

MEATH CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2024 - 2029

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) STATEMENT

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Environmental Assessment **Built Environment**

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Glossary

Appropriate Assessment

The obligation to undertake Appropriate Assessment derives from Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. AA is a focused and detailed impact assessment of the implications of a strategic action or project, alone and in combination with other strategic actions and projects, on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives.

Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna

Biodiversity is the variability among living organisms from all sources including inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems' (United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity 1992).

Flora is all of the plants found in a given area.

Fauna is all of the animals found in a given area.

Environmental Problems

Annex I of 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 (the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive) requires that information is provided on 'any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme', thus, helping to ensure that the proposed strategic action does not make existing environmental problems worse.

Environmental problems arise where there is a conflict between current environmental conditions and ideal targets. If environmental problems are identified at the outset they can help focus attention on important issues and geographical areas where environmental effects of the plan or programme may be likely.

Environmental Vectors

Environmental vectors are environmental components, such as air, water or soil, through which contaminants or pollutants, which have the potential to cause harm, can be transported so that they come into contact with human beings.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures are measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment of implementing a human action, be it a plan, programme or project. Mitigation involves ameliorating significant negative effects. Where there are significant negative effects, consideration should be given in the first instance to preventing such effects or, where this is not possible, to lessening or offsetting those effects.

Protected Structure

Protected Structure is the term used in the Planning and Development Act and Regulations (as amended) to define a structure included by a planning authority in its Record of Protected Structures.

Such a structure shall not be altered or demolished in whole or part without obtaining planning permission or confirmation from the planning authority that the part of the structure to be altered is not protected.

Recorded Monument

A monument included in the list and marked on the map which comprises the Record of Monuments and Places that is set out County by County under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994 by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. The definition includes Zones of Archaeological Potential in towns and all other monuments of archaeological interest which have so far been identified. Any works at or in relation to a recorded monument requires two months' notice to the former Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (now Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht) under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994.

SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt it.

SEA Scoping

Scoping is the process of determining what issues are to be addressed, and setting out a methodology in which to address them in a structured manner appropriate to the plan or programme. SEA coping is carried out in consultation with appropriate environmental authorities.

Strategic Actions

Strategic actions include: Policies / Strategies, which may be considered as inspiration and guidance for action and which set the framework for Plans and programmes; Plans, sets of coordinated and timed objectives for the implementation of the policy; and Programmes, sets of projects in a particular area.

Strategic Environmental Objective (SEO)

Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are methodological measures developed from policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or Member State level and are used as standards against which the provisions of the Masterplan and the alternatives can be evaluated in order to help identify which provisions would be likely to result in significant environmental effects and where such effects would be likely to occur, if - in the case of adverse effects - unmitigated.

1 Introduction

This is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement for the adopted *Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029* (hereafter referred to as - “Meath CAP”). This SEA Statement is prepared on behalf of Meath County Council (MCC) by Brady Shipman Martin, Environmental, Landscape and Planning Consultants.

The following report has been prepared to comply with the provisions of Article 16(2)(b) of S.I. 435 of 2004 – European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations – as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011 – European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.

Directive 2001/42/EC¹ on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the ‘SEA Directive’) requires EU Member States to assess the ‘likely significant environmental effects’ of plans and programmes prior to their adoption. This provides for the assessment of strategic environmental considerations at an early stage in the decision-making process. SEA is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, the environmental quality and consequences of Plans or Programmes (P/Ps). The purpose is to ensure that the environmental consequences of P/Ps are assessed both during their preparation and prior to their adoption. The SEA process also gives specified environmental authorities, interested parties and the general public, an opportunity to comment on the environmental impacts of the proposed P/P and to be kept informed during the decision-making process.

Article 1 of the SEA Directive states that:

“The objective of this 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 and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.”

The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish law through:

- *Statutory Instrument (S.I.) No. 435 of 2004 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011); and*
- *S.I. No. 436 of 2004 (the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).*

S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, relates to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes prepared for “agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive.”².

¹ SEA Directive: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

² See Section 9(1)(a)

S.I. No. 436 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011, relates to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes where the context requires, “a development plan, a variation of a development plan, a local area plan (or an amendment thereto), regional planning guidelines or a planning scheme”³.

Given the nature of the Plan, the SEA for the *Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029* has been prepared under the requirements of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011.

This SEA Statement is a reflective document that looks back on the SEA process, what has been achieved and it also sets out what monitoring will be done in the future.

1.1 Background

Meath County Council (MCC) has prepared the *Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029* for the County to promote best practice in climate action, at the local level. The Meath CAP aligns to the Government’s overall *National Climate Objective*, which seeks to achieve the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy by no later than the end of 2050. This also aligns with the *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021*, which frames Ireland’s legally binding climate ambition, to deliver a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 51% by 2030.

The *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021* specifically requires all local authorities in Ireland to prepare a Climate Action Plan, in consideration of wider national climate and energy targets, addressing both mitigation and adaptation measures. The Meath CAP has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Authority Climate Action Plan Guidelines*, published by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (March 2023).

The Meath CAP sets out the responsibility of Meath County Council for enhancing climate resilience, increasing energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, across its own assets, services and infrastructure, to which it is fully accountable for, whilst also demonstrating a broader role of influencing, advocating and facilitating other sectors, to meet their own climate targets and ambitions.

1.2 Appropriate Assessment

The draft *Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029* was screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the *Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)*⁴ and Regulation 42 of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011*, as amended. The screening process concluded that potential for effects on the integrity of European sites arising from the implementation of the Plan cannot be excluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt and Appropriate Assessment of the Plan, including preparation of a Natura Impact Report (NIR) was required.

The NIR prepared for the Meath CAP concluded as follows:

‘This report concludes on the best scientific evidence that it can be clearly demonstrated that no elements of the MCC CAP will result in any impact on the integrity or Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests of any relevant European site, either on their own or in combination with other plans or projects, in light of their conservation objectives, provided mitigation measures are implemented.’

³ Section 5(c)

⁴ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/habitats-directive_en

Therefore, in accordance with *Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08*⁵, the Draft Meath CAP 2024-2029 was also required to undergo a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with *Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment*⁶ (known as the *SEA Directive*).

1.3 Content of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Statement


In accordance with Article 16(2)(b) of the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, (as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011), the SEA Statement will summarise the following:

- (i) *how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme;*
- (ii) *how:*
 - (I) *the environmental report prepared pursuant to article 12,*
 - (II) *submissions and observations made to the competent authority in response to a notice under article 13, and*
 - (III) *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,*
- (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, and*
- (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.*

1.4 Key stages of the SEA Process




The key focus of SEA is to take environmental issues, and in particular ‘*likely significant environmental effects*’ of a P / P, into consideration during the plan or programme making process. The key stages in the SEA process as they relate to the Meath CAP are outlined in **Table 1.1** below.

Table 1.1 Outline of the SEA Process

Stage	Description	Status
1. Screening	<p>The requirement to undertake a SEA is mandatory for certain Plan / Programme (P / P). Where SEA is not a mandatory requirement, the P / Ps is subject to a ‘Screening process’, to consider if it is <i>likely to have significant effects</i> on the environment, and therefore, if SEA is required.</p> <p>The preparation of the draft <i>Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029</i> was screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA) and it has been concluded that potential for effects on the integrity of European sites cannot be excluded beyond all reasonable scientific doubt and is required to undergo Appropriate Assessment.</p>	<p>Completed</p> 

⁵ Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08

⁶ DIRECTIVE 2001/42/EC: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

Stage	Description	Status
	Therefore, in accordance with <i>Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08</i> the <i>Draft Meath CAP 2024-2029</i> was also required to undergo a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with <i>Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment</i> (known as the SEA Directive).	
2. Scoping	<p>Preparation of a SEA Scoping Report highlighting that the Environmental Report is required to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ methods of assessment; ▪ contents and level of detail in the Plan / Programme; ▪ the stage in the Plan or Programme-making process; and ▪ the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in the decision-making process in order to avoid duplication of environmental assessment. <p>Scoping provides for consultation with the Environmental Authorities specified in Article 13 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011, and the process allows for incorporation of the views of the environmental authorities within the P / P and the SEA Environmental Report.</p>	<p>Completed</p> 
3. Environmental Report	<p>Preparation of a systemic identification and evaluation of alternatives and assessment of the <i>likely significant environmental effects</i> of implementing the P / P.</p> <p>The findings of the assessment, which is carried out at various stages in the P / P making (<i>e.g.</i> Draft, Amended Draft <i>etc.</i>), are provided in the SEA Environmental Report in accordance with Article 12 (including Schedule 2) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011.</p> <p>The Environmental Report accompanied the draft P / P on public display.</p>	<p>Completed</p> 
4. SEA Statement	<p>Completion / adoption of the Final CAP, taking account of <i>likely significant environmental effects</i>, any submissions or observations received from consultations and integration of mitigation and monitoring measures within the Plan.</p> <p>The Environmental Report is concluded and an SEA Statement is prepared in accordance with Article 16(2)(b) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011, summarising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan / Programme; ▪ how the environmental report, and any submissions /observations or consultations have been taken into account in the preparation of the Plan / Programme; ▪ the reasons for choosing the Plan / Programme in light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and ▪ the measures decided for monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan / Programme. 	<p>Completed</p> 

Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 - 2029
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement

Stage	Description	Status
5. SEA Monitoring	The Plan is adopted and implemented, and the environmental effectiveness of the implementation of the Plan is monitored and reported on through the life of the Plan.	On-going

2 Integration of Environmental Considerations into the Plan

2.1 Introduction

This section details how both the SEA Environmental Report and submissions and observations made to the planning authority on the Environmental Report and SEA process have been taken into account during the preparation of the Meath CAP.

