

CD P 12



**Roinn Cumarsáide, Gníomhaithe
ar son na hAeráide & Comhshaoil**
Department of Communications,
Climate Action & Environment



Geological Survey
Suirbhéireacht Gheolaíochta
Ireland | Éireann

Administrative Officer
Review of the County Development Plan
Forward Planning Unit, Longford County Council
Áras An Chontae
Great Water Street
N39 NH56
County Longford

21 November 2019

Re: Review of existing Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021 and preparation of new Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027

Your Ref:
Our Ref: 19/224

A chara,

With reference to your email received on 27 September 2019, concerning the review of the existing Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021 and preparation of the new Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, Geological Survey Ireland (a division of Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment) would like to make the following comments:

Geological Survey Ireland is the national earth science agency and has datasets on Bedrock Geology, Quaternary Geology, Geological Heritage Sites, Mineral deposits, Groundwater Resources and the Irish Seabed. These comprise maps, reports and extensive databases that include mineral occurrences, bedrock/mineral exploration groundwater/site investigation boreholes, karst features, wells and springs. Please see our [website](#) for data availability and we recommend using these various data sets, when undergoing the planning and scoping processes. Geological Survey Ireland should be referenced to as such and should any data or geological maps be used, they should be attributed correctly to Geological Survey Ireland.

Geoheritage

Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) is in partnership with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs) to identify and select important geological and geomorphological sites throughout the country for designation as geological NHAs (Natural Heritage Areas). This is addressed by the Irish Geoheritage Programme (IGH) of GSI, under 16 different geological themes, in which the minimum number of scientifically significant sites that best represent the theme are rigorously selected by a panel of theme experts.

County Geological Sites (CGS), as adopted under the National Heritage Plan are now included in County Development Plans and in the GIS of planning departments, to ensure the recognition and appropriate protection of geological heritage within the planning system. CGSs can be viewed online under the Geological Heritage tab on the online [Map Viewer](#).

The audit for Co. Longford, carried out as part of the current County Development Plan 2015-2021, was completed in 2015 and full details of the report can be found [here](#). The sites listed in the County Audit should be included in the new County Development Plan 2021-2027.

Groundwater

Groundwater is important as a source of drinking water, and it supports river flows, lake levels and ecosystems. It contains natural substances dissolved from the soils and rocks that it flows through, and can also be tainted by human actions on the land surface. As a clean, but vulnerable, resource, groundwater needs to be understood, managed and protected. Through our [Groundwater Programme](#), Geological Survey Ireland provides advice and maps to members of the public, consultancies and public bodies about groundwater quality, quantity, distribution and vulnerability. Geological Survey Ireland monitors groundwater nationwide by characterising aquifers, investigating karst landscapes and landforms and by helping to protect public and group scheme water

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supplies. With regard to Flood Risk Management, there is a need to identify areas for integrated constructed wetlands. We recommend using the GSI's National Aquifer and Recharge maps on our [Map viewer](#) to this end.

Geohazards

Geohazards can cause widespread damage to landscapes, wildlife, human property and human life. In Ireland, landslides are the most prevalent of these hazards. Geological Survey Ireland has information available on past landslides, for viewing on our website and as a layer on our [Map Viewer](#). Geological Survey Ireland also engages in national projects such as Landslide Susceptibility Mapping and GWFlood Groundwater Flooding, and in international projects, such as the Tsunami Warning System, coordinated by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO. We recommend that geohazards be taken into consideration, especially when developing areas where these risks are prevalent, and we encourage the use of our data when doing so.

Geothermal Energy

Geothermal energy harnesses the heat beneath the surface of the Earth for heating applications and electricity generation, and has proven to be secure, environmentally sustainable and cost effective over long time periods. Geothermal applications can range in depth from a few metres below the surface to several kilometres. Ireland has widespread shallow geothermal resources for small and medium-scale heating applications, which can be explored online through Geological Survey Ireland's Geothermal Suitability maps for both domestic and commercial use. We recommend use of our [Geothermal Suitability maps](#) to determine the most suitable type of ground source heat collector for use with heat pump technologies. Ireland also has recognised potential for deep geothermal resources. Geological Survey Ireland currently supports and funds research into this national energy resource.

Natural Resources (Minerals/Aggregates)

Geological Survey Ireland is of the view that the sustainable development of our natural resources should be an integral part of all development plans from a national to regional to local level to ensure that the materials required for our society are available when required. Geological Survey Ireland highlights the consideration of mineral resources and potential resources as a material asset which should be explicitly recognised within the environmental assessment process. Geological Survey Ireland provides data, maps, interpretations and advice on matters related to minerals, their use and their development in our [Minerals section](#) of the website. The Active Quarries, Mineral Localities and the Aggregate Potential maps are available on our [Map Viewer](#).

Climate Action Plan 2019

We would like to draw your attention to **Action 133: Assess and implement mitigation options on post-production, peat extraction sites** – Evaluate natural resources concealed by peat cover in the Midland counties. Outline potential for communities and industry to utilise available sand and gravel deposits, minerals, groundwater and deeper geothermal energy resources as part of a Just Transition for these areas. Data from Geological Survey Ireland are valuable to deliver Action 133 and we would like to offer our support in interpreting the data.

I hope that these comments are of assistance, and if we can be of any further help, please do not hesitate to contact me, or my colleague Clare Glanville (Clare.Glanville@gsi.ie).

We look forward to working with you in the future, in the next stages of the County Development Plan.

Le meas,

Geoheritage Programme

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