre could attract more people to the area resulting in increased traffic and congestion, resulting in worsening of air quality. Residents and employees of the edge of settlement sites may also be more car dependent due to the distance from the town centre.

5.9 Mixed effects (significant positive / minor negative) are expected for **EPO 8: Cultural Heritage** and **EPO 9: Landscape** as the reuse of existing buildings and/or brownfield land will tackle physical dereliction which will enhance townscape character, visual amenity and the setting of heritage assets. However existing urban areas tend to contain the highest concentrations of heritage assets and these assets could be adversely affected by concentrated new development. The Town Centre First Strategy promotes Longford as a town of cultural and heritage significance which may increase the appreciation of and accessibility to heritage assets, however, if access is not properly managed, this could have an adverse effect on heritage assets. Development of some areas of greenfield land at the edge of the settlement may adversely affect landscape character and visual amenity.

5.10 Positive effects are identified for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation, 6: Soil** and **7: Water** as Reasonable Alternative 1 promotes the reuse of existing buildings and brownfield land which would prevent soil sealing of greenfield land. This would aid in minimising and mitigating runoff from new developments and would reduce flood risk. Directing new development to the town centre will enable connections to the public water and waste water infrastructure, avoiding the need for individual septic tanks to be installed which can increase the risk of pollution. In addition, the Town Centre First Strategy promotes prioritising climate change adaptation. An adverse effect is also identified as there would still be some greenfield development at the settlement edge.

5.11 Reasonable Alternative 2 supports dispersed growth in Longford. This approach supports development which is less consolidated and compact.

5.12 A significant negative effect is identified for Reasonable Alternative 2 for **EPO 10: Material Assets** as dispersed growth will likely result in the development of significant areas of greenfield land. This could sterilise mineral resources as well as resulting in the inefficient use of land by focusing development on undeveloped areas. Dispersed development will not optimise the use of existing infrastructure and will likely require the development of new infrastructure. A minor positive effect is identified as it is likely that some new development would occur in the town centre on brownfield land which is a more efficient use of resources.

5.13 Reasonable Alternative 2 would have significant negative effects for **EPOs 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna, 4: Flood risk / climate change adaptation, 6: Soil**, and **7: Water** as it would likely result in the development and loss of significant areas of greenfield land, which would harm the natural environment through habitat loss and subsequent fragmentation of the ecological network. The loss of greenfield land would adversely affect soil quality resulting in soil sealing which reduces the extent of permeable surfaces, increasing surface water runoff into nearby watercourses, and flood risk. Unlike compact growth of the town which has existing infrastructure, the dispersal of growth will require new developments to install individual waste water infrastructure which increases the risk of water pollution. A minor positive effect is identified as it is

likely that some new development would occur in the town centre on brownfield land.

5.14 Significant negative effects are expected for **EPOs 3: Energy / Climate Change Mitigation** and **5: Air** as access to services and facilities would be more difficult, especially via active travel and public transport due to distance and a relative lack of provision of public transport outside the town centre. This would likely result in a higher dependence on and use of cars and less active travel, resulting in an increase in transport emissions. A minor positive effect is identified as it is likely that some new development would occur in the town centre which would avail of the sustainable and active transport infrastructure.

5.15 A mixed (minor positive and significant negative) effect is identified for **EPO 2: Population and human health** as development would be more dispersed and take place away from urban centres where there are already employment and education facilities. This would have negative impacts on social inclusion and access to these facilities would therefore be more difficult, especially via active travel and public transport due to distance and a relative lack of provision of public transport outside of the town centre. This would reduce active travel and increase vehicle-derived air pollution which will impact the physical and mental health of Longford's population. However, Reasonable Alternative 2 may decrease pressure on more urban services and facilities, though new ones would be required to be built elsewhere. More dispersed development may also result in better living conditions; access to more space, including open space for recreation; and be less polluted than urban centres. Although it is noted that access to community, health and sports facilities, including GPs is relatively limited.

5.16 Mixed effects (significant negative / minor positive) are identified for **EPOs 8: Cultural heritage** and **9: Landscape** as dispersed development could adversely impact landscape character, visual amenity, and tranquillity and lead to settlement coalescence. Development of greenfield land could disturb buried archaeology and impact the setting of heritage assets. Minor positive effects are expected as it is likely that some new development would take place in the town centre which would reduce the extent of brownfield land and vacant / derelict properties which would enhance townscape character.

