MEATH CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2024 - 2029

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

BSM Est. 1968 Brady Shipman Martin Built. Environment.

Environmental Assessment **Built Environment**

Client: Meath County Council

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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 Environmental Report of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the proposed *Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029* (hereafter referred to as - "Meath CAP").

The following 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.

The Report has had due regard to the SEA Regulation[1], in particular: -

- methods of assessment;
- contents and level of detail in the Plan / Programme;
- the stage in the Plan or Programme-making process;
- 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; and
- consultation with the SEA Environmental Authorities.

This Environmental Report should be read in conjunction with the Meath CAP and Natura Impact Report (Appropriate Assessment). The SEA Environmental Report was placed on public display between the 17 November 2023 and the 8 January 2023, together with the Draft Meath CAP and the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report (NIR) for comment from statutory bodies, the public and interested parties.

This SEA Environmental Report is prepared on behalf of Meath County Council (MCC) by Brady Shipman Martin, Environmental, Landscape and Planning Consultants.

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 will set 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

[1] https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2004/si/435/made/en/print#:~:text=S.I.-,No.,European%20Communities%20Act%201972%20(No.

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.

The draft *Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029* has been screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the *Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC*[2]) 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 draft Plan is required. Therefore, in accordance with *Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08*[3], 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*[4] (known as the *SEA Directive*).

1.2 Appropriate Assessment

The draft *Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029* has been screened for Appropriate Assessment (AA) in accordance with Article 6(3) of the *Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC*[5]) 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.'*

[2] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/habitats-directive_en
[3] Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08
[4] DIRECTIVE 2001/42/EC: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN
[5] https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/habitats-directive_en

2 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

2.1 Introduction

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.

Directive 2001/42/EC[6] *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.

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."*[7].

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"*[8].

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.

[6] SEA Directive: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN
[7] See Section 9(1)(a)
[8] Section 5(c)

The SEA process is designed to ensure that significant environmental effects arising from plans are:

- Properly identified and assessed;
- Subject to public participation;
- Taken into account by decision makers; and
- Regularly monitored.

The SEA Directive and SEA Regulations require that competent authorities determine whether the implementation of plans or programmes, or modifications thereof, will be likely to have significant effects on the environment. This determination process is referred to as an Environmental Assessment and defined as:

> *"…the preparation of an environmental report, the carrying out of consultations, the taking into account of the environmental report and the results of the consultations in decision-making and the provision of information on the decision…"*[9]

