

LOCAL AREA PLAN 3, NAVAN

Screening Report for submission to:

Environmental Protection Agency,

Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and

Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Meath County Council intends to prepare a Local Area Plan (LAP) for lands between Trim Road and Commons Road, to the southwest of Navan under the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). The purpose of this report is to consider whether the LAP requires Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE LAP

The Navan Development Plan states that the LAP3 area is intended for general development, primarily residential but to include ancillary uses such as employment generating uses, educational and childcare facilities, community and resource centres, local shopping facilities, etc. provided they are appropriate in scale and do not unduly interfere with the predominant residential land use. The development of these lands shall be subject to the timely provision of the section of the Local Distributor Road, RT 5 linking the Athboy Road to the Trim Road.

The Navan Development Plan sets out the contents required to be included in LAPs in the Navan area as follows:

- Proposals in relation to the overall design of the proposed development including maximum heights, external finishes of structures and the general appearance and design including that of the public realm;
- The type and extent of any proposed development indicating how these uses integrate with surrounding developments and land uses;
- Proposals in relation to transportation including public transportation and non-motorised modes, vehicular roads layouts and access arrangements, loading/unloading provision, the provision of parking spaces and traffic management;
- Proposals in relations to the provision of services in the area including the provision of waste and sewage facilities and water, electricity, and telecommunications services, oil and gas pipelines including storage facilities for oil and gas;
- Proposals relating to the provision of amenities, facilities and services for the community including crèches and other childcare facilities, community and resource centres in relation to residential development;
- The facilitation of public access to the proposed amenity areas located within the Area Plan boundaries and beyond;
- Provision for sport and recreational infrastructure commensurate with the needs of the development as an integral element of their proposals.

Figure 1 shows the location and outline of the LAP3 area.

3.0 MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

The EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment provides that SEA is mandatory for Local Area Plans

for areas with a population of 10,000 or more. Where the population involved is less than 10,000, the EU Directive requires Screening of the Plan.

The current population of the area is negligible. Consequently, SEA is not mandatory, however, Screening is required.

4.0 CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

4.1 Characteristics of the Plan

(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 LAP3's purpose is to provide a framework for the general development of the area, including primarily residential uses, but also ancillary uses such as employment generating uses, educational and childcare facilities, community and resource centres, local shopping facilities, etc. The Plan will give a general indication on the preferred urban structure and layout for the area.

The LAP3 lands encompass an area of 39.6 hectares which are mainly under grassland. The Navan Development Plan provides for a minimum of 624 no. dwellings on the lands, and a maximum of 1,560 no. dwellings. This could result in a future population of between 1,635 and 4,087 people at a household size of 2.62, as provided by the Navan Development Plan.

The LAP3 will also make provisions with regard to design standards, services and the phasing of development. It is a land use plan within the terms of the Planning Act 2000.

(ii) The degree to which the Plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy.

This Plan is set within the context of the Navan Development Plan 2003-2009. The LAP3 has to be consistent with the objectives of the Development Plan.

(iii) The relevance of the Plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The LAP is being prepared under the Planning and Development Act, 2000 and therefore must confine itself to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. All policies and objectives of the LAP must be informed by the principles of sustainable development.

The preparation of the LAP is also guided by the overall objectives of the Navan Development Plan which seek:

- *To provide for the future transportation needs of Navan and Environs in a sustainable manner.*
- *The development of an integrated land use and transportation system and a development pattern that protects ecologically sensitive lands and natural environments of high amenity.*
- *Higher densities in the town centre, and along strategic transportation routes and public transport nodes, in particular, on lands adjoining the proposed Railway Line and the proposed Local Distributor Road network.*
- *To reduce the need to travel, especially by car, by compact development with mixed uses.*
- *To encourage the integration of employment locations with other land uses and the transportation network, and in particular, ensure that the location of employment intensive land uses are located in proximity to existing and planned strategic routes, where public transport is viable.*

(iv) Environmental problems relevant to the Plan.

