

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

FOR THE

PROPOSED VARIATION No. 2

TO THE

LONGFORD COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015-2021

for: Longford County Council

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Longford
County Longford



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Section 1 Introduction and Terms of Reference

1.1 Introduction

Longford County Council has prepared Proposed Variation No. 2 to the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021 under Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Plan Variation is not mandatory. As the Council did not determine that the Proposed Variation would be likely to have significant environmental effects, the Proposed Variation had to be screened for the need to undertake SEA. Screening is the process for deciding whether a particular plan - or variation to a plan -, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would warrant the undertaking of SEA. The purpose of this report is to evaluate the requirement for SEA to be undertaken on Proposed Variation No. 2 to the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021.

The Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021 has already been subject to full SEA and Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA). These processes, throughout which the environmental authorities were consulted, facilitated the mitigation of potential environmental effects and the AA concluded that the County Development Plan will not affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

1.2 SEA Legislative Requirements

SEA is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme, or variation to a plan or programme, before a decision is made to adopt it. The SEA Directive¹ requires, inter alia, that SEA is undertaken for certain plans, programmes or variations to these.

Under Article 7 (13K) of the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 436 of 2004) as amended by the Planning and Development (SEA) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 201 of 2011)², Longford County Council is required to determine whether the Proposed Variation needs to be subject to SEA. Screening is the process for determining whether a particular plan - or variation to a plan -, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would warrant the undertaking of SEA³. Such a determination is required to take account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A '*Criteria for determining whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment*' of the SEA Regulations, as amended, and submissions or observations from relevant environmental authorities.

1.3 Reasons for the Proposed Variation

The Proposed Variation incorporates the following into the County Development Plan:

- A. The provisions of the Longford Town and Environs Local Area Plan (LAP) as adopted, at Appendix 1A (replacing current mapping and text); and
- B. The provisions of the Urban Regeneration Housing Act, 2015.

¹ Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers, of 27th June 2001, on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment

² Both sets of Regulations are collectively referred to as 'the Regulations' in this report.

³ It is noted that the SEA Directive requires that SEA is undertaken where Stage 2 AA is being undertaken however the AA Screening process has identified that Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required (see Section 2.2).

1.4 Consultations

As part of the screening process, environmental authorities⁴ were notified that a submission or observation in relation to whether or not implementation of the Proposed Variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment could be made to the Council (a period of 3 weeks was allowed for the reply). One submission was made (by the Environmental Protection Agency) in response to this notice which is detailed at Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Response to EPA SEA Screening Submissions Made

Submission Text	Response
<p>SEA Determination We note your position with regard to the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Proposed variation No. 2 to the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021 (the Variation).</p> <p>While we acknowledge that full SEA is being applied to the Draft Longford Town Local Area Plan 2016-2022, we recommend that you also consider providing the SEA Screening report for the Variation, which supports your position.</p> <p>This SEA Screening report should be prepared taking into account the criteria set out in Annex II of Directive 2001/ 42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (The SEA Directive) and Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004).</p> <p>Longford County Council is obliged to take the relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A into account in making its determination as to whether or not the Variation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.</p>	<p>Noted. An SEA Screening Report and associated SEA Screening Determination has been prepared in compliance with the SEA Regulations (as amended), taking into account the criteria provided at Schedule 2A of the Regulations.</p>
<p>Future Amendments to the Draft Plan Longford County Council should determine whether or not any future proposed Variations or Amendments would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. This assessment should take account of the SEA Regulations Schedule 2A Criteria (S.I. No. 436 of 2004).</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Environmental Authorities Under the SEA Regulations (S.I. No. 436 of 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011, notice should be given to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Minister for the Environment, Community & Local Government • Minister for Agriculture, Marine and Food, and the Minister for Communications Energy and Natural Resources, where it appears to the planning authority that the plan or programme, or modification of the plan or programme, might have significant effects on fisheries or the marine environment • where it appears to the competent authority that the plan or programme, or amendment to a plan or programme, might have significant effects in relation to the architectural heritage or to nature conservation, the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs, and • any adjoining planning authority whose area is continuous to the area of a planning authority which prepared a draft plan, proposed variation or local area plan. 	<p>Noted – notice has already been provided to these authorities.</p>
<p>A copy of your decision regarding the determination should be made available for public inspection at your offices, local authority website and should also be notified to any Environmental Authorities already consulted.</p> <p>Should you have any queries or require further information in relation to the above please contact the undersigned. I would also be grateful if an acknowledgement of receipt of this submission could be sent electronically to the following address: sea@epa.ie.</p>	<p>Noted, the SEA Screening Report and associated Determination is being placed on public display with the Proposed Variation.</p>