2.2 SEA Stages and 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 2.1** and **Figure 2.1** below.

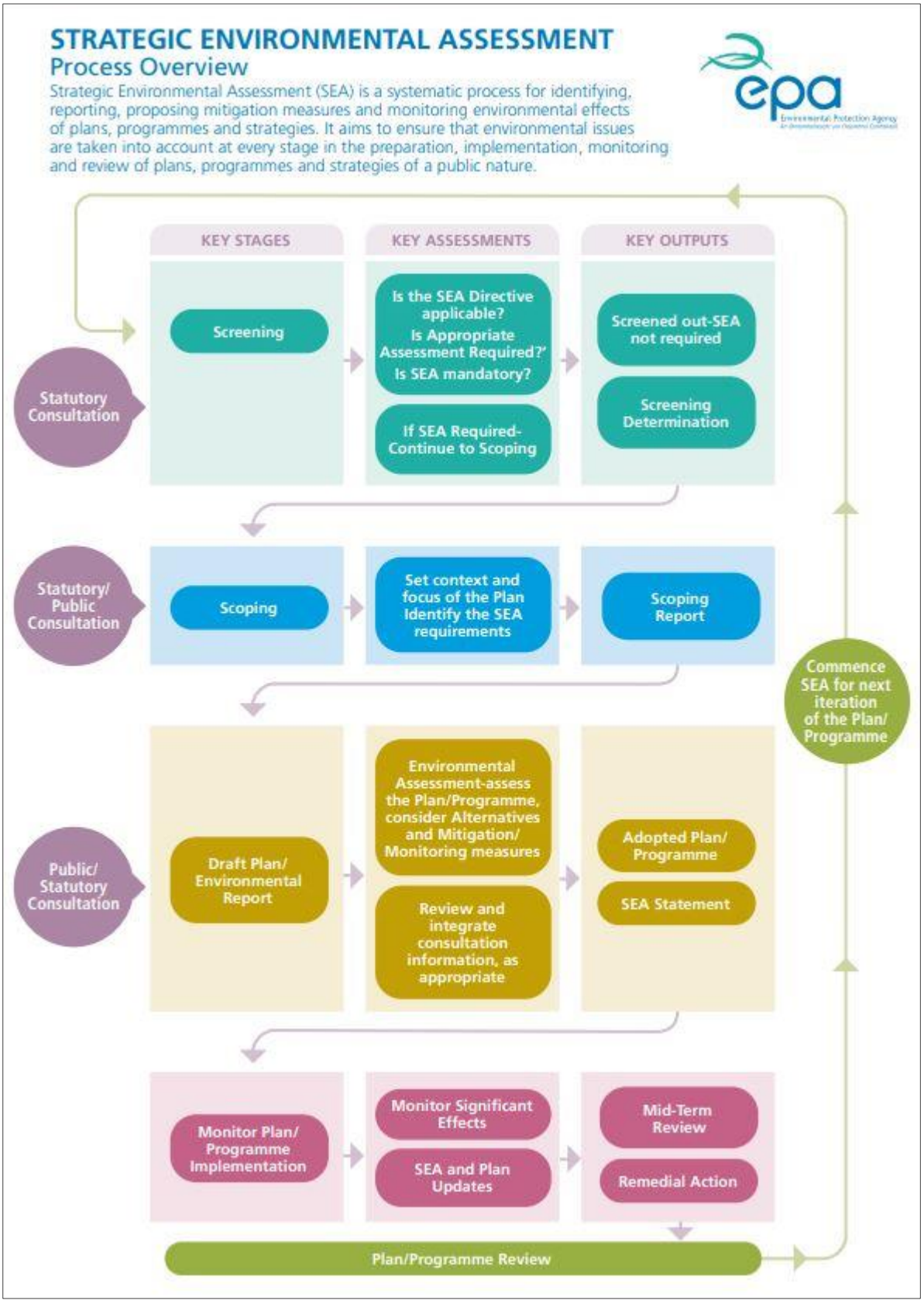
Table 2.1 Outline of the SEA Process

Stage	Description	Status
1. Screening	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 *likely to have significant effects* on the environment, and therefore, if SEA is required. The preparation of the draft *Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029* has been 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. Therefore, in accordance with *Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08* 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* (known as the SEA Directive).	Completed ✓
2. Scoping	Preparation of a SEA Scoping Report highlighting that the Environmental Report is required to include: ▪ 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.	Completed ✓

[9] Article 2(b) of Directive 2001/42/EC, European Union, Article 2 (3) of EC (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 S.I No. 435 of 2004

Stage	Description	Status
	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.	
3. Environmental Report	Preparation of a systemic identification and evaluation of alternatives and assessment of the *likely significant environmental effects* of implementing the P / P. The findings of the assessment, which is carried out at various stages in the P / P making (*e.g.* Draft, Amended Draft *etc.*), 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. The Environmental Report accompanied the draft P / P on public display.	Completed ✓
4. SEA Statement	Completion / adoption of the Final CAP, taking account of *likely significant environmental effects*, any submissions or observations received from consultations and integration of mitigation and monitoring measures within the Plan. 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: ▪ 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.	Current Stage

Figure 2.1: Overview of SEA Process (EPA SEA Process Flow, 2021[10])



[10] EPA: http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/SEA%20Process%20Checklist.pdf

2.3 Screening for the Requirement for SEA

The requirement to undertake a SEA is mandatory for certain P / Ps that are above specified thresholds. Where SEA is not a mandatory requirement, the P / P is subject to a 'Screening process', (Stage 1) to consider if it is likely to have significant effects on the environment, and therefore, if SEA is required.