2.2 SEA Consultation

A number of opportunities are integrated into the plan-making process to allow for consultation with the environmental authorities and the general public on the plan and SEA. Submissions and observations were made at each of these stages, and these informed the preparation and finalisation of the Plan and the SEA process.

2.2.1 SEA Scoping Consultation

SEA Scoping (Stage 2) consultation with the Environmental Authorities specified in Article 9(5) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by Regulations S.I. No. 200 of 2011 was undertaken for incorporation of the views of the Environmental Authorities within the Plan or Programme and the SEA Environmental Report.

The SEA Scoping Report was issued to the following Environmental Authorities specified in Article 9(5) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended, on 15 October 2023:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
- The Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications; and
- The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

Submissions / observations on the scoping of the Environmental Report were received from the environmental authorities and comments have been incorporated into the Plan and Environmental Report as set out in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1 SEA Scoping Submissions / Observation from Environmental Authorities

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
<p>Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)</p>	<p>The submission from EPA includes the following comments and recommendations: Ensure that the Plan aligns with national commitments on climate change mitigation and adaptation, (such as the latest National Climate Action Plan) as well as any relevant sectoral or regional adaptation plans and adjacent local authority climate action plans.</p>	<p>The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan.</p>
	<p>The Plan should include a commitment to consider any relevant updated actions, measures or recommendations that may arise in updates to the National Climate Action Plan over the lifetime of the Plan.</p>	
	<p>The Plan and SEA should take into account the recent Climate Council Annual Review report.</p>	<p>The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan and the Environmental Report.</p>
	<p>The relevant objectives and policy commitments of the National Planning Framework and the Eastern and Midlands Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and the Meath County Development Plan should be aligned with and considered, as appropriate.</p>	
	<p>Greenhouse Gas Emission – The direct and indirect impacts of the Plan on greenhouse gas emissions and removals should be assessed. The Agency’s most recent projections reports Ireland’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections 2022-2040 (EPA, 2023) and Ireland’s Provisional Greenhouse Gas Emissions 1990-2022 (EPA, 2023) should be taken into account. The Plan should also integrate and align with the relevant actions in the Climate Action Plan, as appropriate.</p>	<p>The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan and the Environmental Report.</p>
	<p>Climate Adaptation - The Plan should look to improve resilience of existing and planned critical infrastructure, systems and procedures to the effects and variability of climate change. Vulnerable populations should be considered in the context of just transition/adaptation. The cascading effects of proposed adaptation measures should also be considered. Recent extreme weather events could be useful to assist in identifying areas where for further work is needed to improve resilience, e.g. the resilience of critical water service infrastructure to flooding and drought.</p>	

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	<p>Climate Adaptation - The Plan should include appropriate adaptation measures that can be implemented either directly or through relevant land use plans and/or specific plans e.g. Flood Risk Management Plans, River Basin Management Plans etc. The Plan will also help inform local authority land use and transport planning.</p>	
	<p>Climate Adaptation - Additional aspects to consider may include changes in native species and habitats and the spread of invasive species, pests and pathogens. In this regard, the Plant Atlas 2020 project looking at Ireland’s changing flora might be useful to consider.</p>	
	<p>Water Quality - The Plan should take into account the most recent Water Framework Directive water quality status and risk information, available on the EDEN WFD app. Relevant future projections of river flow are available in either EPA research reports (such as HydroPredict, pending), or academic papers related to these projects.</p>	
	<p>Air Quality - The Plan should take into account the Draft National Clean Air Strategy (DECC). The Air Quality in Ireland 2021 Report (EPA, 2022) sets out the most recent status in each of the four air quality zones in Ireland and may be useful to consider. Data on levels of atmospheric pollutants from the EPA’s national ambient air quality monitoring network should also be integrated as appropriate. The pollutants of most concern are traffic-related, including Particulate Matter and Nitrogen Dioxide.</p>	
	<p>Data / Resources - The Submission provides links to a range of publication on Climate Change, which may be of assistance to the Plan</p>	
	<p>State of the Environment (EPA, 2020) - The Submission refers to key relevant areas in the EPA State of the Environment Report (2020), including Chapter 2 (Climate), Chapter 11 (Transport), Chapter 12 (Energy) as well as Chapter 6 (Nature) and Chapter 13 (Environment and Agriculture). An updated report will be published in 2024.</p>	<p>The information provided has informed the preparation of the Environmental Report.</p>

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	<p>SEA and the Plan - The Agency recommends that the Plan includes summary tables outlining the key findings of the SEA and linking the significant environmental effects identified to the proposed mitigation measures, monitoring programme and Plan policies/measures. The Agency recommends including a separate section on ‘Monitoring, Implementation and Reporting’ in the Plan, setting out the provisions for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Plan and periodic reviews. There may be merits in aligning the periodic reviews of the Plan with existing cyclical reporting e.g. Ireland’s Environment, National Planning Framework, Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive etc. The Environmental Report should specify the monitoring frequency and responsibilities and include provisions for reporting on the monitoring.</p> <p>Other Plans and Programmes - The Plan should align with national commitments on climate change mitigation and adaptation. Actions and measures proposed should be consistent with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act, 2021 and the Climate Action Plan, as well as considering any relevant sectoral and regional climate adaptation plans.</p> <p>The Plan will be a key element linking national and international policy commitments with climate action within the local authority area at a community and local level. We also recognise that local authorities will set out in their own local authority climate action plans, their targets to achieve the 50% improvements in energy efficiency, under the Climate Action Plan, as well as the 51% reduction in Greenhouse gas emissions set out in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021.</p> <p>The Agency recommends including a flow diagram or/ schematic, illustrating where the Plan fits within the hierarchy of land-use, climate and related plans. We also recommend including schematics in the Plan, showing the links and key inter-relationships with other key relevant national, regional, sectoral and environmental plans/programmes.</p>	<p>The Plan includes a high level summary of the assessment and mitigation approach. The detail is provided in the Environmental Report.</p> <p>The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan.</p>
<p>Department of Transport</p>	<p>The Department includes examples for Local Authority Climate Action Plans to support national climate policy in context of the transport sector and this includes:</p>	

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Local Authorities can lead by example in their organisations by decarbonising their own vehicle fleets. ■ Local Authorities also have an important role in developing local area networks for EV charging infrastructure to meet the needs of their residents who cannot charge their vehicles at home, and, through the co-location of shared mobility services, to meet the needs of residents who don't own vehicles. ■ Local Authorities have a key role in delivery of active travel programmes by expanding walking and cycling facilities in their areas, including shared mobility services, and enhancing the public realm to increase safety and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists by retrofitting existing infrastructure and providing new infrastructure. ■ Local Authorities can facilitate the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the private car into the design of local communities in line with Transport Orientated Development principles and by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments. ■ Local Authorities can support and advocate for change in travel behaviour amongst their communities through public engagement and community liaison activities. <p>The updated transport decarbonisation pathway has been informed by two core analyses of the Irish transport system undertaken over the past year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the OECD's Redesigning Irish Transport review, undertaken at the request of the Climate Change Advisory Council (link); and ■ refreshed transport decarbonisation pathway modelling, undertaken by the National Transport Authority's modelling team and the Department of Transport <p>The key performance indicators and targets outlined in the CAP23 Transport chapter are intended to illustrate the level of change required by 2030, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ a reduction of fossil fuel use in transport by 50% ■ a reduction in total kilometres driven of 20% ■ a reduced modal share of daily car journeys from 71% to 53% 	<p>The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan and the Environmental Report.</p>

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ a 50% increase in daily active travel journeys; a 130% increase in daily public transport journeys; and a 25% reduction in daily car journeys ■ a 30% shift of all escort to education car journeys to sustainable modes ■ an EV share of total passenger car fleet at 30%, with 100% share of new registrations <p>In addition, Local Authority climate action plans also should recognise the continued need to identify additional measures to deliver the level of ambition required. This includes, amongst others, the identification and implementation of further road space reallocation opportunities, pedestrian and cycling enhancement plans as well as various demand management measures.</p> <p>The submission identifies and includes several policies regarding transport climate action. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Public engagement and Project Acceptance Communications ■ Smart and Sustainable Mobility Workshops / SMP ‘Accelerator’ Workshop programme ■ Demand Management, Parking Policy, Air Quality and Sustainable Mobility ■ Active Travel Infrastructure ■ Road-space Reallocation, DMURS, Accessibility and Public Realm ■ Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning ■ Climate Adaptation ■ EV Charging Infrastructure <p>Refer to the submission for further details.</p>	
<p>The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage</p>	<p>The submission draws attention to the Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Built and Archaeological Heritage (2019) prepared as part of the National Adaptation Framework.</p> <p>The submission further recommends to take into account issues regarding protection of built and archaeological heritage to identify the heritage assets at risk in its area, assess their vulnerability to climate change, increase their resilience and develop disaster risk reduction</p>	<p>The information provided has informed the preparation and assessment in the Environmental Report.</p>

