

Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) (Section 13)

Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021

Variation No. 4

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report



**Planning Department
Longford County Council
Aras an Chontae
Great Water Street
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1.0 Introduction

Longford County Council has prepared a Variation (no. 4) of the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021. Under the requirements of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC), transposed onto Irish legislation by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 – 2011, certain plans or programmes are subject to SEA prior to their adoption and implementation. The SEA Directive requires, inter alia, that SEA is undertaken for certain plans, programs 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), Longford County Council is required to determine whether any proposed Variation needs to be subject to SEA screening. Screening is the process for determining 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. This report provides the findings of the evaluation of the requirement for SEA to be undertaken on the proposed Variation to the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021.

2.0 Description of the Variation

In accordance with Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), Longford County Council has prepared a Variation (no. 4) of the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021. The Variation consists of the change of land use zoning of an area of 0.39ha on lands at, Knock, Lanesborough, Co. Longford (appendix 1), from the existing land use zoning from '*Established Residential*' to '*Commercial/Residential*'. There is an existing established commercial property on the subject site. Residential development is located on the adjoining lands.

3.0 Reason for the Variation

The reason for the Variation arises as a result of the need to provide and facilitate commercial/residential development in this urban location. The site is located within the existing development envelope of the town and is served by existing public infrastructure and facilities. Commercial/residential development in this urban location would facilitate the surrounding residential catchment area and would be in accordance with the sustainable development of the area.

4.0 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Analysis

This examines whether each part of the Variation would be likely to have significant environmental effects (and thus would warrant the undertaking of SEA) and is supplemented by Table 1 and Table 2 which provides details on:

- The likely significant effects, if unmitigated, of implementing the Variation in combination with key mitigation measures that are already contained within the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021 (Table 1);
- Strategic Environmental Objectives of the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021 (Table 2).

The examination takes into 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 III).

4.1 Environmental Considerations

The following environmental considerations were taken into account:-

i. Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna

The lands are not subject to any ecological designations and most of the lands comprise a commercial area and rear garden of a dwelling house. There are no European Sites within or adjacent to the site area.

ii. Population and Human Health

There is a current employment use within the site. The site is bordered by residential uses to the north, east and west, and by the R392 to the south.

iii. Noise

The site is located in an existing settlement within the development envelope of Lanesborough town and along a busy Regional Route and as such experiences a level of urban generated and roadside traffic generated noise. In terms of noise generated from any commercial activity on the site in terms of its operation or servicing, where deemed necessary by the Planning Authority as part of the

Development Management process such commercial activity should be subject to appropriate mitigation measures and control criteria.

iv. Soil

As per the EPA online database the site is located on subsoils that are manmade with a smaller portion along the western portion of the site located within an area with karsified limestone bedrock.

v. Water

There are no rivers within or adjacent to the site. As the EPA online database, the site is located within the Lough Bannow Stream WFD River sub basin. The groundwater vulnerability of most of the town, including the subject lands, is identified as being under 'review'. The Flood Zones for the town are identified in the County Development Plan. However the subject lands are located a significant distance away from same. No such risk is identified at the subject lands.

vi. Air and Climatic Factors

The site is located in an existing settlement within the development envelope of Lanesborough town.

vii. Cultural Heritage

There are no entries to the Sites and Monument Record within or adjacent to the subject lands. There are no entries to the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) or Record of Protected Structures (RPS) within or adjacent to the subject lands.

viii. Material Assets

The site is served by mains water and sewerage.

ix. Landscape

The subject site does not impact on any Protected Views of the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021.

Table 1: Summary of effects, if unmitigated, arising from the Longford County Plan 2015-2021, in combination with the Proposed Variation and key mitigation measures already in force.