⁴ The following authorities are being notified: Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht; Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources; Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government; Environmental Protection Agency; Cavan County Council; Westmeath County Council; Roscommon County Council; and Leitrim County Council.

Section 2 SEA Screening

2.1 Introduction

The section examines whether the Proposed Variation would warrant the undertaking of Strategic Environmental Assessment.

This examination takes account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A '*Criteria for determining whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment*' of the SEA Regulations, as amended, (see Section 1.1) and has taken into account material arising from consultations (see Section 1.4).

2.2 Appropriate Assessment

Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening has been undertaken for the Proposed Variation. AA is an impact assessment process concerning *Natura 2000*, or *European*, sites - these sites have been designated or proposed for designation by virtue of their ecological importance.

The Habitats Directive⁵ requires, inter alia, that variations to plans undergo an AA process to establish the likely or potential effects arising from implementation of the Variation. If the effects are deemed to be *significant, potentially significant or uncertain* then the Variation must undergo Stage 2 AA.

The AA screening process finds that Stage 2 AA is not necessary for the Proposed Variation.

2.3 SEA Screening Analysis

Table 2.1 examines whether each part of the Proposed Variation would warrant the undertaking of SEA and is supplemented by:

- Table 2.2, which provides details on: significant positive effects likely to arise from implementation of the Draft Longford Town and Environs Local Area Plan (LAP); potential environmental effects, if unmitigated, that could arise from implementation of the Draft LAP; measures that have been integrated into the Draft LAP that will ensure that potential adverse effects arising are mitigated; and residual adverse effects.
- Table 2.3, which provides details on: significant positive effects likely to arise from implementation of the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021; potential environmental effects, if unmitigated, that could arise from implementation of the County Development Plan; measures that have been integrated into the County Development Plan that will ensure that potential adverse effects arising are mitigated; and residual adverse effects.

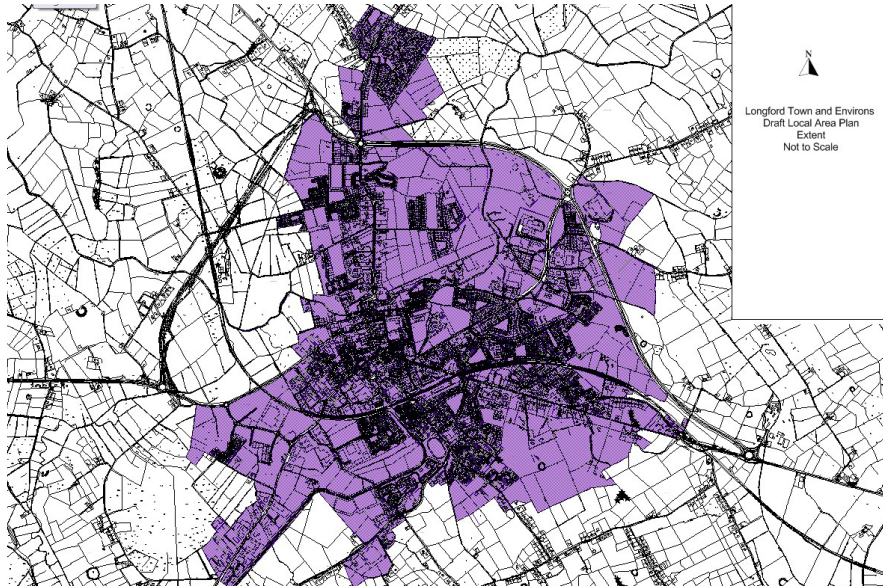
The examination takes account relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A '*Criteria for determining whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment*' of the SEA Regulations, as amended, (see Section 1.1).