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	<p>policies for direct and indirect risks. For example, it is recommended that the strategies should consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifying the built and archaeological heritage assets in the local authority area including, but not restricted to, structures and sites subject to statutory protection under the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014, or the Planning and Development Acts. 2. Including objectives to carry out climate change risk assessments, including condition assessments, for the historic structures and sites in its area. 3. Including objectives to develop disaster-risk reduction policies addressing direct and indirect risks to the built and archaeological heritage in its area. 4. Including objectives to develop resilience and adaptation strategies for the built and archaeological heritage in its area. 5. Developing the skills capacity within the local authority to address adaptation / mitigation / emergency management issues affecting heritage assets in order to avoid inadvertent loss or damage in the course of climate change adaptation or mitigation works. <p>The Departments draws attention to the upcoming guidance document <i>Improving Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings</i> that will assist retrofitting installers and specifiers in how best to choose and apply energy efficiency measures to the historic building stock. The guidance is also intended to assist building owners and occupants in making decisions about upgrading their buildings, many of which are of architectural heritage significance. It is recommended that all proposed retrofitting projects undertaken or supported by the local authority to buildings of traditional construction should follow the principles and practice set out in that guidance.</p>	
<p>The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine</p>	<p>Socio-economic reliance of coastal communities on Ireland’s seafood industry. Fishing and food security is as key a part of Government Policy. Food Vision 2030 recognises and values the role of primary food producers.</p>	<p>The information provided has informed the preparation of the Environmental Report.</p>

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	<p>There is now ever-increasing demand on the marine space from Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE), Marine Spatial Planning, Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), and other environmental measures.</p> <p>The seafood industry, through both the Sectoral Adaptation Plan (<i>Agriculture, Forest and Seafood Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan</i>) and the annual <i>Climate Action Plan (CAP23)</i> continue to support initiatives to improve understanding of our marine area and ensure sustainable resource use, including through bio and circular economy initiatives. These plans require consideration in the SEA process.</p> <p>Also for consideration in the SEA process is the European Commission’s Communication on the energy transition of the fisheries and aquaculture sector as part of its <i>Fisheries Policy Package</i>. This proposes the establishment of an <i>Energy Transition Partnership (ETP)</i> to develop a roadmap for the energy transition of the sector towards climate neutrality by 2050.</p> <p>Local authorities should include relevant steps to support a Just Transition for the sea fisheries and aquaculture sectors in their Climate Action Plans.</p>	
<p>The Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications: Geological Survey Ireland</p>	<p>Submission encourages the use of GSI datasets and provides information in relation to Geoheritage, Groundwater, Geological Mapping, Geotechnical Database Resources, Geohazards, Geothermal Energy, Natural Resources, Geochemistry of Soils, Surface Waters and Sediments, Geophysical Data, Marine Coastal Unit, the National Coastal Change Assessment, and Physiographic Units.</p>	<p>The information and datasets provided have informed the preparation of the Environmental Report.</p>

2.2.2 Draft Plan - Public Consultation

The Draft Meath CAP, together with the SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Report (NIR) were placed on public display between the 17 November 2023 and the 8 January 2024. The public consultation period was also accompanied by public information events. A total of 17no. submissions and observations were received.

The submission from EPA included recommendation for the monitoring and implementation section of the SEA Environmental Report. The SEA Environmental Report and SEA Statement includes details for regular monitoring of the environmental effects of the implementation of the Plan. This monitoring and its supporting data are considered a 'live' process to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Submissions made on the Draft Plan and associated documents, including the SEA and NIR were reviewed, and a Chief Executive's (CE) Report (January 2024) on the submissions and observations was prepared and issued to the Elected Members for review. All the submissions received were summarised and responded to as appropriate within the CE Report. The CE Report provides a summary of the CE's recommendations for minor, non-material modifications to the Meath CAP as a result of the public consultation process.

Two proposed non-material minor alterations were screened for Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment and no likely significant environmental effects were identified.

The Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 was adopted by the members of the Meath County Council on 29 January 2024.

3 SEA Environmental Report

The SEA Environmental Report has been prepared to comply with the provisions of Article 12 of S.I. 435 of 2004 – European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations – as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011 – European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.

Article 5(1) and Annex I of the *SEA Directive* provides detail on the information to be included in an Environmental Report. **Table 3.1** provides a checklist of the information referred to in Article 5(1) with a confirmation of where the relevant information is contained within the SEA. Refer to the standalone SEA Environmental Report prepared for the Meath CAP.

Table 3.1 Information required under Annex I of the SEA Directive

Information referred to in Article 5(1)	Environmental Report Section
(a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Section 3 & Section 4
(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	Section 5
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	Section 5
(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;	Section 5
(e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	Section 6
(f) the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;	Section 8 and Appendix 8.1
(g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	Section 9 and Appendix 9.1
(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Section 7
(i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10;	Section 10
(j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.	Refer to Non-technical Summary Report

3.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives

A series of Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) were prepared in line with current guidance and also with specific reference to the SEA for the CAP (refer to **Table 3.2**). The SEOs provide a basis for the assessment of the environmental effects of the CAP and are framed in such a manner as to enable the CAP to be fully assessed in environmental terms. Given the position of the CAP beneath the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 in the land use planning hierarchy, the measures identified in the SEA for the Development Plan have also been considered in this assessment, with some modification where appropriate.

SEOs are distinct from the objectives within the CAP, although they often overlap and are developed from international, national and regional policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives.

Table 3.2 Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) for Meath CAP

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
Population & Human Health (PHH)	PHH_1	Ensure Decarbonising Zones does not conflict / contradict with the existing activities and land use objectives in the Meath CDP 2021-2027.
	PHH_2	Protect human health and well-being.
Biodiversity (Flora & Fauna) (B)	B_1	Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites and protected species.
	B_2	Ensure Meath CAP does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and rehabilitation objectives in the Meath CDP 2021-2027.
	B_3	Implement biodiversity protection and enhancement measures wherever feasible to address climate and biodiversity emergency.
Land, Soils & Geology (LSG)	LSG_1	Safeguard soil and mineral resources.
Water Quality (WQ)	WQ_1	Protect, maintain and where necessary improve water quality and the management of watercourses, groundwater and the marine environment, in compliance with the requirements of the WFD objectives and measures.
	WQ_2	Implement and comply with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidelines.
Air Quality & Noise (AN)	AN_1	Minimise emissions of pollutants to air associated with transport.
	AN_2	Minimise noise emissions associated with traffic and transport.
	AN_3	Reduce reliance on motorised travel.
	AN_4	Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality through the reduction of emissions and promotion of sustainable renewable energy and energy efficiency.
Climate Change (CC)	CC_1	Contribute to Ireland's commitment to realising a climate neutral economy by 2050.
	CC_2	Support the delivery of national climate policy as appropriate to the county with the prioritisation and acceleration of evidence-based measures.

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
	CC_3	Deliver Decarbonising Zones (DZ) within County Meath to act as a test for a range of climate mitigation and adaptation measures in a specifically defined area through the identification of emission sectors and outcomes that will assist in the delivery of the National Climate Objective.
Material Assets (MA)	MA_1	Make best use of existing infrastructure and promote the sustainable development of new infrastructure to meet the needs of the county's population.
	MA_2	Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.
	MA_3	Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.
	MA_4	Promote sustainable water use and drainage management.
Cultural Heritage (CH)	CH_1	Protect and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).
	CH_2	Protect and avoid impact on places, features, buildings and landscapes of architectural heritage, (including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAHs)).
Landscape & Visual (LV)	LV_1	Protect and maintain the special qualities of landscape character including coastal character within Meath.
	LV_2	Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape designations as identified in the Meath CDP 2021-2027.

3.2 Assessment of Effects of the Meath Climate Action Plan

The Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 has been subject to an assessment for potential effects arising from the implementation of the Plan on the baseline environment as characterised. The assessment was carried out having regard to the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) established for the aspects of the baseline environment which have potential to be impacted by the Meath CAP.

The Meath Climate Action Plan aligns with the Government's overall *National Climate Objective*, the *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021* and the *Local Authority Climate Action Plan Guidelines*, published by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (March 2023). The Plan also takes account of other relevant climate legislation and policy, a climate change risk assessment and a climate mitigation baseline assessment at a County scale. Therefore, the Meath Climate Action Plan is set within and addresses a broader context of international, EU, national and sectoral climate policy, and hence the overall trust of the Plan will have an overwhelmingly positive effect in terms of the environment.

The Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 includes 71no. Actions set out under the 5 Goals, Thematic Areas and Objectives. The finding of the assessment is that 56no. actions will have either potential positive effects or no effects on the environment. The remaining 15no. actions have potential for either negative effects or for uncertain effects on the environment. Of these only 6no. actions have potential for negative effects. Where potential negative or uncertain environment effects have been identified appropriate mitigation has been provided as set out in **Section 3.3** of this Report.

The CE’s Report provides a summary of submissions received at public consultation stage and made recommendations for 2no. minor, non-material modifications to the Meath CAP. The minor alterations were screened for the requirement for Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment and no likely significant environmental effects were identified.

Given the limited regional scope of the Local Authority Climate Action Plan, transboundary effects do not arise.

3.3 Mitigation Measures

The finding of the environmental assessment in the Environmental Report is that, if unmitigated, a number of the actions of the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 have potential for uncertain or negative effects on aspects of the environment. These potential negative and / or uncertain effects, which derive from potential works resulting from the relevant action, focus primarily on biodiversity, water, climate, heritage and landscape. This section of the Environmental Report identifies measures for the mitigation and avoidance of potential uncertain or negative environmental effects.

Actions arising from the Meath Climate Action Plan must be set within the context of the sustainable and proper planning requirements of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. Therefore, the majority of measures for mitigation of potential negative and / or uncertain environmental effects are achieved through the detailed environmental protective policies and objectives set out in the Development Plan.

The following is a list of the key environmental protective policies (**Table 3.3**) and objectives (**Table 3.4**) included in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, which will ensure that any potential negative or uncertain environmental effects arising from the actions of the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 will be avoided or appropriately mitigated.