5.17 The results of the appraisal findings for the alternative and preferred access strategies for Abbeycartron are illustrated in **Table 5.1** overleaf.

Table 5.1: Summary of the likely sustainability effects of the reasonable alternatives of the Longford Town LAP

Environmental Protection Objective	Reasonable Alternative 1 – Town Centre First Approach	Reasonable Alternative 2 – Dispersed Growth
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	++/-	--

5.18 Longford County Council took into account the SEA findings when deciding on the preferred approach for the Longford Town LAP. The preferred approach was chosen in preference to the reasonable alternative as it would result in fewer adverse 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 LAP. Factors such as public opinion, deliverability and conformity with national legislation will also be taken into account when selecting the preferred approach for the Longford Town LAP. Taking all of these factors into consideration, Longford County Council rejected the reasonable alternative appraised during the SEA process as a preferred approach.

Chapter 6

The measures decided concerning monitoring

6.1 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 LAP 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 LAP. Reference has been made to the EPA's Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment Statements and Monitoring [[See reference 8](#)] in devising the monitoring programme.

6.2 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 and used in the evaluation. Given the position of the LAP 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 LAP are derived and modified, where necessary, from the Environmental Report of the Longford County Development Plan [[See reference 9](#)]. Monitoring indicators and targets are also derived from Chapter 16 of the Longford Town LAP which sets out the phased approach to residential and employment zoned lands.

6.3 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.

6.4 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).

6.5 It should be noted that the indicators and targets that comprise the Monitoring Programme represent wide-ranging environmental parameters derived from existing plans and programmes and are not the sole responsibility of Longford County Council. The indicators and the achievement of associated targets will be influenced by a range of factors including the activities of other sectors and Longford County Council will take a broad view of the findings of ongoing monitoring processes to identify whether the LAP has any significant unforeseen effects. Where these are identified, Longford County Council will put in place specific monitoring arrangements and will consider how best to mitigate or avoid the adverse consequences.

6.6 The Monitoring Programme for the Longford Town LAP is presented in **Appendix C**.

Appendix A

Key environmental issues and opportunities relevant to the Longford Town LAP

Biodiversity

- Longford contains many areas of high ecological value including the Royal Canal pNHA in Longford Town. Fragmentation and erosion of habitats and the ecological network in the town is an ongoing threat to biodiversity.
- There is potential for additional pressure on biodiversity sites (which may already be under pressure from recreational access and disturbance, pollution, and climate change) from improved accessibility as a result of the Longford Town LAP.
- There are potential opportunities for the Longford Town LAP to manage the sensitivities of the sites and biodiversity networks. This could include locating development away from the most sensitive locations, provide for new green infrastructure, and ensuring that growth does not adversely affect their current condition but where possible contributes to their improvement.

Population and human health

- Population growth will place additional demand on local services and facilities including a variety of housing, education, healthcare and childcare services. The LAP offers an opportunity to deliver services and facilities in a coherent, sustainable manner alongside development. The LAP also offers the opportunity to target residential development in areas where the barriers to accessing housing are greatest.

- Commuting and HGV traffic travelling through the town contribute towards traffic congestion and lower air quality. There is potential for the Longford Town LAP to reduce air and/or noise pollution and encourage active lifestyles by creating a safe and accessible active travel network and providing sufficient quality open spaces/recreational resources.
- The centre, southern and eastern areas of the town include higher levels of relative deprivation and unemployment, along with lower levels of educational attainment. The Longford Town LAP provides an opportunity to help close the gap through spatial planning, particularly with a view to encouraging new development that will provide jobs, raise income levels, support education/skills/training, reduce crime, and remove barriers to housing and services.

Climatic factors

- There is a need to significantly reduce Longford's greenhouse gas emissions to help meet international and national greenhouse gas reduction targets.
- There is potential for the Longford Town LAP to adapt and mitigate climatic factors by:
 - promoting sustainable development, for example by locating development 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 Drainage Systems (SuDS) as part of new developments;
 - identifying suitable locations for new public EV charging infrastructure; promoting low carbon design and energy efficiency of new developments; and promoting the use of renewable or low carbon energy sources in new developments.