Screening for the purposes of SEA is defined as "*the determination of whether implementation of a P / P [Plan or Programme] would be likely to have significant environmental effects on the environment. The process of deciding whether a P / P [Plan or Programme] requires SEA."*[11] The criteria for screening, i.e. determining whether a particular plan is likely to have significant environmental effects are set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. These criteria are reproduced in Schedule 1 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011. The criteria are set out under two principal headings, each of which have a number of sub-criteria:

- Characteristics of a Plan / Programme; and
- Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected.

It is also noted that in accordance with Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08[12] , SEA for a P / P is also a mandatory requirement where the P / P requires Appropriate Assessment (AA) under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

Article 3(2) of the SEA Directive requires that:

> *"Subject to paragraph 3, an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all plans and programmes,*
>
> *(a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, 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 Directive 85/337/EEC, or*
>
> *(b) which, in view of the likely effect on sites, have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of Directive 92/43/EEC."*

Article 9(1) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, states that:

> *"Subject to sub-article (2), an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all plans and programmes:*
>
> *(a) which are 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, or*
>
> *(b) which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but, either individually or in combination with other plans, are likely to have a significant effect on any such site."*

Articles 9(2) and 9(3) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, further state that:

[11] EPA: http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/SEA%20Pack%202018.pdf
[12] https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf

(2) "A plan or programme referred to in sub-article (1) which determines the use of a small area at local level or a minor modification to a plan or programme referred to in sub-article (1) shall require an environmental assessment only where the competent authority determines that it is likely to have significant effects on the environment and, for this purpose, the competent authority shall make any necessary determination.

(3) A competent authority shall determine whether plans and programmes other than those referred to in sub-article (1), which set the framework for future development consent of projects, are likely to have significant effects on the environment"

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

Therefore, in accordance with *Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08*[13] the Draft Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 was also required to undergo 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*[14] (the *SEA Directive*).

This Environmental Report has been prepared as the Meath CAP was subject to requirements of SEA.

2.4 SEA Scoping

SEA Scoping (Stage 2) has been undertaken for consideration of the range and level of detail of the information to be included in the SEA Environmental Report as set out in Article 11 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended. This ensured that the SEA is focused on the relevant environmental issues and examines issues at the appropriate level of detail.

Scoping allowed for 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 and 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.

[13] https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf
[14] DIRECTIVE 2001/42/EC: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN

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
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	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.	The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan.
	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.	
	The Plan and SEA should take into account the recent Climate Council Annual Review report.	The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan and the Environmental Report.
	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.	
	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.	The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan and the Environmental Report.
	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.	

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	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.	
	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.	
	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.	
	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.	
	Data / Resources - The Submission provides links to a range of publication on Climate Change, which may be of assistance to the Plan	The information provided has informed the preparation of the Environmental Report.
	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.	

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	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.	The Plan includes a high level summary of the assessment and mitigation approach. The detail is provided in the Environmental Report.
	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. 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. 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.	The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan.
Department of Transport	The Department includes examples for Local Authority Climate Action Plans to support national climate policy in context of the transport sector and this includes:	

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	▪ 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.	The information provided has informed the preparation of the Plan and the Environmental Report.
	The updated transport decarbonisation pathway has been informed by two core analyses of the Irish transport system undertaken over the past year: ▪ 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	
	The key performance indicators and targets outlined in the CAP23 Transport chapter are intended to illustrate the level of change required by 2030, including: ▪ 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%	

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	▪ 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 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.	
	The submission identifies and includes several policies regarding transport climate action. These include: ▪ 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 Refer to the submission for further details.	
The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage	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.	The information provided has informed the preparation and assessment in the Environmental Report.
	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	

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	policies for direct and indirect risks. For example, it is recommended that the strategies should consider: 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.	
	The Departments draws attention to the upcoming guidance document *Improving Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings* 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.	
The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine	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.	The information provided has informed the preparation of the Environmental Report.

Environmental Authority	Outline of Nature of the Submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	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.	
	The seafood industry, through both the Sectoral Adaptation Plan (*Agriculture, Forest and Seafood Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan*) and the annual *Climate Action Plan* (CAP23) 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.	
	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 *Fisheries Policy Package*. This proposes the establishment of an *Energy Transition Partnership* (ETP) to develop a roadmap for the energy transition of the sector towards climate neutrality by 2050. Local authorities should include relevant steps to support a Just Transition for the sea fisheries and aquaculture sectors in their Climate Action Plans.	
The Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications: Geological Survey Ireland	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.	The information and datasets provided have informed the preparation of the Environmental Report.