Table 3.3 Key Environmental Protective Policies in the Meath Development Plan 2021-2027

Theme	Protective Policies
Chapter 01: Introduction	
International Guidance	INT POL 1: <i>To promote the UNs Sustainable Development Goals within Meath County Council for our customers and stakeholders through the actions and policies taken by the organisation.</i>
Chapter 05: Movement Strategy	
Integration of Sustainable Land Use and Transport Planning	MOV POL 3: <i>To promote sustainable land use planning measures which facilitate transportation efficiency, economic returns on transport investment, minimisation of environmental impacts and a general shift towards the greater use of public transportation throughout the County.</i>
Meath Road Safety Strategy	MOV POL 25: <i>To implement the actions of the Meath Road Safety Strategy and promote road and traffic safety measures in conjunction with Government Departments, the Road Safety Authority and other agencies.</i>
Chapter 06: Infrastructure Strategy	
Water Conservation	INF POL 7: <i>To continue to support Irish Water’s Water Conservation Programme.</i>

Theme	Protective Policies
Water and Public Health	INF POL 8: <i>To continue to work with Irish Water to ensure the protection of public health through the ongoing provision of high-quality drinking water in compliance with drinking water standards.</i>
Protection of Water Resources	INF POL 10: <i>To liaise and work in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the protection and improvement of the County's water resources.</i>
Wastewater Capacity & Access	INF POL 12: <i>To require that in the case of all developments where the public foul sewer network is available or likely to be available and has sufficient capacity, that development shall be connected to it.</i>
Surface Water Quality	INF POL 15: <i>To continue efforts to improve water quality under the Local Government (Water Pollution) Act 1977, as amended and by implementing the measures outlined under the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) and complying with the requirements of the European Communities Environment Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 and other relevant regulations.</i>
Surface Water Management	INF POL 16: <i>To ensure that all planning applications for new development have regard to the surface water management policies provided for in the GDSDS.</i>
Surface Water Drainage and Flood Management	INF POL 17: <i>To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water in the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for surface water drainage and flood management, including the separation of foul and surface water drainage networks where feasible and undertake drainage network upgrades to help remove surface water misconnection and infiltration.</i>
Flood Risk Management	INF POL 18: <i>To implement the "Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (DoEHLG/OPW, 2009) through the use of the sequential approach and application of Justification Tests for Development Management and Development Plans, during the period of this Plan.</i>
Flood Risk Assessment	INF POL 20: <i>To require that a Flood Risk Assessment is carried out for any development proposal, where flood risk may be an issue in accordance with the "Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (DoECLG/OPW, 2009). This assessment shall be appropriate to the scale and nature of risk to and from the potential development and shall consider the impact of climate change.</i>
Surface Water Liaison	INF POL 21: <i>To consult with the Office of Public Works in relation to proposed developments in the vicinity of drainage channels and rivers for which the OPW are responsible.</i>
Riparian Corridor	INF POL 22: <i>To retain a strip of 10 metres on either side of all channels/flood defence embankments where required, to facilitate access thereto.</i>
River Basin Management and Groundwater Protection	INF POL 32: <i>To ensure, through the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan(s) and the associated Programmes of Measures and any other associated legislation or revised plans with all relevant</i>

Theme	Protective Policies
	<i>stakeholders, the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and ground waters throughout the County.</i>
Protection of Salmonid Water Courses	INF POL 33: <i>To protect recognised salmonid water courses (in conjunction with Inland Fisheries Ireland) such as the Boyne and Blackwater catchments, which are recognised to be exceptional in supporting salmonid fish species.</i>
Renewable Energy Sources and Protection of the Environment	INF POL 34: <i>To promote sustainable energy sources, locally based renewable energy alternatives, where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity, natural and built heritage, residential or local amenities.</i>
Chapter 07: Community Building Strategy	
Open space and Protection of Natura Sites	SOC POL 39: <i>To protect the integrity of Natura 2000 sites during the identification of suitable sites for recreation, in particular in terms of their design and use.</i>
Chapter 08: Cultural and Natural Heritage Strategy	
Protection of Sites, Monuments, Places, Areas or Objects of Archaeology Heritage Significance	HER POL 1: <i>To protect sites, monuments, places, areas or objects of the following categories:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sites and monuments included in the Sites and Monuments Record as maintained by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht;</i> • <i>Monuments and places included in the Record of Monuments and Places as established under the National Monuments Acts;</i> • <i>Historic monuments and archaeological areas included in the Register of Historic Monuments as established under the National Monuments Acts;</i> • <i>National monuments subject to Preservation Orders under the National Monuments Acts and national monuments which are in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht or a local authority;</i> • <i>Archaeological objects within the meaning of the National Monuments Acts; and Wrecks protected under the National Monuments Acts or otherwise included in the Shipwreck Inventory maintained by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.</i>
Protection of Archaeological Heritage	HER POL 3: <i>To require, as part of the development management process, archaeological impact assessments, geophysical survey, test excavations or monitoring as appropriate, for development in the vicinity of monuments or in areas of archaeological potential. Where there are upstanding remains, a visual impact assessment may be required.</i>
Protection of Archaeological Heritage	HER POL 4: <i>To require, as part of the development management process, archaeological impact assessments, geophysical survey, test excavations or monitoring as appropriate, where development proposals involve ground clearance of more than half a hectare or for linear developments over one kilometre in length; or developments in proximity to areas with</i>

Theme	Protective Policies
	<i>a density of known archaeological monuments and history of discovery as identified by a suitably qualified archaeologist.</i>
Protection of Architectural Heritage	HER POL 13: <i>To protect and preserve in situ all surviving elements of medieval town defences.</i>
Protection of Architectural Heritage	HER POL 14: <i>To protect and conserve the architectural heritage of the County and seek to prevent the demolition or inappropriate alteration of Protected Structures.</i>
Protection of Protected Structures	HER POL 16: <i>To protect the setting of Protected Structures and to refuse permission for development within the curtilage or adjacent to a protected structure which would adversely impact on the character and special interest of the structure, where appropriate.</i>
Protection of Protected Structures	HER POL 17: <i>To require that all planning applications relating to Protected Structures contain the appropriate accompanying documentation in accordance with the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011) or any variation thereof, to enable the proper assessment of the proposed works.</i>
Protection of Architectural Conservation Areas	HER POL 19: <i>To protect the character of Architectural Conservation Areas in Meath.</i>
Protection of Architectural Heritage	HER POL 21: <i>To encourage the retention, sympathetic maintenance and sustainable re-use of historic buildings, including vernacular dwellings or farm buildings and the retention of historic streetscape character, fabric, detail and features.</i>
Protection of Landscape Heritage	HER POL 26: <i>To encourage the protection and enhancement of heritage gardens and demesne landscapes, and to support, in consultation with the owners, the provision of public access to these sites as appropriate.</i>
Protection of Natural Heritage	HER POL 27: <i>To protect, conserve and enhance the County's biodiversity where appropriate.</i>
Protection of Natural Heritage	HER POL 28: <i>To integrate in the development management process the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and landscape features wherever possible, by minimising adverse impacts on existing habitats (whether designated or not) and by including mitigation and/or compensation measures, as appropriate.</i>
Protection of Habitats and Species, including European Sites	HER POL 31: <i>To ensure that the ecological impact of all development proposals on habitats and species are appropriately assessed by suitably qualified professional(s) in accordance with best practice guidelines – e.g. the preparation of an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA), Screening Statement for Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment, Natura Impact Statement (NIS), species surveys etc. (as appropriate).</i>
Protection of European Sites	HER POL 32: <i>To permit development on or adjacent to designated Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas, Statutory Nature Reserves or those proposed to be designated over the period of the Plan, only where the development has been subject to the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment process and has been carried</i>

Theme	Protective Policies
	<i>out to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, in consultation with National Parks and Wildlife.</i>
Liaison in relation to Protection of sites of European and National Designation	HER POL 33: <i>To have regard to the views and guidance of the National Parks and Wildlife Service in respect of proposed development where there is a possibility that such development may have an impact on a designated European or National site or a site proposed for such designation.</i>
Protection of Biodiversity	HER POL 35: <i>To ensure, where appropriate, the protection and conservation of areas, sites, species and ecological/networks of biodiversity value outside designated sites and to require an appropriate level of ecological assessment by suitably qualified professional(s) to accompany development proposals likely to impact on such areas or species.</i>
Liaison in relation to Protection of Protected Plants, Animals and Birds	HER POL 36: <i>To consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and take account of their views and any licensing requirements, when undertaking, approving or authorising development which is likely to affect plant, animal or bird species protected by law.</i>
Protection of Woodlands, hedgerows and trees	HER POL 37: <i>To encourage the retention of hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatments in rural areas and prevent loss and fragmentation, where practically possible. Where removal of a hedgerow, stone wall or other distinctive boundary treatment is unavoidable, mitigation by provision of the same type of boundary will be required.</i>
Planting of Native Species	HER POL 38: <i>To promote and encourage planting of native hedgerow species in new developments and as part of the Council's own landscaping works.</i>
Protection of Townland Boundary Heritage	HER POL 39: <i>To recognise the archaeological importance of townland boundaries including hedgerows and promote their protection and retention.</i>
Protection of Trees and Woodlands	HER POL 40: <i>To protect and encourage the effective management of native and semi-natural woodlands, groups of trees and individual trees and to encourage the retention of mature trees and the use of tree surgery rather than felling, where possible, when undertaking, approving or authorising development.</i>
Control of Invasive Species	HER POL 43: <i>To promote best practice in the control of invasive species in the carrying out its functions in association with relevant authorities including TII and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.</i>
Management of Invasive Species	HER POL 44: <i>To require all development proposals to address the presence or absence of invasive alien species on proposed development sites and (if necessary) require applicants to prepare and submit an Invasive Species Management Plan where such a species exists to comply with the provisions of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015.</i>
Protection of Geological Sites and Heritage	HER POL 46: <i>To maintain the geological and geomorphological heritage values of County Geological Sites listed in Table 8.7 (of the Meath County</i>