Likely Significant Effect, if unmitigated	Mitigation Measure reference from the 2015-2021 County Development Plan
<i>Loss of biodiversity with regard to Natura 2000 sites</i>	Policy NHB 6, NHB 21 (A), NHB 21 (B), NHB 23, AGR 10, RE 1, RE 6.
<i>Loss of biodiversity with regard to ecological connectivity</i>	Policy NHB 1, NHB 2, NHB 8, NHB 10, NHB 19.
<i>Loss of biodiversity with regard to Wildlife Sites and species listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Act 1976</i>	Policy NHB 4, NHB 6, NHB 7.
<i>Loss of population of the county involved in land management</i>	Policy NHB 23.
<i>Spatially concentration deterioration in human health</i>	Policy ENV 2, ENV 4, ENV 12, ACA 2.
<i>Damage to the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource; Geology; Failure to maximise urban consolidation.</i>	Policy HOUS DS 4, CHAR 1, RPS 6, GEO 1.
<i>Adverse impacts upon the status of water bodies.</i>	Policy ENV 6, ENV 7, ENV 8, ENV 9, ENV 10, WS 10, WS 11, WS 12, SW 2.
<i>Increase in the risk of flooding</i>	Policy SFRA 1, SFRA 2, SFRA 3, SFRA 4, SFRA 5, SFRA 6, SFRA 7, SFRA 8, SFRA 9, SFRA 10, SFRA 11, FLO 1, FLO 2, FLO 3, FLO 4, FLO 5, FLO 6, FLO 7, FLO 8, FLO 9.
<i>Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment</i>	WS 1, WS 2, WS 2(a), WS 3, WS 4, WS 5, WS 6, WS 14, WS 18.
<i>Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development with adequate drinking water that is both wholesome and clean.</i>	WS 1, WS 2, WS 2(a), WS 3, WS 4, WS 5, WS 6, WS 9, WS 10, WS 11, WS2, WS 14, WS 18, WS 19.
<i>Failure to contribute towards sustainable transport and associated impacts</i>	Policy 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, BUS 3.
<i>Increases in waste levels</i>	Policy WAS 1, WAS 2, WAS 3, WAS 5.
<i>Effects on entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and other archaeological heritage</i>	Policy HER 1, HER 5, ARC 1, ARC 5, ARC 6, ARC 9, ARC 10, ARC 11, ARC 12.
<i>Effects on entries to the Records of Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas and other architectural heritage</i>	Policy HER 5, RPS 1, RPS 2, RPS 3, RPS 4, RPS 5, RPS 6, ARCH 6, ACA 1, ACA 2.
<i>Occurrence of adverse visual impacts</i>	Policy HER 2, LCA 1, LCA 2, LCA 3.
<i>Other</i>	Policy AM 1, CLT 1, AM 1.

**Table 2: Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021 - Strategic
Environmental Objectives**

B1	To ensure compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives with regard to the protection of Natura 2000 Sites and Annexed habitats and species.
B2	To ensure compliance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive with regard to the management of features of the landscape which - by virtue of their linear and continuous structure or their function act as stepping stones - are of major importance for wild fauna and flora and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.
B3	To avoid significant impacts on relevant habitats, species, environmental features or other sustaining resources in Wildlife Sites and to ensure compliance with the Wildlife Acts 1976-2010 with regard to the protection of species listed on Schedule 5 of the principal act.
B4	To sustain existing sustainable rural management practices - and the communities who support them - to ensure the continuation of long established managed landscapes and the flora and fauna that they contain.
PHH1	To protect populations and human health from exposure to incompatible land uses.
S1	To avoid damage to the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource in County Longford.
W1	To maintain and improve, where possible, the quality and status of surface waters.
W2	To prevent pollution and contamination of ground water.
W3	To comply as appropriate with the provisions of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2009).
M1	To serve new development with adequate and appropriate waste water treatment.
M2	To serve new development with adequate drinking water that is both wholesome and clean.
M3	To reduce waste volumes, minimise waste to landfill and increase recycling and reuse.
C1	To reduce travel related emissions to air and to encourage modal change from car to more sustainable forms of transport.
CH1	To protect archaeological heritage including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places and/or their context.
CH2	To protect as appropriate architectural heritage including entries to the Record of Protected Structures and their context and Architectural Conservation Areas.
L1	To avoid significant adverse impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to protected views and prospects and broad zones including lakes, rivers, canals and deciduous woodlands.