2.5 SEA Environmental Report

The current stage of the SEA process (Stage 3) involves the preparation of the Environmental Report for the identification, description, evaluation and mitigation of the potential environmental impacts associated with the Meath CAP and the alternatives taking account of the geographical scope of the Plan.

Article 5(1) and Annex I of the *SEA Directive* provides detail on the information to be included in an Environmental Report. Table 2.2 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.

The SEA Environmental Report was placed on public display, together with the Draft Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 and for comment from statutory bodies, the public and interested parties.

Table 2.2 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

2.6 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 2023. The public consultation period was also accompanied by public information events. A total of 17no. submissions and observations were received.

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 are 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.

2.7 SEA Statement

Following approval of the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029, an SEA Statement (Stage 4) will be prepared which includes information on:

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Climate Action Plan, highlighting the main changes to the Climate Action Plan which resulted from the SEA process;
- How the SEA Environmental Report and consultations have been taken into account, summarising the key issues raised in consultations and in the Environmental Report indicating what action was taken in response;
- The reasons for choosing the Climate Action Plan in the light of the other alternatives, identifying the other alternatives considered, commenting on their potential effects and explaining why the Climate Action Plan, as adopted, was selected; and
- The measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementing the Climate Action Plan.

2.8 SEA Guidance

The SEA Environmental Report reflects the requirements of *Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment* (the *SEA Directive*) and the national implementing Regulations S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, and by the PDR 2001, as amended.

The following principal sources of guidance were used in the SEA process including in the preparation of this Environmental Report:

- Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of certain plans and programmes on the environment.
- S.I. No. 435 of 2004 – European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004.

- S.I. No. 200 of 2011 -Environmental Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.
- Guidance on Implementation of Directive 2001/42/EC, European Commission, 2004, at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/eia/pdf/030923_sea_guidance.pdf
- SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans - EPA Recommendations and Resources. EPA, Updated January 2023.
- SEA Pack. EPA, Updated January 2022.
- SEA Spatial Information Sources Inventory. EPA, Updated July 2023.
- SEA Resource Manual for Local and Regional Planning Authorities. EPA, 2015.
- Local Authority Climate Action Plan Guidelines. Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, March 2023.
- EPA Mapping. Environmental Mapping / Geographical Information System (GIS) tools are available at: http://gis.epa.ie/SeeMaps
- EPA Water and Air Quality Reports at: https://www.epa.ie/pubs/legislation/air/quality/
- EPA Ireland's Environment – An Integrated Assessment 2020 at: https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/irelands-environment/state-of-environment-report-/#
- SEA (EPA) Spatial Information Sources at: http://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/ea/
- Developing and Assessing Alternatives in Strategic Environmental Assessment, EPA 2015 at: https://www.epa.ie/publications/research/biodiversity/EPA-157_web.pdf
- Integrating Climate Change into Strategic Environmental Assessment in Ireland - A Guidance Note. EPA, 2015.
- Climate Action Plan 2023, Changing Ireland for the Better. Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, 2023.
- Circular Letter PL 9/2013: Article 8 (Decision Making) of EU Directives 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as amended. Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013.
- Circular Letter PSSP 6/2011: Further Transposition of EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2011.
- Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08: Appropriate Assessment of Land Use Plans. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2008.
- Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment - Streamlining AA, SEA and EIA Processes: Practitioner's Manual. Strive Report Series No. 106. Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013.
- Guidance on Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into Strategic Environmental Assessment. European Commission 2013.
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites - The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2000, at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/provision_of_art6_en.pdf

- 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
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2009, at: http://www.npws.ie/publications/archive/NPWS_2009_AA_Guidance.pdf

3 Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029

3.1 Introduction

Meath County Council (MCC) has prepared the *Meath Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029* ("Meath CAP") for the County to promote best practice in climate action, at the local level. As previously stated, the Meath CAP aligns with Government's overall *National Climate Objective*, *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021* and *Local Authority Climate Action Plan Guidelines*, published by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (March 2023). The Meath CAP 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. This Plan is set within a broader context of international, EU, national and sectoral climate policy.