Theme	Protective Policies
	Development Plan 2021-2027) and, through consultation with the Geological Survey of Ireland, protect them from inappropriate development.
Protection of Waterways and Associated Towpaths and Wetlands	HER POL 47: <i>To protect the ecological, recreational, educational, amenity and flood alleviation potential of navigational and non-navigational waterways within the County, towpaths and adjacent wetlands.</i>
Protection of Wetlands	HER POL 48: <i>To manage, enhance and protect the wetlands of the County having regard to the 'County Meath Wetland Survey 2010' and ensure that there is an appropriate level of assessment in relation to proposals which would involve draining, reclaiming or infilling of wetland habitats.</i>
Protection of Coastal Zones	HER POL 49: <i>To protect the character, visual, recreational, ecological and amenity value of the coast and provisions for public access, in assessing proposals for development.</i>
Protection of Natural Coastal Defences	HER POL 50: <i>To ensure that the County's natural coastal defences, such as beaches, sand dunes, coastal wetlands and estuaries are not compromised by inappropriate works or development.</i>
Protection of Landscape and Landscape Character	HER POL 52: <i>To protect and enhance the quality, character, and distinctiveness of the landscapes of the County in accordance with national policy and guidelines and the recommendations of the Meath Landscape Character Assessment (2007) in Appendix 5, to ensure that new development meets high standards of siting and design.</i>
Chapter 09: Rural Development Strategy	
Development Management Standards and Environmental Protection	RD POL 44: <i>To ensure that new development meets the highest standards in terms of environmental protection.</i>
Protection of Groundwater	RD POL 45: <i>To utilise a "Groundwater Protection Response Matrix" to assist in deciding the appropriateness of various categories of development to areas that have different levels of vulnerability in terms of groundwater contamination. This approach will support the proper input of information into planning decision-making processes.</i>
Chapter 10: Climate Change Strategy	
Environmental Protection	This chapter includes policies listed in other chapters of the Development Plan, including the following, which are also highlighted in this table: MOV POL 3; INF POL 20; INF POL 34; HER POL 43; and HER POL 44.
Chapter 11: Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives	
Protection of Field Boundaries	DM POL 9: <i>To support the retention of field boundaries for their ecological/habitat significance, as demonstrated by a suitably qualified professional. Where removal of a hedgerow, stone wall or other distinctive boundary treatment is unavoidable, mitigation by provision of the same boundary type will be required.</i>

Table 3.4 Key Environmental Protective Objectives in the Meath Development Plan 2021-2027

Meath Development Plan 2021-2027 Theme	Protective Objectives
Chapter 06: Infrastructure Strategy	
Sustainable Water and Drainage	INF OBJ 1: <i>To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water to promote the sustainable development of water supply and drainage infrastructure in the county and the region, in accordance with the objectives and recommendations set out in the Greater Dublin Drainage Study and Irish Water’s Water Services Strategic Plan.</i>
Sustainable Water Conservation	INF OBJ 7: <i>To promote the sustainable use of water and water conservation in existing and new development within the County and encourage demand management measures among all water users.</i>
Sustainable Ground and Surface Water Protection	INF OBJ 8: <i>To protect both ground and surface water resources and work with Irish Water to develop and implement Water Safety Plans to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchment.</i>
Surface and Ground Water Protection	INF OBJ 11: <i>To ensure that all development shall connect to the public foul sewer network where available within the County.</i>
Surface and Ground Water Protection	INF OBJ 18: <i>To ensure that new developments provide for the separation of foul and surface water drainage networks within application site boundaries.</i>
Surface and Ground Water Protection	INF OBJ 19 : <i>To ensure that developments permitted by the Council which involve discharge of wastewater to surface waters or groundwaters comply with the requirements of the EU Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations and EU Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations.</i>
Flood Risk Management	INF OBJ 20: <i>To implement the Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG/OPW 2009) or any updated guidelines. A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment should be submitted where appropriate.</i>
Protection of Floodplains	INF OBJ 21: <i>To restrict new development within floodplains other than development which satisfies the Justification Test, as outlined in the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 for Planning Authorities (or any updated guidelines).</i>
Protection of Floodplains, Wetlands and Coastal Areas	INF OBJ 23: <i>To protect and enhance the County’s floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas subject to flooding as “green infrastructure” which provide space for storage and conveyance of floodwater, and ensure that development does not impact on important wetland sites within river/stream catchments.</i>
Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems	INF OBJ 25: <i>To require the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable drainage techniques where</i>

Meath Development Plan 2021-2027 Theme	Protective Objectives
	<i>appropriate, for new development or for extensions to existing developments, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks.</i>
Improve Water Quality	INF OBJ 29: <i>To strive to achieve 'good status' in all water bodies in compliance with the Water Framework Directive and to cooperate with the implementation of the National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021.</i>
Protection of Natural Coastal Defences	INF OBJ 30: <i>To ensure the County's natural coastal defences, such as beaches, sand dunes, salt marshes and estuary lands, are protected and are not compromised by inappropriate works or forms of development.</i>
Protection of Coastal Landscape and Visual Amenity	INF OBJ 34: <i>To strictly control the nature and pattern of development within coastal areas and ensure that it is designed and landscaped to the highest standards, and sited appropriately so as not to detract from the visual amenity of the area. Development shall be prohibited where the development poses a significant or potential threat to coastal habitats or features, and/or where the development is likely to result in altered patterns of erosion or deposition elsewhere along the coast.</i>
Protection of Groundwater	INF OBJ 37: <i>To implement the recommendations of the Meath Groundwater Protection Scheme(s).</i>
Protection of Riparian Corridors	INF OBJ 38: <i>To establish riparian corridors free from new development along all significant watercourses and streams in the County as follows: -A 10 metre wide riparian buffer strip measured from the top of the bank either side of all watercourses in urban areas; - A 30m wide riparian buffer strip from top of bank to either side of all watercourses is required as a minimum outside of urban areas.</i>
Renewable Energy Sources and Protection of the Environment	INF OBJ 39: <i>To support Ireland's renewable energy commitments outlined in national policy by facilitating the development and exploitation of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, geothermal, hydro and bio-energy at suitable locations within the County where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or local amenities so as to provide for further residential and enterprise development within the county.</i>
Waste management and Protection of Human Health	INF OBJ 59: <i>To seek to ensure, in cooperation with relevant authorities, that waste management facilities are appropriately managed and monitored according to best practice to maximise efficiencies to protect human health and the natural environment.</i>
Enhance Waste Recovery / Recycling	INF OBJ 67: <i>To require developers to prepare construction and demolition waste management plans for new construction projects over certain thresholds which shall meet the relevant recycling/recovery targets for such waste in accordance with the national legislation and national and regional waste management policy.</i>
Mitigation and Reduction of Adverse Noise Impacts	INF OBJ 73: <i>To support and facilitate the preparation of strategic noise maps and action plans, in conjunction with EMRA, that support</i>

Meath Development Plan 2021-2027 Theme	Protective Objectives
	<i>proactive measures to avoid, mitigate and minimise noise, in all instances where it is likely to have adverse impacts.</i>
Mitigation and Reduce Light Pollution	INF OBJ 74: <i>To require that outdoor lighting proposals minimise the harmful effects of light pollution and to ensure that new street lighting is appropriate to a particular location and that environmentally sensitive areas are protected from inappropriate forms of illumination.</i>
Chapter 08 Cultural and Natural Heritage Strategy	
Protection of Recorded Monument or Zone of Archaeological Potential	HER OBJ 2: <i>To ensure that development in the vicinity of a Recorded Monument or Zone of Archaeological Potential is sited and designed in a sensitive manner with a view to minimal detracting from the monument or its setting.</i>
Protection of Archaeological Landscape	HER OBJ 3: <i>To protect important archaeological landscapes from inappropriate development.</i>
Protection of Architectural Conservation Area	HER OBJ 17: <i>To promote best conservation practice and encourage the use of appropriately qualified professional advisors, tradesmen and craftsmen, with recognised conservation expertise, for works to protected structures or historic buildings in an Architectural Conservation Area.</i>
Protection of Architectural Conservation Area	HER OBJ 22: <i>To avoid the demolition of structures and the removal of features and street furniture which contribute to the character of an ACA. The Council will require that any planning application for demolition or alteration within an ACA be accompanied by a measured and photographic survey, condition report and architectural heritage assessment.</i>
Protection of Industrial Heritage	HER OBJ 26: <i>To require an architectural / archaeological assessment, as appropriate, which references the Meath Industrial Heritage Survey and other relevant sources, for all proposed developments on industrial heritage structures or sites.</i>
Protection of Heritage Landscape	HER OBJ 28: <i>To discourage development that would adversely affect the character, the principal components of, or the setting of historic parks, gardens and demesnes of heritage significance.</i>
Protection of Heritage Landscape	HER OBJ 29: <i>To require that proposals for development in designated landscapes and demesnes include an appraisal of the landscape, designed views and vistas, including a tree survey, where relevant, in order to inform site appropriate design proposals.</i>
Protection of European Sites	HER OBJ 33: <i>To ensure an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directives (92/43/EEC) and in accordance with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009 and relevant EPA and European Commission guidance documents, is carried out in respect of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary for the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect on a</i>