The full range of environmental effects⁶, including cumulative effects are considered by this assessment.

⁵ Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

⁶ These include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects

Table 2.1 SEA Screening

Proposed Variation Part	Proposed Variation Text	SEA Screening Determination	SEA Screening Determination Explanation
A	<p>Incorporate the provisions of Longford Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2016-2022 as adopted, at Appendix 1A (replacing current mapping and Text)</p> <p>The purpose of the proposed variation is to provide for the areas to be covered by the Longford Town and Environs LAP within the CDP. This LAP will consolidate the zoning regime in Longford Town and Environs and provide an overall planning framework in the context of recent local government reform, incorporating zoning provisions for the Town and Environs area under the current county development Plan (CDP), town development Plan, northern environs LAP and southern environs LAP. This LAP will also provide for Masterplan areas to promote the physical, social, economic and environmental development of Longford Town in line with its designated position within the settlement hierarchy at National, Regional and County Level.</p> <p>The LAP has been subject to detailed Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) processes.</p> <p>The area concerned is outlined hereunder:</p> 	SEA is not required.	<p>This part of the Proposed Variation incorporates the Longford Town and Environs LAP into the County Development Plan. The LAP is being subjected to full SEA⁷.</p> <p>Table 2.2 provides details on: significant positive effects likely to arise from implementation of the Draft Longford Town and Environs LAP; potential environmental effects, if unmitigated, that could arise from implementation of the Draft LAP; and measures that have been integrated into the Plan that will ensure that potential adverse effects arising are mitigated; and residual adverse effects. These are identified in the Draft SEA Environmental Report for the Draft LAP which has been placed on public display alongside the Draft LAP.</p> <p>On account of SEA being undertaken alongside the preparation of the new Draft Longford Town LAP and the established European principle of subsidiarity⁸, it is determined that SEA is not required to be undertaken.</p>

⁷ This SEA Screening Report should be read in conjunction with:

- The County Development Plan as varied and associated AA, SEA and SFRA documents; and
- The Draft LAP and associated SEA Environmental Report, Stage 2 AA Natura Impact Report and SFRA.

⁸ SEA Directive 2001/42/EC: "With a view to avoiding duplication of the assessment, Member States should take account, where appropriate, of the fact that assessments will be carried out at different levels of a hierarchy of plans and programmes."

Proposed Variation Part	Proposed Variation Text	SEA Screening Determination	SEA Screening Determination Explanation
B	<p>B. To incorporate the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015</p> <p>The following amendment (amended text in italics) is proposed to existing policy CS 2 in the County development plan to facilitate the application of the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015:</p> <p>Functional roles of the larger towns shall be maintained and supported by the promotion of appropriate development in these areas and through the development management process <i>and other mechanisms and initiatives, including the vacant sites levy, as opportunities arise. It is an objective of this plan to encourage and facilitate the appropriate development of sites and areas in need of development and renewal in order to prevent:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land</i> • <i>Urban blight or decay</i> • <i>Anti-social behaviour, or</i> • <i>A shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses</i> <p><i>Lands designated for regeneration within the "Town Core" and "Residential" character areas in the Longford Town and Environs Local Area Plan may include lands in need of development and/or renewal in the context outlined above and will be examined to determine if there are sites where the Vacant Site Levy is applicable under the provisions of Urban Housing and Regeneration Act 2015 and all associated regulations and guidance.</i></p> <p>The Proposed Variation has been subject to SEA and AA Screening processes and SEA and AA Screening Reports and associated SEA and AA Screening Determinations accompany the Proposed Variation on public display.</p> <p>This proposed Variation and associated SEA and AA Screening documents should be read in conjunction with the Draft Local Area Plan Document and associated SEA Environmental Reports, Stage 2 AA Natura Impact Report and SFRA document.</p>	SEA is not required.	<p>The County Development Plan already provides for the development of sites and areas in need of development, regeneration and renewal - this change provides further detail on how what is already provided for in this regard will be achieved. There are no additional adverse effects arising from this change (significant, potential or uncertain) that were not envisaged and mitigated by the SEA of that Plan, including Policy CS 2 (see Table 2.3). That SEA process successfully facilitated the integration of mitigation into the Draft Plan in order to contribute towards the protection of the environment.</p> <p>Positive effects arising from the development of sites and areas in need of development, regeneration and renewal (such as a reduced need to develop greenfield sites in sensitive locations) have already been envisaged by the SEA of the County Development Plan and will be further contributed towards. This includes any potential interactions with the provisions of the Draft Longford Town and Environs LAP.</p> <p>Consequently further assessment is not required.</p>