The *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act, 2021* commits Ireland to reach a legally binding target to deliver a reduction of 51% by 2030. An overall emission reduction of 2,170 ktCO2eq is required for the County Meath across all sectors to achieve the target to reduce GHG emissions by 51% by 2030.

The Meath CAP sets a pathway for Meath to actively translate national climate policy to local circumstances with evidence-based measures, assist in achieving climate neutrality objective at local and community levels and to identify and deliver 'Decarbonising Zones' within Meath to act as test for a range of climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity measures in a specifically defined area, through the identification of projects and outcomes that will assist in the delivery of the *National Climate Objective*.

MCC will be responsible 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.

3.2 Climate Action Plan – Vision, Mission and Targets

The Meath CAP sets out the following:

3.2.1 Vision

Meath aims to be a climate resilient, biodiverse rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy that supports healthy lifestyles and jobs growth.

3.2.2 Mission

Meath County Council is committed to lead in translating the National Climate Policy into local actions through inclusive engagement, capacity building and leadership to the people of County Meath.

3.2.3 Targets

Meath County Council's Climate Action Plan contains four key targets, as follows:

- *Energy Efficiency – 50% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030*
- *GHG Reduction – 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030*

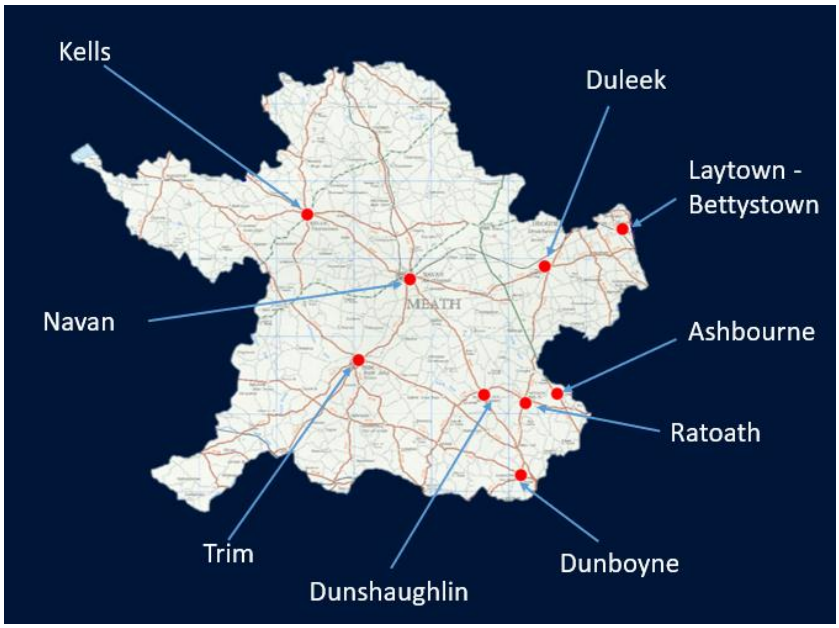
- *Resilience – Making Meath a climate resilient region by reducing the impacts of future climate-change related events*
- *Awareness – Actively engaging and informing citizens, communities and businesses on climate change*

3.3 Content of the Meath Climate Action Plan

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) and has been set out as follows:

- Evidence based climate action within the administrative area of Meath County Council has been presented, including:
  - Climate Change Risk Assessment - A summary of the Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) findings for County Meath which has been established using details of past climate events and contemporary data sources as evidence, coupled with a determination of the potential future climate risks predicted for the County as a result of a changing climate; and
  - Baseline Emissions Inventory – A summary of the Baseline Emissions Inventory (BEI) for County Meath which establishes the current greenhouse gas emissions from all sources (transport, residential, commercial, agriculture, municipal, social housing, wastewater and waste) for the set baseline year (2018).
- Decarbonising Zones (DZs), including Strategic Priority Areas – The nine DZs described in the Meath CAP include Ashbourne, Duleek, Dunboyne, Dunshaughlin, Laytown / Bettystown, Kells, Navan, Ratoath and Trim (refer to **Figure 3.1**). The four main sectors where the emissions were material across the nine DZs are residential, manufacturing & commercial, transport and waste.