Meath Development Plan 2021-2027 Theme	Protective Objectives
	<i>Natura 2000 site(s), either individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, in view of the site's conservation objectives.</i>
Protection of European and National Designated Sites	<i>HER OBJ 34: To protect and conserve the conservation value of candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas as identified by the Minister for the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and any other sites that may be proposed for designation during the lifetime of this Plan in accordance with the provisions of the Habitats and Birds Directives and to permit development in or affecting same only in accordance with the provisions of those Directives as transposed into Irish Law.</i>
Protection of Protected Plants, Animals and Birds	<i>HER OBJ 35: To ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact, incapable of satisfactory avoidance or mitigation, on plant, animal or bird species protected by law.</i>
Protection of Landscape and Landscape Character	<i>HER OBJ 49: To ensure that the management of development will have regard to the value of the landscape, its character, importance, sensitivity and capacity to absorb change as outlined in Appendix 5 Meath Landscape Character Assessment and its recommendations.</i>
Protection of Protected Views and Prospects	<i>HER OBJ 56: To preserve the views and prospects listed in Appendix 10, in Volume 2 and on Map 8.6 (of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027) and to protect these views from inappropriate development which would interfere unduly with the character and visual amenity of the landscape.</i>
Protection of Features Important to Coherence of the Natura 2000 Network	<i>HER OBJ 60: To encourage, pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), the management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.</i>
Chapter 09: Rural Development Strategy	
Protection of Aquifers and Water Sources	<i>RUR DEV SO 2: To identify and protect rural resources such as locally and regionally important aquifers and water sources from development which would prejudice their sustainable future usage.</i>
Protection of European Sites	<i>RUR DEV SO 9: To ensure that plans and projects associated with rural development will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment Screening and those plans or projects which could, either individually or in-combination with other plans and projects, have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site (or sites) undergo a full Appropriate Assessment.</i>
Chapter 10: Climate Change Strategy	
Environmental Protection	This chapter includes objectives listed in other chapters of the Development Plan, including the following, which are also highlighted in this table: INF OBJ 19; INF OBJ 23; INF OBJ 25; INF OBJ 29; INF OBJ 30; INF OBJ 39; and RUR DEV SO 2.

Meath Development Plan 2021-2027 Theme	Protective Objectives
Chapter 11: Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives	
Protection of Trees and Hedgerows	DM OBJ 11: <i>Existing trees and hedgerows of biodiversity and/or amenity value shall be retained, where possible</i>

The key environmental protective policies and objectives which will ensure avoidance and mitigation of potential uncertain and / or negative environmental effects are set out in **Table 3.5**.

Table 3.5 Mitigation Measures for Potential Negative and / or Uncertain Environmental Effects of Actions of the Meath Climate Action Plan

(SEO Key: B – Biodiversity, PHH – Population & Human Health, LSG – Land, Soils & Geology, WQ – Water Quality, AN – Air Quality & Noise, CC – Climate Change, MA – Material Assets, CH – Cultural Heritage, LV – Landscape & Visual)

Actions	Description	Potential Negative SEO Effects	Potential Uncertain SEO Effects	Mitigation Measures (Refer also to Tables 9.1A & 9.1 B in Appendix 9.1)
Goal 2				
2	Continue to work with appropriate external stakeholders to deliver social housing at a BER B2 or cost optimal standard including provision of Energy Efficient Design, on-site renewable energy, EV Charging Facilities, SuDS, and nature based solutions, as feasible.	B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1)	AN (AN2) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)	Due regard will be had to the environmental protection measures detailed in the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 and to the following protective policies and objectives of Meath County Development Plan (MCDP). MCDP Policies: INT POL 1; INF POL 10; INF POL 15; INF POL 20; INF POL 22; INF POL 32; INF POL 34; HER POL 1; HER POL 3; HER POL 13; HER POL 16; HER POL 27; HER POL 31; HER POL 32; HER POL 35; HER POL 37; HER POL 46; HER POL 49; HER POL 52; RD POL 45; DM POL 9; Objectives: INF OBJ 7; INF OBJ 8; INF OBJ 20; INF OBJ 21; INF OBJ 23; INF OBJ 30; INF OBJ 34; INF OBJ 38; HER OBJ 3; HER OBJ 22; HER OBJ 28; HER OBJ 33; HER OBJ 34; HER OBJ 49; HER OBJ 60; DM OBJ 11.
9	Undertake deep retrofit and install renewable energy sources as appropriate on LA owned buildings.	CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)	B (B1, B2, B3) WQ (WQ1), AN (AN2)	
10	Construct all new LA properties to A2 Energy Rating or higher including provision of Energy Efficient Design, on-site renewable energy, EV Charging Facilities, SuDs, and nature based solutions, where feasible.		B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1) CH (CH1, CH2)	
11	All Buy and Renew acquisition properties should be retrofitted to a B2 BER rating or higher including provision of Energy Efficient Design, on-site renewable energy, EV Charging		B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1) CH (CH1, CH2)	

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Actions	Description	Potential Negative SEO Effects	Potential Uncertain SEO Effects	Mitigation Measures (Refer also to Tables 9.1A & 9.1 B in Appendix 9.1)
	Facilities, SuDs, and nature based solutions, as feasible.			
14	New Building projects designed to nZEB standard including provision of Energy Efficient Design, on-site renewable energy, EV Charging Facilities, SuDs, and nature based solutions.	B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1)	AN (AN2) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)	
15	Promote the reuse and refurbishment of vacant and derelict properties in town centres and simultaneously promote the sustainable use of these properties for appropriate active town centre uses.		B (B3) CH (CH1, CH2)	
16	Increase active travel usage in town centres through improved sustainable active travel proposals and an enhanced pedestrian and public realm environment.		B (B1, B2, B3), WQ (WQ1)	
Goal 3				
4	Plant native woodland on appropriate LA owned lands.		B (B1, B2, B3)	Due regard will be had to the environmental protection measures detailed in the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 and to the following protective policies and objectives of Meath County Development Plan (MCDP). Policies: INT POL 1; INF POL 10; INF POL 15; INF POL 20; INF POL 22; INF POL 32; INF POL 34; HER POL 1; HER POL 3; HER POL 13; HER POL 16; HER POL 27; HER POL 31; HER POL 32; HER POL 35; HER POL 37; HER POL 46; HER POL 49; HER POL 52; RD POL 45; DM POL 9; Objectives: INF OBJ 7; INF OBJ 8; INF OBJ 20; INF OBJ 21; INF OBJ 23; INF OBJ 30; INF OBJ 34; INF OBJ 38; HER OBJ 3; HER OBJ 22; HER OBJ 28; HER OBJ 33; HER OBJ
8	Undertake climate risk assessment of local authority owned heritage assets (natural, built and cultural). Carry out regular programme of inspection, maintenance and phased conservation works to develop climate resilience.		B (B1, B2, B3) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) CH (CH1, CH2)	

Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 - 2029
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement

Actions	Description	Potential Negative SEO Effects	Potential Uncertain SEO Effects	Mitigation Measures (Refer also to Tables 9.1A & 9.1 B in Appendix 9.1)
				34; HER OBJ 49; HER OBJ 60; DM OBJ 11.
Goal 4				
7	Increase number of safe routes to school scheme, where feasible.		B (B1, B2, B3) WQ (WQ1)	Due regard will be had to the environmental protection measures detailed in the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 and to the following protective policies and objectives of Meath County Development Plan (MCDP). Policies: INT POL 1; INF POL 10; INF POL 15; INF POL 20; INF POL 22; INF POL 32; INF POL 34; HER POL 1; HER POL 3; HER POL 13; HER POL 16; HER POL 27; HER POL 31; HER POL 32; HER POL 35; HER POL 37; HER POL 46; HER POL 49; HER POL 52; RD POL 45; DM POL 9; Objectives: INF OBJ 7; INF OBJ 8; INF OBJ 20; INF OBJ 21; INF OBJ 23; INF OBJ 30; INF OBJ 34; INF OBJ 38; HER OBJ 3; HER OBJ 22; HER OBJ 28; HER OBJ 33; HER OBJ 34; HER OBJ 49; HER OBJ 60; DM OBJ 11.
8	To liaise with the OPW in the identification of new or the reinforcement of existing flood defences and protection measures.	B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1) MA (MA3, MA4) LV (LV1, LV2)	AN (AN1, AN2) CH (CH1, CH2)	
9	Review of Flood events and Flood susceptibility of infrastructure and liaise with relevant MCC Sections and Uisce Éireann to identify assets at risk from flooding/extreme rainfall to inform and implement low-cost 'minor works' flood relief schemes.	B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1) MA (MA3, MA4) LV (LV1, LV2)	AN (AN1, AN2) CH (CH1, CH2)	
10	Carry out a Coastal Erosion and Flood Risk Study for County Meath and implement the recommendations while prioritising nature based solutions.	B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1) CC (CC1, CC2) LV (LV1, LV2)	AN (AN1, AN2) MA (MA3) CH (CH1, CH2)	
Goal 5				
10	Support development of enterprise hubs to facilitate remote working.		B (B1, B2, B3) LSG (LSG1) WQ (WQ1, WQ2) AN (AN2) MA (MA3, MA4) CH (CH1, CH2) LV (LV1, LV2)	Due regard will be had to the environmental protection measures detailed in the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 and to the following protective policies and objectives of Meath County Development Plan (MCDP). Policies: INT POL 1; INF POL 10; INF POL 15; INF POL 20; INF POL 22; INF POL 32; INF POL 34; HER POL 1; HER POL 3; HER POL 13; HER POL 16; HER POL 27; HER POL 31; HER POL 32; INF POL 35; HER POL 37; HER POL 46; HER POL 49; HER POL 52; RD POL 45; DM POL 9;
12	In4Green Urbact Network Project: Complete the Integrated Action Plan for Navan. (Plan objectives		B (B1, B2, B3) WQ (WQ1)	

Actions	Description	Potential Negative SEO Effects	Potential Uncertain SEO Effects	Mitigation Measures (Refer also to Tables 9.1A & 9.1 B in Appendix 9.1)
	include strengthening walking and cycling, and optimising traffic access to reduce through traffic and to facilitate high quality public transport services; behavioural change linking to 2050 Vision)			31; HER POL 32; HER POL 35; HER POL 37; HER POL 46; HER POL 49; HER POL 52; RD POL 45; DM POL 9; Objectives: INF OBJ 7; INF OBJ 8; INF OBJ 20; INF OBJ 21; INF OBJ 23; INF OBJ 30; INF OBJ 34; INF OBJ 38; HER OBJ 3; HER OBJ 22; HER OBJ 28; HER OBJ 33; HER OBJ 34; HER OBJ 49; HER OBJ 60; DM OBJ 11.