Air

6.7 Longford Town is a smokeless fuel town and decarbonisation area. The Longford Town LAP provides an opportunity to improve air quality in the town by:

- locating development sustainably i.e. with good access to services and sustainable transport modes which will reduce the need to travel by private vehicles;
- developing an accessible and inclusive transport network in the town that supports a modal shift from private car use to public transport and active travel;
- supporting the uptake of electric vehicles and e-bikes in preference to private vehicles through the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure; and
- developing and enhancing green infrastructure, particularly along major roads.

Soil

- There are several vacant sites in Longford Town, 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.
- Several notable construction projects are either planned, programmed or underway in Longford, which will require significant amounts of mineral resources in the future. Projects include the N4/M4 Mullingar to Longford (Roosky) Upgrade which will pass Longford Town and the Royal Canal Way.
- The LAP provides an opportunity to ensure that development is located and designed to take into account the sensitivities of the soil environment and geological sites of value. Furthermore, the Longford Town LAP has the opportunity to support the regeneration of Longford Town's infill/brownfield land through regeneration of particular sites.

Water

- The River Camlin is failing to meet the Water Framework Objective of 'good' ecological and chemical status.
- The water environment has the potential to be both directly and indirectly affected by the Longford Town LAP, with 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.
- The LAP provides an opportunity to ensure that development is located and designed to take into account the sensitivity of the water environment; to plan for adequate wastewater infrastructure; to incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS); and to promote water efficiency and grey water recycling.

Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

- There are many heritage assets and areas of historical and cultural interest in Longford Town.
- 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.
- The Longford Town LAP provides opportunities to protect these assets (including their settings) from inappropriate development at a local level. It is likely that the maintenance and management of existing buildings and infrastructure, and the delivery of any new development, 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.

- The Longford Town LAP also supports heritage-led urban regeneration of the historic town including at Connolly Barracks and the Camlin Quarter area of the town. The regeneration of the town will protect and enhance heritage assets and their settings, as well as improve accessibility and interpretation of distinctive features of local heritage.

Landscape

- Major new development projects, including those relating to regeneration and public realm enhancements, transport infrastructure, and renewable and non-renewable energy development have the potential to influence both positive and negative landscape / townscape change.
- The Longford Town LAP offers an opportunity to ensure that the variation in landscape character is taken into account in the design and siting of new development, and that opportunities for the protection and enhancement of the landscape are maximised.
- The LAP provides an opportunity to ensure that local level landscape sensitivities are protected from inappropriate development and Longford Town's landscape and townscapes are enhanced.

Material assets

- 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.
- The Longford Town LAP 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.
- New development and population growth will generate additional waste which should be managed according to the waste hierarchy. The LAP provides the opportunity to guide the sustainable use of resources and minimise waste impacts by:
 - Promoting the use of locally sourced, reclaimed, recycled or low environmental impact materials in construction; and,
 - Encouraging the re-use/enhancement (to high standards of sustainable resource-efficient design) of existing buildings and infrastructure.
- The LAP provides opportunities to ensure adequate drinking water provision and wastewater treatment services by:
 - Seeking to ensure the adequate supply and quality of water, recognising future demands from population growth;
 - Extending wastewater services where resources permit, utilising developer contributions;
 - Separating any remaining combined sewers within the town;
 - Restricting large-scale development on unserved land; and,
 - Requiring new development to incorporate surface water drainage facilities, including SuDS.

Appendix B

Environmental Protection Objective Framework

EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna

- Conserve and enhance Longford's biodiversity including designated sites, habitats and protected species.
 - Does the LAP conserve and enhance designated and undesignated ecological assets, including promoting habitat connectivity; avoiding fragmentation; and adverse impacts on habitats and species from development-related changes to air quality, water quality and quantity, noise levels and light levels?
 - Does the LAP 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, enable people to stay independent, reduce inequalities, provide a suitable mix of new and affordable housing to meet identified needs of the whole community, and ensure adequate access to services and facilities for all.
 - Does the LAP provide the amount and mix (size, tenures) of homes to meet local needs over the plan period?
 - Will the LAP increase the range and affordability of housing to support the growing population and for all social groups?