Table 2.2 Potential environmental effects, if unmitigated, that could arise from implementation of the Draft Longford Town and Environs Local Area Plan, associated mitigating measures and residual effects

Environmental Component	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Effect, if unmitigated	Mitigation Measures	Residual Adverse Effects
Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates lower overall effects on ecology (including designated sites, ecological connectivity, habitats) – due to reducing the need for development within more sensitive, less well served locations within the County and wider Region; and intensifying uses and consolidating development, including brownfield development. Facilitates protection of ecology with respect to the provision of adequate and appropriate water services. Facilitates contribution towards the protection of ecology as a result of contributing towards the protection of environmental vectors, including air and water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arising from both construction and operation of development and associated infrastructure: loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including Natura 2000 Sites/Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects. Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species. 	OBJ ENV1 Section 4.2.2.1 OBJ ENV 2 OBJ ENV 3 OBJ ENV 4 OBJ ENV 5 OBJ ENV 3 Section 4.2.2.4 Section 4.2.2.5 Section 4.2.2.6 Section 4.2.2.7 Section 4.2.2.8 Section 4.2.2.9 Section 4.2.2.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of an extent of non-protected habitats and species arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces. Losses or damage to ecology (these would comply with relevant legislation).
Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates protection of human health with respect to the provision of adequate and appropriate water services and the provision of transport infrastructure integrated with land use planning – and associated interactions with sustainable mobility, emissions and energy usage. Facilitates contribution towards the protection of human health as a result of contributing towards the protection of environmental vectors, including air and water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential interactions if effects upon environmental vectors such as water and air are not mitigated 	Objective OBJ CA2 Section 4.2.2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential interactions with residual effects on environmental vectors. This has been mitigated by provisions that have been integrated into the Plan, including those relating to sustainable mobility and infrastructural provision.
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates lower overall effects on soil – due to reducing the need for development within more sensitive, less well-served locations within the County and wider Region; and intensifying uses and consolidating development, including brownfield development. Facilitates protection of soil with respect to the provision of water services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Damage to the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource. 	Section 4.2.4.6 Section 4.3.5.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces.
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates lower effects on ground and surface waters due to due to reducing the need for development within more sensitive, less well-served locations within the County and wider Region that would be less capable of delivering Water Framework Directive targets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adverse impacts upon the status of water bodies arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology. Increase in the risk of flooding. 	Section 4.2.2.11 Section 4.2.2.12 Section 3.8 OBJ CLU1 OBJ CLU2 OBJ CLU3 Section 3.8.2 Section 4.2.2.11 OBJ SW1 Section 4.2.2.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased loadings as a result of development to comply with River Basin Management Plan. Flood related risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to extreme weather events.