Figure 3.1 The nine Decarbonising Zones (DZs) to be identified in the Meath CAP



- Meath County Council's approach to implementing climate action – this includes opportunities of climate action, action planning, MCC's scope and role on Climate Action, environmental governance, MCC's climate role, funding and collaboration.

- The Plan provides an overview of climate change legislation and policy- Meath CAP is set within a broader context of international, EU, national and sectoral climate policy.
- The framework for climate actions across five different Thematic Areas – to address both mitigation and adaptation. These are described in Section 3.3.1.
- The Council's approach to measuring progress and reporting on actions over the lifetime of the Plan – this will include internal monitoring and reporting, reporting to Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) on progress regarding climate action at county level as part of the delivery of the national climate objective via CARO reporting tool, annual reporting by MCC.

3.3.1 Goals, Actions and Measures

To support the vision and mission of the Meath CAP set out in Section 3.2, strategic goals across five thematic areas have been set to devise objectives and actions under the Plan and the format of the information presented for each Strategic Goal has been aligned with the *Local Authority Climate Action Plan Guidelines 2023* and "*Delivering Effective Climate Action 2030*" (DECA). The actions within the Plan also align with the *National Implementation Plan for SDGs* and *Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027*.

Actions set within the Plan prioritised reduction in emissions from Meath County Council's own assets and operations, influence sectors in the delivery of their own emission reductions, raise awareness of climate change and promote positive climate action at community level.

The *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021* specifically requires all local authorities in Ireland to prepare and make a *Climate Action Plan*, in consideration of wider national climate and energy targets, addressing both mitigation and adaptation measures, where:

- Mitigation relates to changing how we live, move, consume and manufacture, so as to reduce and/or eliminate the production of harmful greenhouse gases, it also includes how we best use our land;
- Adaptation refers to dealing with the impacts of climate change and involves taking practical actions to manage risks, protect communities and strengthen the resilience of the economy (e.g. from flooding, sea level rise etc.).

Refer to Table 3.1 for the strategic goals, actions, tracking measures, timeframe and adaptation and mitigation measures.

Table 3.1 Strategic Goals, Actions, Tracking Measures, Timeframe and Adaptation & Mitigation Measures for the Meath CAP 2024 - 2029

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Adaptation / Mitigation	Tracking Measure	Timeframe	UN SDG
Goal 1 Develop appropriate structures and processes for directing and managing effective climate action Thematic Area Governance & Leadership Objective 1.1 Support the development and implementation of positive climate action across all services and operations of Meath County Council, collaborating with others to enable and inspire endeavours to reduce their climate impact.	1	Implement ISO 50001 Energy Management System.	Combined	Certification to ISO 50001 attained	Q2 2024	7.3, 13.2
	2	Use green procurement where feasible in all procurement of good and services.	Combined	% Green Public Procurement spend	Annual	13.2
	3	Prepare a Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Guidance Document to support the inclusion of the global goals in all plans, strategies and grant programmes published by the LA.	Combined	Document published	QR1 2025	13.2
	4	Mainstreaming of climate mitigation and adaptation considerations into all policies, strategies and plans adopted by LA.	Combined	Climate mitigation and adaptation considered within all LA documents	2024 - 2029	13.2, 16.6, 16.7
	5	Identify an appropriate monitoring and reporting protocol on the implementation of low carbon construction in public tenders and grant schemes.	Combined	Annual Report on embodied, operations and sequestered carbon	QR4 2027	13.2
	6	Undertake annual audits of climate expenditure that considers cost effectiveness, efficiency, governance, relevance, coherence and impacts (environment and societal).	Combined	Annual audit completed and actions identified	Annual	13.2
	7	Identify and put in place appropriate business continuity measures to ensure continuity of service provision during severe weather events.	Combined	Business Continuity Plan published	QR4 2024	13.1, 13.2
	8	Conduct detailed study of staff modal split to identify measures to reduce staff travel emissions.	Mitigation	Study complete and measures identified	QR4 2024	13.2
	9	Organise awareness, information, knowledge sharing and capacity initiatives with staff on mitigation and adaptation measures.	Combined	4 No. staff initiatives annually	Annual	13.3
	10	Delivery of EV Charging Strategy for County Meath.	Mitigation	Strategy published; No. of chargers installed annually	QR4 2025	8.2, 13.2