- Will the LAP address the housing needs of older people, disabled people and vulnerable groups e.g., accessible and adaptable housing, extra care housing or sheltered housing?
- Does the LAP reduce the quantity of vacant homes in the town?
- Does the LAP reduce the need to travel by private car to access essential services, facilities and employment areas?
- Does the LAP promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging and facilitating active travel, such as walking and cycling?
- Does the LAP promote physical activity and outdoor recreation by maintaining, connecting and creating a range of accessible, new, high quality, multifunctional open spaces, green and blue infrastructure, recreation, play and sports facilities?
- Does the LAP protect physical and mental health and wellbeing by preventing, avoiding and mitigating adverse health effects associated with air pollution, noise, vibration, odour, and contamination of land and water?
- Does the LAP promote economic growth to encourage sustainable development and the retention of the working age population?
- Does the LAP ensure that planned population growth is matched with the required public infrastructure and services?

EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation

- Minimise greenhouse gas emissions and encourage energy efficiency and the transition to renewable / low carbon energy sources in new developments.
- Does the LAP minimise energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions from transport, domestic, commercial and industrial sources?

- Does the LAP promote energy efficiency by encouraging the use of energy efficient buildings and the use of renewable or low carbon energy sources in development?
- Does the LAP encourage the provision of renewable energy infrastructure in appropriate locations?
- Does the LAP encourage the use of sustainable construction methods and materials in development, with a focus on reducing the embodied carbon in new buildings and infrastructure?

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

- Reduce the risk and effects of flooding, both now and in the future.
 - Does the LAP seek to build resilience and adapt to the impacts of climate change such as flood, drought, overheating and extreme weather events particularly on groups more vulnerable to the effects of climate change?
 - Does the LAP direct development away from areas at highest risk of flooding and avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, taking into account the effects of climate change and mitigate residual risks without increasing flood risk elsewhere?
 - Does the LAP promote the use of SuDS, where appropriate?
 - Does the LAP encourage the creation, management and enhancement of a coherent green and blue infrastructure (GBI) network?
 - Does the LAP identify, allocate and safeguard open space for flood storage, where appropriate?
 - Does the LAP seek to manage current and future flood risks to the historic environment?

EPO 5: Air

- Improve air quality by reducing emissions and concentrations of harmful atmospheric pollutants and avoiding their emission.
 - Does the LAP improve air quality by minimising pollutant emissions from all sources?
 - Does the LAP reduce the need to travel by petrol or diesel vehicles?
 - Does the LAP encourage a modal shift to sustainable modes of transport by supporting maintenance and expansion of public and active transport networks?
 - Does the LAP support the provision of facilities for electric vehicle charging?

EPO 6: Soil

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

EPO 7: Water

- Preserve and enhance the quality and quantity of waterbodies and groundwater.

- Does the LAP maintain or improve the quality of waterbodies and groundwater by avoiding adverse impacts from pollution / changes to drainage?
- Does the LAP minimise and mitigate runoff from new development and infrastructure?
- Does the LAP minimise inappropriate development in groundwater Source Protection Areas?
- Does the LAP promote the efficient use of water, such as minimising water consumption and abstraction and by encouraging re-use of grey and rainwater?

EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

- Conserve and enhance the significant qualities, fabric, setting and accessibility of Longford's historic environment.
 - Does the LAP 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 LAP support heritage-led regeneration of Longford Town?
 - Does the LAP improve access to, as well as enjoyment and understanding of, the local historic environment?

EPO 9: Landscape

- Conserve and enhance Longford's landscape and townscape, ensuring development does not detract from the quality of views and local distinctiveness.

- Does the LAP adversely impact, protect or enhance the townscape and visual amenity of Longford Town?
- Does the LAP reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land?
- Is the scale/density of development in keeping with important and valued features of the local landscape?
- Does the LAP encourage high-quality design principles to respect local character and visual amenity?
- Does the LAP encourage the retention and planting of green infrastructure alongside development to protect landscape character and create a sense of place?
- Does the LAP improve access to valued landscapes, townscapes and viewpoints, including by sustainable and active travel modes to reduce the impact of road traffic?

EPO 10: Material assets

- Use resources intelligently, optimising reuse and recovery to keep waste to a minimum, minimising impacts on existing infrastructure and the transport network.
 - Does the LAP optimise existing infrastructure and provide new infrastructure sufficient to meet demand?
 - Does the LAP maximise energy efficiency and minimise the consumption of non-renewable energy?
 - Does the LAP encourage the re-use/enhancement of existing buildings and promote the use of recycled and secondary materials in construction?
 - Does the LAP support the efficient use of natural resources, minimising waste and promoting appropriate waste management?