Environmental Component	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Effect, if unmitigated	Mitigation Measures	Residual Adverse Effects
			OBJ ENV4 OBJ ENV5	
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides for planned infrastructure including water services infrastructure and transport infrastructure. Make most use of existing water services and drainage infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to provide adequate and appropriate wastewater treatment (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development with adequate drinking water that is both wholesome and clean (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts) Increases in waste levels 	Section 4.3.1.1 Section 4.3.1.2 Section 4.3.1.3 Section 4.3.1.4 Section 4.3.1.5 Section 4.3.1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residual wastes to be disposed of in line with higher level waste management policies.
Air and Climatic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximises sustainable mobility and associated effects (energy usage and emissions to air including noise and greenhouse gases). Facilitates contribution towards a shift from car to more sustainable and non-motorised transport modes. Facilitates contribution towards reducing congestion and associated adverse effects on air quality. Facilitates contribution towards reductions in travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emissions to air including greenhouse gas emissions and other emissions. 	OBJ CC1. Climate Change and Air Quality section OBJ QOL4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An extent of travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air. This has been mitigated by provisions that have been integrated into the Plan, including those relating to sustainable mobility.
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards the protection of cultural heritage by facilitating compliance with protection legislation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture arising from construction and operation activities. 	Section 4.2.4.2 Section 4.2.4.3 Section 4.2.4.4 Section 4.2.4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential alteration to the context and setting of architectural heritage however, these will occur in compliance with legislation. Potential alteration to the context and setting of archaeological heritage however, this will occur in compliance with legislation. Potential loss of unknown archaeology however, this loss will be mitigated by measures integrated into the Draft Plan.
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards the protection/management of landscape – due to reducing the need for development within more sensitive, less well-served locations within the County and wider Region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occurrence of adverse visual impacts and conflicts with the appropriate protection of the landscape. 	Section 4.2.4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None. The Draft Plan contributes towards the protection of the landscape. The Town and Environs' landscape will change overtime as a result of natural changes in vegetation cover combined with new developments.

Table 2.3 Potential environmental effects, if unmitigated, that could arise from implementation of the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021, associated mitigating measures and residual effects

Environmental Component	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Effect, if unmitigated	Mitigation Measures	Residual Adverse Effects
Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna	Allocating population to existing settlements: protects due to low concentration of ecological sensitivities; and contributes towards maintenance of population of county involved in land management Positive effects on the environment from integration of mitigation measures	Loss of biodiversity with regard to Natura 2000 Sites	Policies NHB 6, NHB 21 (A), NHB 21 (B), NHB 23, AGR 10, RE 1 and RE 6.	Loss of an extent of non-protected habitats arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces
		Loss of biodiversity with regard to ecological connectivity	Policies NHB 1, NHB 2, NHB 8, NHB 10 and NHB 19.	
		Loss of biodiversity with regard to Wildlife Sites and species listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Act 1976	Policies NHB 4, NHB 6 and NHB 7.	
		Loss of population of the county involved in land management	Various measures providing for populations in rural and supporting areas and Policy NHB 23.	
Population and Human Health	Population served by existing/upgraded infrastructure and services in existing settlements Positive effects on the environment from integration of mitigation measures	Spatially concentrated deterioration in human health	Policies ENV 2, ENV 4, ENV 12 and ACA 2. Also see measures related to water quality, flooding, waste water treatment and drinking water supply and quality.	None
Soil	Allocating population to existing settlements minimises soil impacts Positive effects on the environment from integration of mitigation measures	Damage to the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource	Policies HOU DS 4, CHAR 1, RPS 6 and GEO 1.	Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces
Water	Allocating population to existing settlements minimises flood risk Positive effects on the environment from integration of mitigation measures	Adverse impacts upon the status of water bodies	Policies ENV 6, ENV 7, ENV 8, ENV 9, ENV 10, WS 10, WS 11, WS 12 and SW 2.	Fluvial and pluvial flood related risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to extreme weather events
		Increase in the risk of flooding	Policies SFRA 1 to 11 and FLO 1 to 9.	
Material Assets	Population served by existing/upgraded infrastructure and services in existing settlements Positive effects on the environment from integration of mitigation measures	Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment	Policies WS 1, WS(a), WS 2, WS 3, WS 4, WS 5, WS 6, WS 14 and WS 18	None
		Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development with adequate drinking water that is both wholesome and clean	Policies WS 1, WS 2, WS 2 (a), WS 3, WS 4, WS 5, WS 6, WS 14, WS 18, WS 9, WS 10, WS 11, WS 12 and WS 19	Residual wastes to be disposed of in line with higher level waste management policies