The adoption of the mitigation measures within the Meath CAP, in combination with the development planning and control related environmental protection measures defined in the Meath County Development Plan will prevent and mitigate any potential negative environmental effects due to the implementation of the Plan. No further mitigation measures are required.

4 Assessment of Alternatives for the Meath CAP

4.1 Overview

One of the critical roles of the SEA was to facilitate an evaluation of the likely environmental consequences of a range of alternative scenarios for the implementation of the Meath CAP. Article 5(1) of the SEA Directive requires the Environmental Report to consider reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme and the significant environmental effects of the alternatives selected.

Alternatives put forward should be reasonable, realistic and capable of implementation. They should also be in line with the appropriate strategic level at which the plan will be implemented within the national planning hierarchy. As preparation of the Meath County Council Climate Action Plan is a statutory requirement under Section 16 of the Climate Act, 'do-nothing' or 'do-minimum' scenarios are not viable alternatives.

Reasonable alternatives are assessed against the Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) (refer to **Section 3** of this Report), established for the assessment of the Meath CAP against the baseline environment. The purpose is to determine if the reasonable alternatives result in positive, negative, neutral or uncertain environmental outcomes. This assessment process can result in mixed-effects outcomes.

4.2 Assessment of Alternatives

Three reasonable alternatives for the Meath CAP have been identified and assessed as set out in **Table 7.1**. The potential effects of the reasonable alternatives on the SEOs categorised as follows:

- Potential Positive Environmental Impact (indicated by '+')
- Potential Negative Environmental Impact (indicated by '-')
- Potential Positive and Negative Environmental Impacts (indicated by '+/-').
- Uncertain Environmental Impact ((indicated by '?').
- Neutral, No or Insignificant Environmental Impact (indicated by '0')

Table 7.1 Assessment of Alternatives for the Meath CAP

Reasonable Alternative	Description	SEO	Environmental Assessment	Environmental Evaluation
<p>Alternative 1</p> <p>Target reducing GHG from the sectors with highest emissions to mitigate the impacts of climate change</p>	<p>This is a viable alternative that could achieve a significant reduction in GHG emissions by prioritizing and supporting climate mitigation related action for areas of direct or reasonable influence to Meath County Council, e.g. the Residential and Transport sectors.</p>	PHH_1	+/-	<p>This alternative will lead to some positive environmental effects and will result in the reduction of GHG emissions in sectors that contribute significantly in terms of GHG emission in the County – the Residential and Transport sectors.</p> <p>It is less likely that this alternative will deliver the wide-ranging climate mitigation and offsetting related actions, which will be required to fully realise GHG emission reduction potential in the County. While improving the situation, it is also less likely this alternative would define a wide range of climate adaptation measures that would maximise protection for biodiversity, heritage resources, environmental receptors and people from climate change risks.</p> <p>By focusing on specific sectors, it is also likely that this alternative will not bring the community-wide response that is required to appropriately address climate change and adaptation.</p> <p>In comparison to other alternatives, this approach may generate negative environmental effects, which would not be counterbalanced by the positive environmental effects associated with other alternatives.</p>
		PHH_2	+/-	
		B_1	+/-	
		B_2	+/-	
		B_3	+/-	
		LSG_1	0	
		WQ_1	0	
		WQ_2	0	
		AN_1	+	
		AN_2	+	
		AN_3	+	
		AN_4	0	
		CC_1	+	
		CC_2	+	
		CC_3	+/-	
		MA_1	-	
		MA_2	+/-	
		MA_3	+/-	
MA_4	+/-			
CH_1	0			
CH_2	0			
LV_1	0			
LV_2	0			

Reasonable Alternative	Description	SEO	Environmental Assessment	Environmental Evaluation
<p>Alternative 2</p> <p>A balanced focus on both climate mitigation and adaptation across several theme areas and all socio-economic sectors</p>	<p>This alternative would have enhanced potential to reduce GHG emissions across multiple sectors, potential to offset GHG emissions, and greater potential to protect the local community and the environment from climate change related risks.</p>	PHH_1	+/-	<p>This alternative will broadly deliver suitably wide ranging and effective climate action. The approach has the potential to generate multiple positive environmental effects, including a reduction in GHG emissions at organisational and sectoral levels, in addition to a variety of other environmental benefits.</p> <p>The alternative will place a balanced emphasis on both climate mitigation and adaptation action. However, with focus on theme areas and all socio-economic sectors, the approach would benefit from wider community engagement, support and initiative so as to realise maximum potential.</p>
		PHH_2	+	
		B_1	+	
		B_2	+	
		B_3	+/-	
		LSG_1	+/-	
		WQ_1	+/-	
		WQ_2	+/-	
		AN_1	+/-	
		AN_2	+/-	
		AN_3	+/-	
		AN_4	+	
		CC_1	+	
		CC_2	+	
		CC_3	+/-	
		MA_1	+/-	
		MA_2	+/-	
		MA_3	+/-	
		MA_4	+/-	
		CH_1	+	
CH_2	+			
LV_1	+			
LV_2	+			

Reasonable Alternative	Description	SEO	Environmental Assessment	Environmental Evaluation
<p>Alternative 3</p> <p>A balanced focus on both climate mitigation and adaptation across several theme areas and all socio-economic sectors and all socio-economic sectors, and which has a strong community engagement emphasis, which underpins, supports and drives climate actions</p>	<p>This alternative would have enhanced potential to reduce GHG emissions across multiple sectors, potential to offset GHG emissions, and greater potential to protect the local community and the environment from climate change related risks.</p> <p>Climate mitigation and adaptation actions across a wide breath of theme areas would have better community level and organizational support given its strong community engagement emphasis.</p>	PHH_1	+	<p>Alternative 3 has the greatest potential to deliver effective climate action given its inclusive, encompassing approach and its strong emphasis on community engagement. This community support will support better participation in climate action at community level and across all environmental aspects.</p>
		PHH_2	+	
		B_1	+	
		B_2	+	
		B_3	+	
		LSG_1	+	
		WQ_1	+	
		WQ_2	+	
		AN_1	+	
		AN_2	+	
		AN_3	+	
		AN_4	+	
		CC_1	+	
		CC_2	+	
		CC_3	+	
		MA_1	+	
		MA_2	+	
		MA_3	+	
MA_4	+			
CH_1	+			
CH_2	+			
LV_1	+			
LV_2	+			

4.3 Reasoning for Selection of the Preferred Alternative

Alternative 3 is selected as the preferred approach as it has the greatest potential to deliver the most-effective response to climate action given the inclusive, encompassing nature, and its strong community engagement emphasis.

Alternative 3 will place a balanced emphasis on climate mitigation and adaptation actions, ensuring climate change related risks across all environmental aspects, are adequately understood and managed at all levels.

5 Monitoring Measures

Monitoring of the Plan and its implications on the environment is important to ensure that the environment is not adversely affected through the implementation of the Plan. In accordance with Article 10 of the SEA Directive, monitoring must be carried out of the significant environmental effects directly related to the implementation of the Plan *“in order to, inter alia, identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action.”*

Monitoring is based around indicators which allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives (**Section 3**) used in the assessment. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the targets. The monitoring programme may be updated to deal with specific environmental issues - including unforeseen effects - as they arise. Such issues may be identified by the Council or identified to the Council by other agencies.

Meath County Council is responsible for monitoring and the preparation of monitoring evaluation report(s), the publication of these reports and, if necessary, the carrying out of corrective action. It is recommended that the monitoring for the Meath CAP and review is undertaken in parallel with monitoring and review of the Meath County Development Plan for efficiency and given that similar data sets will be used to measure the progress of each plan.

Environmental indicator assessment during monitoring can show positive / neutral impacts or negative impacts on the environment. Where an indicator value highlights a positive / neutral impact on the environment, it is likely that the objectives of the Meath CAP are well-defined with regard to the environment. Conversely where the objectives of the Meath CAP have a negative impact on the environment, it may be necessary to review the objectives of the Meath CAP or to take some other form of intervention. For example, if an objective is having a significant adverse impact, an amendment may be considered during the lifetime of the Meath CAP.

Refer to **Table 5.1** below for the monitoring programme set for the SEA which includes details on the indicators, targets and data sources to monitor the progress of the Meath Climate Action Plan.