Appendix C

Monitoring Programme

EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna

Table 6.1: Monitoring for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Condition of European sites identified in the Natura Impact Report.	No deterioration in the condition of European sites identified in the NIS as a result of implementation of the objectives and development of the Strategic Sites within the LAP.	Where condition of a European site is found to be deteriorating this will be investigated with the Regional Assembly and the DHLGH to establish if the pressures are related to the LAP actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance.	DHLGH report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive (every 6 years). DHLGH National Birds Directive Monitoring Report for the under Article 12 (every 3 years).	DHLGH NPWS

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Area of green and blue infrastructure in urban areas (square metres) of Longford Town.	Increase in the overall provision of GBI within the built-up footprint of Longford Town.	Where there is a decrease in the extent of GBI in the built-up footprint of Longford Town, this will be investigated by the local authority to establish if this is related to the implementation of the LAP. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with any relevant stakeholders in such a circumstance.	CORINE Project updated every six years, including information about changes over the past six years.	European Commission CORINE Land Cover dataset Copernicus Land Monitoring Services
EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Status of water bodies as reported by the EPA Water Monitoring Programme for the WFD.	No deterioration in the status of any surface water body and not to affect the ability of any surface water achieving 'good status'.	Where water bodies are failing to meet at least good status this will be investigated with the DHLGH Water Section, the EPA Catchment Unit, the Regional Assembly and, as relevant, Uisce Éireann to establish if the pressures are related to LAP actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance.	EPA Monitoring Programme for WFD compliance.	EPA

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Compliance of planning permissions with LAP measures providing for the protection of Biodiversity and flora and fauna – see Chapter 11 “Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure”.	For planning permission to be granted when applications demonstrate that they comply with all LAP measures providing for the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna – see Chapter 11 “Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure”.	Where planning applications are granted which do not comply with LAP measure on the protection of biodiversity, the Council will ensure that appropriate mitigation and management measures are in place.	Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission.	Longford County Council.

EPO 2: Population and human health

Table 6.2: Monitoring for EPO 2: Population and human health

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 2: Population and human health	Implementation of LAP measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by Chapter 7 “Economic Development”.	For review of progress on implementing LAP objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by Chapter 7 “Economic Development”.	Where planning applications are being approved which do not comply with LAP measure on economic development, the Council will ensure that appropriate mitigation and management measures are in place.	Internal review of progress on implementing LAP objectives.	Longford County Council
EPO 2: Population and human health	Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors resulting from development permitted under the LAP.	No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the LAP.	Where there is an increase in health problems, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DECC, NTA and Health Service Executive to develop a tailored response.	Consultations with the Health Service Executive and EPA	Health Service Executive Longford County Council

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 2: Population and human health	Proportion of people in Longford Town reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures.	Increase in the proportion of people in Longford Town reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures.	Where the proportion of the population shows an increase in private car use above CSO 2016 figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response.	Census data (every five years or as Census data is released).	CSO
EPO 2: Population and human health	Area of green and blue infrastructure in urban areas (square metres) of Longford Town.	Increase in the overall provision of GBI within the built-up footprint of Longford Town.	Where there is a decrease in the extent of GBI in the built-up footprint of Longford Town, this will be investigated by the local authority to establish if this is related to the implementation of the LAP. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with any relevant stakeholders in such a circumstance.	CORINE Project updated every six years, including information about changes over the past six years.	European Commission CORINE Land Cover dataset Copernicus Land Monitoring Services

EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation

Table 6.3: Monitoring for EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation	Implementation of LAP measures relating to climate reduction targets as provided for by LAP provisions including those provided for and referenced in Chapter 15 “Climate Change”.	For review of progress on implementing LAP objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures climate reduction targets as provided for by LAP provisions including those provided for and referenced in Chapter 15 “Climate Change”.	Where planning applications are being granted which do not comply with LAP measures on climate change, the Council will ensure that appropriate mitigation and management measures are in place.	Internal review of progress on implementing LAP objectives.	Longford County Council
EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation	Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 levels.	Decrease in the proportion of journeys made by residents of the Longford Town using private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 levels.	Where targets are not achieved, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions.	EPA Annual National Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory reporting	CSO data Climate Action Regional Office EPA