Environmental Component	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potential Effect, if unmitigated	Mitigation Measures	Residual Adverse Effects
		Increases in waste levels	Policies WAS 1, WAS 2, WAS 3 and WAS 5	
Air and Climatic Factors	Allocating population to existing settlements further contributes towards levels sustainable mobility Positive effects on the environment from integration of mitigation measures	Failure to contribute towards sustainable transport and associated impacts	Policies ROADS 2, PED 1, PED 2, PED 3, PED 4, PED 5, PT 1, PT 2, RL 1, RL 2, RL 3, RL 4, RL 5, RL 6, RL 7, RL 8, BUS 1, BUS 2 and BUS 3	None
Cultural Heritage	Positive effects on the environment from integration of mitigation measures	Effects on entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and other archaeological heritage	Policies HER 1, HER 5, ARC 1, ARC 5, ARC 6, ARC 9, ARC 10, ARC 11 and ARC 12	Potential alteration to the context and setting of architectural heritage (Protected Structures) however these will occur in compliance with legislation Potential alteration to the context and setting of archaeological heritage (Recorded Monuments) however this will occur in compliance with legislation Potential loss of unknown archaeology however this loss will be mitigated by measures integrated into the Plan
		Effects on entries to the Records of Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas and other architectural heritage	Policies HER 5, RPS 1, RPS 2, RPS 3, RPS 4, RPS 5, RPS 6, ARCH 6, ACA 1 and ACA 2	
Landscape	Allocating population to existing settlements allows for greatest concentration of landscape sensitivities avoided Positive effects on the environment from integration of mitigation measures	Occurrence of adverse visual impacts	Policies HER 2, LCA 1, LCA 2 and LCA 3	The Plan contributes towards the protection of landscape designations. The county's landscapes will change overtime as a result of natural changes in vegetation cover combined with new developments

2.4 Schedule 2A

PART 1

1. The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: the degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources

The Proposed Variation incorporates the following into the County Development Plan:

- A. The provisions of the Longford Town and Environs Local Area Plan (LAP) as adopted, at Appendix 1A (replacing current mapping and text); and
- B. The provisions of the Urban Regeneration Housing Act, 2015.

The Longford County Development Plan, 2015-2021, sets out the spatial and policy framework for development in the County.

With respect to part A of the Proposed Variation, over the period of its lifetime, the Longford Town Development Plan, in conjunction with the Northern and Southern Environs LAPs, provided the basis for decision taking for proposed developments in the development management process. The Variation will consolidate this planning hierarchy which will now sit within and remain subordinate to the policy framework of the CDP.

The Draft Longford Town and Environs LAP is being subjected to detailed SEA, AA and SFRA processes. The Proposed Variation and associated SEA and AA Screening documents should be read in conjunction with:

- The County Development Plan as varied and associated AA, SEA and SFRA documents; and
- The Draft LAP and associated SEA Environmental Report, Stage 2 AA Natura Impact Report and SFRA.

Table 2.2 provides details on: significant positive effects likely to arise from implementation of the Draft Longford Town and Environs LAP; potential environmental effects, if unmitigated, that could arise from implementation of the Draft LAP; and measures that have been integrated into the Plan that will ensure that potential adverse effects arising are mitigated; and residual adverse effects. These are identified in the Draft SEA Environmental Report for the Draft LAP which has been placed on public display alongside the Draft LAP.

On account of SEA being undertaken alongside the preparation of the new Draft Longford Town LAP and the established European principle of subsidiarity⁹, it is determined that SEA is not required to be undertaken.

With respect to part B of the Proposed Variation, the County Development Plan already provides for the development of sites and areas in need of development, regeneration and renewal - this change provides further detail on how what is already provided for in this regard will be achieved. There are no additional adverse effects arising from this change (significant, potential or uncertain) that were not envisaged and mitigated by the SEA of that Plan, including Policy CS 2 (see Table 2.3). That SEA process successfully facilitated the integration of mitigation into the Draft Plan in order to contribute towards the protection of the environment.

⁹ SEA Directive 2001/42/EC: "With a view to avoiding duplication of the assessment, Member States should take account, where appropriate, of the fact that assessments will be carried out at different levels of a hierarchy of plans and programmes."

Positive effects arising from the development of sites and areas in need of development, regeneration and renewal (such as a reduced need to develop greenfield sites in sensitive locations) have already been envisaged by the SEA of the County Development Plan and will be further contributed towards. This includes any potential interactions with the provisions of the Draft Longford Town and Environs LAP.