The underlying environmental issues of the LAP3 relate to the provision of a development framework for the future development of the LAP3 lands for predominantly residential uses, and ancillary uses. The LAP3 area has very few environmental assets, of which only the Swan River requires particular protection. The LAP3 area is bounded to the north and east by existing housing developments and the new Distributor Road linking the Commons Road and Trim Road will border the LAP3 lands to the south and west. There are no manifest strategically significant environmental problems identified yet.

(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).

These plans and programmes are considered under the Navan Development Plan 2003-2009 and will not be specifically addressed in this LAP.

4.2 Characteristics of the Effects and of the Area Likely to be Affected.

(i) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.

The LAP3 will provide for various land uses, which are summarised in the following table.

Land Uses	Policies/Objectives Proposed
Residential	The LAP3 will provide for predominantly residential use. In line with the Navan Development Plan the LAP3 area can provide between 624 no. and 1,560 no. dwellings, which could result in a population of between 1,635 and 4,087 people.
Employment	Provide for some employment generating uses, e.g. small scale enterprises.
Community	Provide for a neighbourhood centre, including retail, community, health facilities; and primary school.

Infrastructure	Provide road network, footpaths and cycle tracks, and service infrastructure.
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Generally it is considered that the effects on the existing environment will be durable and irreversible. However, development control provisions in the Navan Development Plan and the LAP3 as well as the Part XI process allow for the appropriate assessment of proposed developments on a case-by-case basis.

(ii) The cumulative nature of the effects.

The Navan Development Plan projects a population of 40,000-45,000 people for the town in 2009. This is an increase of 106% to 132% on the 2002 population. To meet the target population the Development Plan provides that 5,100-7,000 additional residential units have to be accommodated in Navan and its Environs. To achieve the target population the Navan Development Plan designates 5 Local Area Plan areas and 6 Area Action Plan areas. The LAP3 itself will result in a population increase of 8% to 21% on the 2002 population.

The cumulative nature of the effects on the environment of the projected growth of Navan may be significant. This has been assessed within the Navan Development Plan 2003-2009.

(iii) The transboundary nature of the effects.

Meath County Council is preparing the LAP3. This Plan is part of the Navan Development Plan 2003-2009, which was prepared by Meath County Council and Navan Town Council. The Plan has no other national, regional or inter-county transboundary effects.

(iv) The risk to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).

There are no designated SEVESO sites within the Plan area.

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

The Plan area comprises approximately 39.6 hectares. At present the population of the LAP area is negligible. The implementation of the LAP3 could result in a population of between 1,635 and 4,087 people.

(vi) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:

- **Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,**

The site is not covered by any conservation designation. The area contains no structures or other items that are listed for protection, nor any historical sites or monuments. The LAP3 lands mainly consist of improved grassland, with hedgerows dividing the area into some 20 fields. A small watercourse of c.1.5-2 m width, the

Swan River, flows across the site from east to west. The stream is too small to be of significance for fisheries, however, it is a tributary of the River Boyne, which is a candidate Special Area of Conservation. The network of hedgerows and treelines are considered to be of low to moderate local value. The improved agricultural grassland and the watercourse are habitats of low ecological value.

- **Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,**

It is not expected that certain environmental quality standards will be exceeded or that the value of vulnerable areas limited as a result of this LAP.

- **Intensive land use.**

It is not expected that the intensification of existing land uses in the Plan area will be such that vulnerable areas will be significantly affected.

(vii) The effects on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, European Union or international protection status.

There are no such areas within the Plan area. The Swan River is a tributary of the River Boyne, which is a candidate Special Area of Conservation.

5.0 CONCLUSION

SEA is not mandatory for this Plan as its current and proposed population is less than 10,000.

The implementation of the LAP3 could result in a population of between 1,635 and 4,087 people. The value of the existing environment in the Plan area and the nature of surrounding areas are such that the development resulting from policies and objectives within the Plan are unlikely to lead to any significant environmental effects. The Development control provisions in the Navan Development Plan and the LAP3 as well as the Part XI process will ensure the appropriate assessment of proposed developments on the LAP3 lands on a case-by-case basis, and will also ensure the protection of the Swan River as a tributary to the Boyne River.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

Based on this screening process it is considered that an SEA will not be required for the proposed Local Area Plan.