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
		Contribute towards the target of aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions of at least 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050 across the electricity generation, built environment and transport sectors.		Census data (every five years or as Census data is released).	
EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation	Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures.	<p>Increase in the proportion of people resident in the Longford Town reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures.</p> <p>Contribute towards the target of the Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC), for all Member States to reach a 10% share of renewable energy in transport by 2020.</p>	Where targets are not achieved, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions.	Census data (every five years or as Census data is released).	CSO Climate Action Regional Office

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation	Number of new developments granted permission which include renewable or low carbon energy	Increased uptake of renewable energy options and a move away from fossil fuels.	Where fewer renewable energy planning applications are being submitted and approved which reduces Longford Town's contribution to renewable energy targets, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions for the greater uptake of such technologies.	Internal monitoring of grants of permission.	Longford County Council

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

Table 6.4: Monitoring for EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation	Number of incompatible developments permitted within flood risk areas.	Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk.	Where planning applications are being permitted on flood zones, the Council will ensure that such grants are in compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and include appropriate flood risk mitigation and management measures	Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant)	Longford Town Council
EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation	Area of green and blue infrastructure in urban areas (square metres) of Longford Town.	Increase in the overall provision of GBI within the built-up footprint of Longford Town.	Where there is a decrease in the extent of GBI in the built-up footprint of Longford Town, this will be investigated by the local authority to establish if this is related to the implementation of the LAP. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with any relevant stakeholders in such a circumstance.	CORINE Project updated every six years, including information about changes over the past six years.	European Commission CORINE Land Cover dataset Copernicus Land Monitoring Services

EPO 5: Air

Table 6.5: Monitoring for EPO 5: Air

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 5: Air	Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 Census for Longford Town.	Decrease in proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 Census for Longford Town.	Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above CSO 2016 figures, Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response.	Census data (every five years or as Census data is released). Data from the National Travel Survey. Consultations with Department of Transport and DECC	CSO National Travel
EPO 5: Air	NO _x , SO _x , PM ₁₀ and PM _{2.5} as part of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring.	Improvement in Air Quality trends, particularly for transport related emissions of NO _x and particulate matter.	Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above CSO 2016 figures, Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response.	EPA Air Quality Monitoring.	EPA

EPO 6: Soil

Table 6.6: Monitoring for EPO 6: Soil

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 6: Soil	Proportion of population growth occurring on infill and brownfield lands compared to greenfield.	Maintain built surface cover to below the EU average of 4% as per the NPF. Achieve the 40% target for growth on infill as per NPF.	Where the proportion of growth on infill and brownfield sites is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the RSES, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly to establish reasons and coordinate actions to address constraints to doing so.	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Geoportal. Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission.	EPA
EPO 6: Soil	Number of AA determinations and environmental assessments undertaken to support applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission	Increased number of AA determinations and environmental assessments which support brownfield and infill development.	Where there is an increase in the number of AA determinations for development of greenfield land, the Council will work with the Regional Assembly, the EPA and other stakeholders to address the pressures through additional mitigation.	Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission.	Longford County Council

EPO 7: Water

Table 6.7: Monitoring for EPO 7: Water

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 7: Water	Status of water bodies in Longford Town as reported by the EPA Water Monitoring Programme for the WFD.	No deterioration in the status of any surface water. Not to affect the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status'. Not to cause any additional waterbodies to fail to achieve at least 'good status'.	Where water bodies are failing to meet at least good status this will be investigated with the DHLGH Water Section, the EPA Catchment Unit, the Regional Assembly and, as relevant, Uisce Éireann to establish if the pressures are related to LAP actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance.	EPA Monitoring Programme for WFD compliance.	EPA

EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

Table 6.8: Monitoring for EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage	Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and their setting, which are protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the LAP.	Protect entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and their setting, from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the LAP.	Where monitoring reveals visitor pressure is causing negative effects on key cultural tourist features, the Council will work with Regional Assembly, Fáilte Ireland and other stakeholders to address the pressures through additional mitigation.	Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant).	Longford County Council
EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage	Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their setting, which are protected from significant adverse effects arising from	Protect entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their setting from significant adverse effects arising from new	Where monitoring reveals visitor pressure is causing negative effects on key cultural tourist features, the Council will work with Regional Assembly, Fáilte Ireland and other stakeholders	Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant).	Longford County Council