Taking into account the above, arising from the degree to which the Plan and associated Proposed Variation sets a framework for projects and other activities, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

2. The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: the degree to which the plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy

The Proposed Variation incorporates the following into the County Development Plan:

- A. The provisions of the Longford Town and Environs Local Area Plan (LAP) as adopted, at Appendix 1A (replacing current mapping and text); and
- B. The provisions of the Urban Regeneration Housing Act, 2015.

The Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021 is the principal decision-making instrument for the development of the County. Lower level plans, such as LAPs, are required to be consistent with the County Development Plan, including any variations to it. The Proposed Variation will reinforce this hierarchical arrangement.

With respect to part A of the Proposed Variation, over the period of its lifetime, the Longford Town Development Plan, in conjunction with the Northern and Southern Environs LAPs, provided the basis for decision taking for proposed developments in the development management process. The Variation will consolidate this planning hierarchy which will now sit within and remain subordinate to the policy framework of the CDP.

The Draft Longford Town and Environs LAP is being subjected to detailed SEA, AA and SFRA processes. The Proposed Variation and associated SEA and AA Screening documents should be read in conjunction with:

- The County Development Plan as varied and associated AA, SEA and SFRA documents; and
- The Draft LAP and associated SEA Environmental Report, Stage 2 AA Natura Impact Report and SFRA.

Table 2.2 provides details on: significant positive effects likely to arise from implementation of the Draft Longford Town and Environs LAP; potential environmental effects, if unmitigated, that could arise from implementation of the Draft LAP; and measures that have been integrated into the Plan that will ensure that potential adverse effects arising are mitigated; and residual adverse effects. These are identified in the Draft SEA Environmental Report for the Draft LAP which has been placed on public display alongside the Draft LAP.

On account of SEA being undertaken alongside the preparation of the new Draft Longford Town LAP and the established European principle of subsidiarity¹⁰, it is determined that SEA is not required to be undertaken.

With respect to part B of the Proposed Variation, the County Development Plan already provides for the development of sites and areas in need of development,

¹⁰ SEA Directive 2001/42/EC: "With a view to avoiding duplication of the assessment, Member States should take account, where appropriate, of the fact that assessments will be carried out at different levels of a hierarchy of plans and programmes."

regeneration and renewal - this change provides further detail on how what is already provided for in this regard will be achieved. There are no additional adverse effects arising from this change (significant, potential or uncertain) that were not envisaged and mitigated by the SEA of that Plan including Policy CS 2 (see Table 2.3). That SEA process successfully facilitated the integration of mitigation into the Draft Plan in order to contribute towards the protection of the environment.

Positive effects arising from the development of sites and areas in need of development, regeneration and renewal (such as a reduced need to develop greenfield sites in sensitive locations) have already been envisaged by the SEA of the County Development Plan and will be further contributed towards. This includes any potential interactions with the provisions of the Draft Longford Town and Environs LAP.

Taking into account the above, arising from the degree to which the Plan and associated Proposed Variation influence other plans, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

3. *The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: the relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development*

The Longford County Development Plan - to which the Proposed Variation relates - has undergone SEA. This process integrated environmental considerations into the Plan and found that the Plan contributes to environmental protection and management and sustainable development.

Taking the above and the examination of the various parts of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3 into account, arising from the relevance of the Plan and Proposed Variation for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

Furthermore, with respect to part A of the Variation, on account of SEA being undertaken alongside the preparation of the new Draft Longford Town LAP and the established European principle of subsidiarity, it is determined that SEA is not required to be undertaken.

4. *The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: environmental problems relevant to the plan*

Environmental problems arise where there is a conflict between current environmental conditions and legislative targets.

Through its provisions relating to environmental protection and management, the existing Plan contributes towards ensuring that environmental conditions do not get worse and, where possible, it contributes towards its amelioration.

Taking the above and the examination of the various parts of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3 into account, arising from environmental problems relevant to the Plan and Proposed Variation, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

Furthermore, with respect to part A of the Variation, on account of SEA being undertaken alongside the preparation of the new Draft Longford Town LAP and the established European principle of subsidiarity, it is determined that SEA is not required to be undertaken.