4.2 Assessment of Proposed Variation no. 4 against Schedule 2A Criteria of Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)

4.2.1 The characteristics of the Proposed Variation having regard, in particular, to:

- i. 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 changes by the Variation relate to the provisions of the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021 which provides a framework for land use planning in County Longford. Taking the above and the examination of the various parts of the Variation provided under Section 4.1 into account, arising from the degree to which the Variation and existing County Development Plan set a framework for projects and other activities, the Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

- ii. the degree to which the plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy***

The Variation is being made to the existing County Development Plan. The County Development Plan is influenced by higher level legislation, plans and programmes and influences lower tier plans including Local Area Plans. Taking the above and the examination of the various parts of the Variation provided under Section 4.1 into account, arising from the degree to which the Proposed Variation and existing County Development Plan influence other plans, the Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

- iii. the relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development***

The current County Development Plan to which the 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 Variation provided under Section 4.1 into account, arising from the degree to which the Variation and existing County Development Plan are relevant for

the integration of environmental considerations with a view to promoting sustainable development, the Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

iv. environmental problems relevant to the Proposed Variation

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 current County Development Plan contributes towards ensuring that environmental conditions do not get worse and, where possible, it contributes towards its amelioration. The Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021 is subject to a number of high level environmental protection policies and objectives with which it must comply, including those which have been identified as Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEO'S) (Table 2). These were developed from international and national policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives. Such policies include those of various European Directives which have been transposed into Irish law and which are intended to be implemented within the Plan area.

As such the Variation will be subject to a number of high level environmental protection policies and objectives with which it must comply. It is considered that the Variation will not involve any considerable impact outside the Strategic Environmental Objectives identified in the Development Plan. Taking the above and the examination of the various parts of the Variation provided under Section 4.1 into account and the existing policies contained within the Development Plan, it is considered that the Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

v. 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 existing County Development 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 Variation provided under Section 4.1 into account, arising from the relevance of the Variation for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment, the Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

4.2.2 Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:

1. the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects

The Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the Variation provided under Section 4.1).

2. The cumulative nature of the effects

The Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the Variation provided under Section 4.1).

3. The transboundary nature of the effects

The Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the Variation provided under Section 4.1).

4. The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)

The Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the Variation provided under Section 4.1).

5. The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)

The Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the Variation provided under Section 4.1).

6. The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:

a) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;

The Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the Variation provided under Section 4.1).

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

The Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the Variation provided under Section 4.1).

c) Intensive land-use.

The Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the Variation provided under Section 4.1).

7. the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status

The Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects (see responses under Schedule 2A Part 1 above and the examination of the Variation provided under Section 4.1).

5.0 Consultations

The relevant authorities were notified and submissions in relation to SEA related issues were received from the following the contents of which are summarised accordingly:-

Environmental Protection Agency

- *SEA Determination* - note the local authority position with regards to the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment of the proposed variation.
- *Comments on Variation* – should include a description of how noise considerations, that may arise from this land use change and relating to commercial activity, will be considered and where necessary mitigated. In this

regard the Draft Initial SEA Report has been amended to include an additional section as per 4.1 Environmental Considerations, (x) Noise in this report.

6.0 Conclusion

Screening of Variation no. 4 of the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021 identified that implementation of the Variation will not have significant effects on the environment and that SEA of the Variation is not required, as per the following findings:-

- The Variation does not meet Schedule 2A criteria for plans or programmes likely to have significant environmental effects.
- Potential effects arising from the Variation will be mitigated by provisions already in force so as not to be significant (adverse).

In assessing Variation no.4 of the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021 against the required environmental criteria, it was determined that the Variation would not result in significant environmental effects, and as such does not require full Strategic Environmental Assessment.

A Screening Determination is provided overleaf:

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Determination under:
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) for:
Variation No. 4 to the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021**

Article 7 (13K) of the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 436 of 2004) (as amended), requires, inter alia, a determination to be made as to whether Variation No. 4 warrants the undertaking of SEA. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening determination has been made by Longford County Council regarding Variation No. 4 to the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021. Such a determination takes into 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.

The Variation consists of the change of land use zoning of 0.39ha on lands at, Knock, Lanesborough, Co. Longford (appendix 1), from the existing land use zoning from '*Established Residential*' to '*Commercial/Residential*'. There is an existing established commercial property on the subject site. Residential development is located on the adjoining lands.

The SEA screening process has found that implementation of the Variation will not have significant effects on the environment and that SEA of the Variation is not required, as per the following findings:-

- The Variation does not meet Schedule 2A criteria for plans or programmes likely to have significant environmental effects.
- In assessing Variation no. 4 of the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021 against the required environmental criteria, it was determined that the proposed Variation would not result in significant environmental effects, and as such does not require full Strategic Environmental Assessment.

APPENDIX 1