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
	new development granted permission under the LAP.	development granted permission under the LAP.	to address the pressures through additional mitigation.		
EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage	Proportion of vacant and derelict buildings/ properties within Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)	Reduction in number of vacant and derelict properties within ACAs.	Where the proportion of refurbishment of vacant and/or derelict properties for housing is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the Housing for All Plan, or there has not been a high uptake of vacant property grants, the local authority will liaise with the Regional Assembly to develop a tailored response.	Census data (every five years or as Census data is released).	CSO

EPO 9: Landscape

Table 6.9: Monitoring for EPO 9: Landscape

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 9: Landscape	Number of developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape resulting from development which is granted permission under the LAP.	No developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape resulting from development which is granted permission under the LAP.	Where monitoring reveals developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, the Council will re-examine LAP provisions and the effectiveness of their implementation.	Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission.	Longford County Council
EPO 9: Landscape	Number of vacant properties being retrofitted.	Increase in the number of properties retrofitted for housing since Census 2022.	Where the proportion of refurbishment of vacant and/or derelict properties for housing is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the Housing for All Plan, or there has not been a high uptake of vacant property grants, the local authority will liaise with the Regional Assembly to develop a tailored response.	Census data (every five years or as Census data is released).	CSO

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 9: Landscape	Number of Vacant Property Refurbishment Grants awarded.	Increase in the number of Vacant Property Refurbishment Grants awarded since 2023.	Where the proportion of refurbishment of vacant and/or derelict properties for housing is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the Housing for All Plan, or there has not been a high uptake of vacant property grants, the local authority will liaise with the Regional Assembly to develop a tailored response.	Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant: Croí Cónaithe Towns Fund.	DHLGH

EPO 10: Material assets

Table 6.10: Monitoring for EPO 10: Material assets

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 10: Material assets	Programmed delivery of Uisce Éireann infrastructure for Longford Town in line with Uisce Éireann's Investment Plan to ensure sustainable growth can be accommodated.	All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the LAP.	Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in waste water treatment plants, the Council will consider whether it is necessary to coordinate a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Uisce Éireann to achieve the necessary capacity.	Consultations with Uisce Éireann.	Uisce Éireann.
EPO 10: Material assets	Number of new developments granted permission which can be adequately and appropriately served with waste water treatment over the lifetime of the LAP.	All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the LAP.	Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in waste water treatment plants, the Council will consider whether it is necessary to coordinate a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Uisce Éireann to achieve the necessary capacity.	Consultations with Uisce Éireann.	Uisce Éireann.

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 10: Material assets	Proportion of population who report regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures.	Increase in the proportion of people resident in the County reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures.	Where targets are not achieved, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions.	CSO data Climate Action Regional Office	CSO CARO
EPO 10: Material assets	Proportion of population growth occurring on infill and brownfield lands compared to greenfield.	Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4% as per the NPF. Achieve the 40% target for growth on infill as per NPF.	Where the proportion of growth on infill and brownfield sites is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the RSES, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly to establish reasons and coordinate actions to address constraints to doing so.	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Geoportal Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission.	EPA Longford County Council

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 10: Material assets	Number of properties retrofitted for housing	Increase in the number of properties retrofitted for housing since Census 2022.	Where the proportion of refurbishment of vacant and/or derelict properties for housing is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the Housing for All Plan, or there has not been a high uptake of vacant property grants, the local authority will liaise with the Regional Assembly to develop a tailored response.	Sustainability Energy Authority of Ireland grant schemes (annual reporting) Census data (every five years or as Census data is released). Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant: Croí Cónaithe Towns Fund.	Sustainability Energy Authority of Ireland Central Statistics Office DHLGH
EPO 10: Material assets	Proportion of vacant and derelict buildings/ properties within Longford Town.	Reduction in number of vacant and derelict properties within Longford Town.	Where the proportion of refurbishment of vacant and/or derelict properties for housing is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the Housing for All Plan, or there has not been a high uptake of vacant property	Sustainability Energy Authority of Ireland grant schemes (annual reporting)	Sustainability Energy Authority of Ireland Central Statistics Office

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
			grants, the local authority will liaise with the Regional Assembly to develop a tailored response.	Census data (every five years or as Census data is released). Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant: Croí Cónaithe Towns Fund.	DHLGH
EPO 10: Material assets	Number of Vacant Property Refurbishment Grants awarded.	Increase in the number of Vacant Property Refurbishment Grants awarded.	Where the proportion of refurbishment of vacant and/or derelict properties for housing is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the Housing for All Plan, or there has not been a high uptake of vacant property grants, the local authority will liaise with the Regional Assembly to develop a tailored response.	Sustainability Energy Authority of Ireland grant schemes (annual reporting) Census data (every five years or as Census data is released). Vacant Property	Sustainability Energy Authority of Ireland Central Statistics Office DHLGH

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
				Refurbishment Grant: Croí Cónaithe Towns Fund.	