Table 5.1 Environmental Monitoring Programme

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Source
Population & Human Health (PHH)	PHH_1	Ensure Decarbonising Zones does not conflict / contradict with the existing activities and land use objectives in the Meath CDP 2021-2027.	To comply with the policies, objectives and land use objectives of the Meath CDP.	No non-compliances with the policies, objectives and land use objectives of the Meath CDP 2021-2027. Individual developments within decarbonizing zone shall be subject to planning permission which are compliant with Meath CDP.	Meath County Council monitoring of the CDP policies and objectives.
	PHH_2	Protect human health and well-being.	Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan.	No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan	Consultations with EPA, Central Statistics Office (CSO) and Health Service Executive (HSE)
Biodiversity (Flora & Fauna) (B)	B_1	Preserve, protect, maintain and where appropriate enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, including internationally, EU and nationally designated sites and protected species.	To comply with the conservation objectives for the Natura 2000 Sites and to maintain or restore the favourable conditions of the qualifying interests (SACs) and special conservation interests (SPAs) of the habitats and species of community interest.	Ensure there is compliance with the attributes and targets set with the conservation objectives for the Natura 2000 Sites. Ensure there is no adverse impacts on the condition of European Sites, habitats and species as a result of the Meath CAP.	Consultation with NPWS and EPA. Meath County Council monitoring likely significant environmental effects of the developments.
	B_2	Ensure Meath CAP does not contradict biodiversity protection, restoration and	To comply with the biodiversity policies and	No contravention of the biodiversity policies and	Meath County Council monitoring likely significant environmental effects of the

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Source
		rehabilitation objectives in the Meath CDP 2021-2027.	objectives of the Meath County Development Plan	objectives of the Meath County Development Plan.	developments and compliance with policies and objectives of the CDP.
	B_3	Implement biodiversity protection and enhancement measures wherever feasible to address climate and biodiversity emergency.	Condition of habitats impacted by climate change. Number and geographical distribution of Species or Species population trends impacted by climate change. Compliance of action and development supported by the plan with policies providing for the protection and enhancement of Biodiversity and flora and fauna defined in the County's Biodiversity Action Plan.	Ensure no habitats are impacted by the effects of climate change. Ensure no reduction in the number of geographic distribution of species as a result of climate change effects. No contravention of policies providing for the protection and enhancement of Biodiversity and flora and fauna defined in the County's Biodiversity Action Plan.	Meath County Council monitoring likely significant environmental effects of the developments and compliance with policies and objectives of the CDP.
Land, Soils & Geology (LSG)	LSG_1	Safeguard soil and mineral resources.	Number of instances of significant adverse impacts on mineral resources or soils occurring, including the pollution, loss or degradation of mineral resources or soils, as a result of action and development supported by the plan.	No instances of significant adverse impacts on mineral resources or soils occurring as a result of action and development supported by the plan.	Meath County Council Consultation with Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) and GSI data and maps
Water Quality (WQ)	WQ_1	Protect, maintain and where necessary improve water quality and the management of watercourses, groundwater and the marine environment,	Reference to EPA WFD Monitoring programme and status of surface waterbodies, groundwater	To comply with the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (SI No. 722/2003). The regulation objectives include the	Meath County Council Consultation with EPA and EPA water quality monitoring reports.

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Source
		in compliance with the requirements of the WFD objectives and measures.	bodies, and bathing water quality reported.	attainment of good status in waterbodies that are of lesser status at present and retaining good status or better where such status exists.	
	WQ_2	Implement and comply with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management and Sustainable Drainage Systems Guidelines	Number of incompatible developments (supported by the plan) permitted within flood risk areas.	Implementation of Flood Risk Management Guidelines and to ensure that developments granted planning permissions are on appropriately zoned lands.	Meath County Council Consultation with OPW
Air Quality & Noise (AN)	AN_1	Minimise emissions of pollutants to air associated with transport.	Number of exceedances of ambient air quality standards in the County, as monitored under the EPA's National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Network.	No significant adverse air quality impact on sensitive receptors. Adhere to relevant Development Management Standards defined in the CDP relating to the protection of air quality.	Meath County Council Consultation with Roads Authorities and EPA
	AN_2	Minimise noise emissions associated with traffic and transport.	Number of sensitive receptors exposed to noise nuisance.	No sensitive receptors exposed to nuisance noise in the County.	Meath County Council Consultation with Roads Authorities
	AN_3	Reduce reliance on motorised travel	Degree of modal shift transport options.	Maximum use of non-motorised transport options.	Meath County Council Consultation with NTA
	AN_4	Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality through the reduction of emissions and promotion of	Number of exceedances of ambient air quality standards in the County, as monitored under the EPA's National	No significant adverse air quality impact on sensitive receptors.	Meath County Council Consultation with EPA

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Source
		sustainable renewable energy and energy efficiency.	Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Network.	Adhere to relevant Development Management Standards defined in the CDP relating to the protection of air quality.	
Climate Change (CC)	CC_1	Contribute to Ireland's commitment to realising a climate neutral economy by 2050.	Level of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions in the County. Level of renewable energy infrastructure in the County.	Reduce GHG emissions associated with the Energy sector in the County. Increase the level of renewable energy infrastructure in the County.	Meath County Council Consultation with EPA.
	CC_2	Support the delivery of national climate policy as appropriate to the county with the prioritisation and acceleration of evidence-based measures.	Level of GHG emissions in the County	Reduce GHG emissions for all sectors in the County.	Meath County Council Consultation with EPA.
	CC_3	Deliver Decarbonising Zones (DZ) within County Meath to act as a test for a range of climate mitigation and adaptation measures in a specifically defined area through the identification of emission sectors and outcomes that will assist in the delivery of the National Climate Objective.	Level of GHG emissions in the Decarbonising Zone.	Reduce Decarbonising Zone GHG emissions to Net Zero.	Meath County Council Consultation with EPA.
Material Assets (MA)	MA_1	Make best use of existing infrastructure and promote the sustainable development of new infrastructure to meet the needs of the county's population.	Number of incompatible developments (supported by the plan) adversely affecting existing or planned infrastructure, including water supply, wastewater management, energy and transport infrastructure.	No incompatible development (supported by the plan) adversely affecting existing or planned material assets infrastructure.	Meath County Council, Consultation with Uisce Éireann, Gas Networks Ireland, ESB Networks and Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Source
	MA_2	Promote sustainable transportation including increased use of public transport and active travel measures.	<p>% change in modal split.</p> <p>Kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network.</p> <p>Kilometres of permanent integrated cycling network.</p> <p>Number of Electric Vehicle charging points in the county.</p> <p>Total Area of road reallocated for sustainable alternatives.</p>	<p>Percentage increase in the number of public transport users in the County</p> <p>Increase kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network.</p> <p>Increase kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network.</p> <p>Increase number of Electric Vehicle charging points in the county.</p> <p>Increase Total Area of road reallocated for sustainable alternatives</p>	Meath County Council Consultation with Transport Infrastructure Ireland / NTA.
	MA_3	Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.	<p>Tonnes of hazardous waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually.</p> <p>Tonnes of W.E.E.E. waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually.</p> <p>Tonnes of Bulky waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually.</p> <p>Tonnes of garden waste received at Council Waste</p>	<p>Increase waste recycling in the County.</p> <p>Reduce waste generation in the County.</p>	Meath County Council Consultation with Regional Waste Authority.

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Source
			Management Facilities annually.		
	MA_4	Promote sustainable water use and drainage management.	Level of water use in the County. Compliance with Sustainable Drainage System (SuDs) related development management standards defined in the CDP.	Reduced water use in the county. All development (supported by the plan) must comply with SuDs related development management standards defined in the CDP.	Meath County Council Consultation with Uisce Éireann.
Cultural Heritage (CH)	CH_1	Protect and avoid impact on places, features and landscapes of cultural and archaeological importance, including entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).	Percentage of features contained in the RMP (and, where relevant, the associated surrounding context) protected from adverse effects due to action and development occurring as a result of this plan.	No features contained in the RMP (nor the associated surrounding context) should be significantly adversely affected as a result of the implementation of this plan.	Meath County Council
	CH_2	Protect and avoid impact on places, features, buildings and landscapes of architectural heritage, (including entries to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAHs)).	Percentage of features contained in the RPS and NIAH (and, where relevant, the associated surrounding context) protected from adverse effects due to action and development occurring as a result of this plan.	No features contained in the RPS and NIAH (nor the associated surrounding context) should be significantly adversely affected as a result of the implementation of this plan.	Meath County Council
Landscape & Visual (LV)	LV_1	Protect and maintain the special qualities of landscape character including coastal character within Meath.	Status of Landscape Character Areas, and Historic Landscape Character Areas. Number of developments permitted that result in	All action and development proposals supported by the plan must comply with policy objectives relating to the protection of Landscape Character Areas and Historic	Meath County Council

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective	Indicators	Targets	Data Source
			avoidable adverse impacts on Landscape Character Areas and, Historic Landscape Character Areas.	Landscape Character Areas defined in the CDP. No development supported by the plan should have an adverse impact on Landscape Character Areas and Historic Landscape Character Areas.	
	LV_2	Avoid impacts on the statutory landscape designations as identified in the Meath CDP 2021-2027.	Status of High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects. Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse impacts on High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects.	All action and development proposals supported by the plan must comply with policy objectives relating to the protection of High Amenity Zone and Views and Prospects defined in the CDP. No development supported by the plan should have an adverse impact on High Amenity Zones and Views and Prospects.	Meath County Council

6 References

Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2002, at : http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_asses_s_en.pdf

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