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Adaptation / Mitigation	Tracking Measure	Timeframe	UN SDG
	11	Continue to support and expand the 'Bus It 2 School' Pathfinder Project.	Combined	No. of children transitioning to travelling to school by bus	Q4 2024	13.2, 13.3
	12	Develop strategic partnerships to assist in achieving emissions targets.	Combined	No. of partnerships established	Annual	13.2
	13	Ensure readily available information, advice, knowledge and awareness of climate friendly actions via LA Climate Action Website and social media posts.	Combined	No. of media interactions	Annual	13.3
	14	LA staff to receive climate action training under Local Authority Climate Action Training Programme	Mitigation	No. and percentage of staff trained; Percentage of staff trained in adaptation scenario planning	Annual	15.9, 13.3
Goal 2 Achieve local government carbon emissions and energy efficiency Targets for 2030 Thematic Area Built Environment & Transport Objective 2.1 Minimize the Council's contribution to climate change by increasing energy efficiency, reducing carbon	1	Incorporate biodiversity, mitigation and adaptation actions into the design and delivery of urban regeneration plans.	Combined	No. of regeneration projects with climate action initiatives delivered	Annual	11.1, 11.2
	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.	Mitigation	No. of Properties Retrofitted per year; Percentage of Energy Efficient Design, on-site renewable energy, SuDs and nature based solutions per property	Annual	7.3
	3	Reduce and remove where feasible plastic waste generated, through removing single use plastics within LA owned buildings and services.	Mitigation	Percentage reduction in plastic waste	Annual	12.4, 14.1
	4	Switch to digital marketing and advertising materials wherever possible. Reduce production/waste on programmes and posters.	Mitigation	Percentage of digital marketing/advertising campaigns run	Annual	8.2
	5	Switch out on cleansing products to eco-friendly products	Mitigation	Transition to eco products only	Annual	3.9, 14.1
	6	Introduce water usage conservation measures within LA owned buildings	Combined	Percentage reduction in water usage	Annual	6.1, 12.2

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Adaptation / Mitigation	Tracking Measure	Timeframe	UN SDG
emissions, and encouraging sustainable opportunities for the broader County Meath community.	7	Management of municipal waste from LA owned buildings. Increase recycling/organise waste collection and reduce general waste.	Mitigation	Percentage reduction in solid waste annually; Percentage waste recycled from LA waste	Annual	9.1
	8	Management of energy efficient LA fleet including implementation of driving efficiency software and associated eco driving training for all staff driving LA fleet	Mitigation	Fleet management system implemented. Software installed/training delivered	QR1 2027	7.3
	9	Undertake deep retrofit and install renewable energy sources as appropriate on LA owned buildings.	Combined	No. of retrofits on LA owned buildings, member of renewable energy installs completed	Annual	7.3
	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.	Mitigation	No. Properties Built per year; Percentage of Energy Efficient Design, on-site renewable energy, SuDs and nature based solutions per development	Annual	7.1, 7.2, 7.3
	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 Facilities, SuDs, and nature based solutions, as feasible.	Mitigation	No. properties retrofitted per year; percentage of energy efficient design, on-site renewable energy, SuDs and nature-based solutions utilised per development	Annual	7.1, 7.2, 7.3
	12	Increase energy efficiency of ICT Infrastructure.	Mitigation	Ensure energy efficiency requirements form part of the procurement process • Measure existing components for energy usage (baseline) • Measure future components for energy usage (comparison)	Annual	7.3
	13	Deliver public lighting LED retrofit project under PLEEP (Public Lighting Energy Efficient Project).	Combined	Percentage reduction in energy usage from LED public lighting	Retrofit programme	7.3