Appendix D

Compliance with SEA Regulations

D.1 This appendix details the SEA Regulations' requirements of the post adoption procedures and indicates where relevant information required can be found in this report.

Information on decision (SEA Regulation 16)

Article 1

1. *“As soon as practicable after the adoption of a plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, the competent authority shall -*

(a) send notice of adoption of, and a copy of, the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, and a copy of the statement referred to in sub-article (2)(b) to the environmental authorities specified in article 9(5), as appropriate, and

(b) publish notice of the adoption of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, in at least one newspaper with a sufficiently large circulation in the area covered by the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme”.

- Longford County Council, as the competent authority, will send notice of the publication of the Longford Town LAP, the Longford Town LAP itself and this SEA Statement to the Environmental Authorities.
- Longford County Council will publish notice of the publication of the Longford Town LAP.

Article 2

2. “A notice under sub-article (1)(b) shall state that -

(a) *a copy of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, is available for inspection at a stated place or places and at stated times and a copy shall be kept available for inspection accordingly.*

■ A copy of the Longford Town LAP and the various SEA and AA reports are available online at: <https://www.longfordcoco.ie/services/planning/longford-town-local-area-plan-2025-2031/>

■ A hardcopy version of the Longford Town LAP is also available to view at Longford County Council, the Planning Office, Áras an Chontae, Great Water Street, Longford Town, N39NH56 during its opening hours of 10:00 – 13:00 and 14:00 – 16:00, Mon – Fri (excl. public holidays).

(b) *a statement is also available for inspection which summarises -*

(i) *how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme.*

■ **Chapter 2** of this SEA Statement.

(ii) *how the environmental report prepared pursuant to article 12, submissions and observations made to the competent authority in response to a notice under article 13, and any consultations under article 14, have been taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme.*

■ **Chapters 3 and 4 and Appendices A and B** of this SEA Statement.

(iii) *the reasons for choosing the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with.*

■ **Chapter 5** of this SEA Statement.

(iv) *the measures decided upon to monitor, in accordance with article 17, the significant environmental effects of implementation of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme”.*

- **Chapter 6** and **Appendix C** of this SEA Statement.

Monitoring (SEA Regulation 17)

“The competent authority shall monitor the significant environmental effects of implementation of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme in order, inter alia, to identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action and, for this purpose, existing monitoring arrangements may be used, if appropriate, with a view to avoiding duplication of monitoring”.

- Monitoring procedures are set out in **Chapter 6** and **Appendix C**.

References

- 1 [SEA Directive 2001/42/EC](#)
- 2 [S.I. No. 435 of 2004 European Communities \(Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes\) Regulations 2004](#)
- 3 [S.I. No. 200 of 2011 European Communities \(Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- 4 Longford County Council (2021) Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 [online] Available at:
<https://www.longfordcoco.ie/services/planning/longford-county-development-plan-2021-2027/volume-1-written-statement-compressed.pdf>
- 5 EPA (2020) Ireland's Environment An Integrated Assessment 2020 [online] Available at: <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/assessment/state-of-the-environment/irelands-environment-2020---an-assessment.php>
- 6 [ESM Webtool](#)
- 7 Longford County Council (2021) Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 [online] Available at:
<https://www.longfordcoco.ie/services/planning/longford-county-development-plan-2021-2027/volume-1-written-statement-compressed.pdf>
- 8 EPA (2023) Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment Statements and Monitoring (online) Available at:
<https://www.epa.ie/publications/research/environmental-technologies/guidance-on-sea-statements-and-monitoring.php>
- 9 CAAS (2021) Environmental Report for Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 (pdf) Available at:
<https://www.longfordcoco.ie/services/planning/longford-county-development-plan-2021-2027/volume-4-environmental-and-flood-reports-compressed1.pdf>

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