5. The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to: the relevance of the plan for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste-management or water protection)

The Plan relates to the land use sector and has undergone SEA. This process integrated considerations with regard to EU and national legislation on the environment into the Plan, including those relating to the waste management and the Water Framework Directive.

Taking the above and the examination of the various parts of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3 into account, arising from the relevance of the Plan and Proposed Variation for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

Furthermore, with respect to part A of the Variation, on account of SEA being undertaken alongside the preparation of the new Draft Longford Town LAP and the established European principle of subsidiarity, it is determined that SEA is not required to be undertaken.

PART 2

1. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects

With respect to part A of the Variation, on account of SEA being undertaken alongside the preparation of the new Draft Longford Town LAP and the established European principle of subsidiarity, it is determined that SEA is not required to be undertaken.

With respect to part B of the Variation, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the various parts of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3).

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the cumulative nature of the effects

With respect to part A of the Variation, on account of SEA being undertaken alongside the preparation of the new Draft Longford Town LAP and the established European principle of subsidiarity, it is determined that SEA is not required to be undertaken.

With respect to part B of the Variation, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the various parts of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3).

3. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the transboundary nature of the effects

With respect to part A of the Variation, on account of SEA being undertaken alongside the preparation of the new Draft Longford Town LAP and the established European principle of subsidiarity, it is determined that SEA is not required to be undertaken.

With respect to part B of the Variation, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the various parts of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3).

4. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)

With respect to part A of the Variation, on account of SEA being undertaken alongside the preparation of the new Draft Longford Town LAP and the established European principle of subsidiarity, it is determined that SEA is not required to be undertaken.

With respect to part B of the Variation, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the various parts of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3).

5. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)

With respect to part A of the Variation, on account of SEA being undertaken alongside the preparation of the new Draft Longford Town LAP and the established European principle of subsidiarity, it is determined that SEA is not required to be undertaken.

With respect to part B of the Variation, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the various parts of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3).

6. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:

a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;

With respect to part A of the Variation, on account of SEA being undertaken alongside the preparation of the new Draft Longford Town LAP and the established European principle of subsidiarity, it is determined that SEA is not required to be undertaken.

With respect to part B of the Variation, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the various parts of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3).

b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values, and;

With respect to part A of the Variation, on account of SEA being undertaken alongside the preparation of the new Draft Longford Town LAP and the established European principle of subsidiarity, it is determined that SEA is not required to be undertaken.

With respect to part B of the Variation, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the various parts of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3).

c) intensive land-use.

With respect to part A of the Variation, on account of SEA being undertaken alongside the preparation of the new Draft Longford Town LAP and the established European principle of subsidiarity, it is determined that SEA is not required to be undertaken.

With respect to part B of the Variation, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the various parts of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3).

7. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to: the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status

With respect to part A of the Variation, on account of SEA being undertaken alongside the preparation of the new Draft Longford Town LAP and the established European principle of subsidiarity, it is determined that SEA is not required to be undertaken.

With respect to part B of the Variation, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the various parts of the Proposed Variation provided under Section 2.3).

Section 3 Conclusion

Screening is the process for deciding whether a particular plan - or variation to a plan -, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant SEA. The purpose of the report is to evaluate the requirement for SEA to be undertaken on Proposed Variation No. 2 to the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021.

The Proposed Variation incorporates the following into the County Development Plan:

- A. The provisions of the Longford Town and Environs Local Area Plan (LAP) as adopted, at Appendix 1A (replacing current mapping and text); and
- B. The provisions of the Urban Regeneration Housing Act, 2015.

The SEA screening process that has been undertaken and documented in this Draft report has found that:

- With respect to part A of the Proposed Variation, on account of SEA being undertaken alongside the preparation of the new Draft Longford Town LAP and the established European principle of subsidiarity¹¹, it is determined that SEA is not required to be undertaken; and
- With respect to part B of the Proposed Variation, the Proposed Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

Consequently full SEA is not required.

A SEA Screening Determination has been prepared and accompanies this report.

¹¹ SEA Directive 2001/42/EC: "With a view to avoiding duplication of the assessment, Member States should take account, where appropriate, of the fact that assessments will be carried out at different levels of a hierarchy of plans and programmes."