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Adaptation / Mitigation	Tracking Measure	Timeframe	UN SDG
				energy efficiencies since baseline year	QR4 2027; Annual	
	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.	Mitigation	No. of projects completed	Annual	7.1, 7.2, 7.3
	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.	Mitigation	No. of vacant and derelict properties brought back into use	Annual	11.1
	16	Increase active travel usage in town centres through improved sustainable active travel proposals and an enhanced pedestrian and public realm environment.	Mitigation	No. of schemes completed or length of scheme completed.	Annual	3.6, 11.2
	17	Explore the feasibility of sustainable energy and heating solutions in County Meath	Combined	Feasibility report	QR4 2027	7.3
Goal 3 Protect and enhance Meath's natural environment by supporting biodiversity and increasing climate resilience Thematic Area Natural Environment & Green Infrastructure Objective 3.1	1	Installation of water butts at public buildings, to aid tidy towns committees, staff and contractors access a sustainable water source for garden maintenance.	Mitigation	No. of water butts installed	Annual	6.1, 12.2
	2	Commence a programme of auditing of LA lands to carry out ecological and habitat surveys and highlight areas at risk and those suitable for restoration and enhanced carbon storage.	Combined	Surveys and action listing; Biodiversity improvement evidenced by monitoring	QR2 2027	15.1, 15.2, 15.5, 15.9
	3	Develop options for the delivery of a National Implementation Strategy for Nature-Based Solutions and interim guidance to the management of rainwater and surface water run-off in urban areas.	Adaptation	No. of nature based solutions for the management of rainwater and surface run-off	QR2 2025	6.1, 15.1, 15.2, 15.5
	4	Plant native woodland on appropriate LA owned lands.	Combined	Hectares of land planted	Q4 2024	15.1, 15.2, 15.5, 15.b
	5	Major Emergency Plan - co-ordinate update of emergency response plans and revise based on	Adaptation	Plan updated.	Q4 2024	1.5, 6.3

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Adaptation / Mitigation	Tracking Measure	Timeframe	UN SDG
Support the responsible management, protection and enhancement of Meath's natural heritage, biodiversity, and natural environment		learnings of response to events, having regard to environment sensitivities				
	6	Critical Infrastructure Routes on the existing network for climate related extreme weather events.	Adaptation	Portal with critical infrastructure routes	QR2 2026	11.2
	7	Develop and implement a County (Local) Biodiversity Action Plan, to protect and enhance local biodiversity, including climate-relevant measures	Combined	Local Biodiversity Action Plan adopted	Q4 2027	15.1, 15.2, 15.5, 15.a, 15.b
	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.	Combined	Two conservation projects commenced per year. Programme of inspections underway. Risk assessment complete.	Annual	15.1, 15.2, 15.5, 15.a, 15.b
	9	Carry out an assessment of Section 4 discharges to Water Licenses	Adaptation	No. of Discharge licenses reviewed	Annual	15.1
	10	Support the creation of community gardens through partnership with local communities and external agencies.	Mitigation	No. of community gardens	Annual	2.1
	11	Support and facilitate the planting of groups of trees within the boundary/built footprint of existing built-up areas.	Adaptation	Yearly Measurement	Annual	15.1, 15.2, 15.5, 15.a, 15.b
Goal 4 Mobilise Climate Action in Local Communities, whilst achieving a just transition Thematic Area	1	Installation of water refill stations at public buildings/amenity areas, to reduce the use of single use plastics.	Mitigation	No. of water refill stations installed.	Annual	6.1, 12.2
	2	Expand Trim Air Quality Project to other Decarbonising Zones	Combined	Air quality report for each Decarbonising Zone	Q4 2029	3.9, 14.1
	3	Monitor implementation of flood risk management guidelines in planning applications, having regard to environmental sensitivities e.g. biodiversity, archaeology, amenity value.	Adaptation	Guidelines adhered to	Annual	12.b, 15.5

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Adaptation / Mitigation	Tracking Measure	Timeframe	UN SDG
Communities: Resilience & Transition Objective 4.1 Promote through collaboration and partnership sustainable, inclusive, and resilient communities, focusing on actions which promote health and wellbeing benefits and supports local economies.	4	Expand operation and availability of bike and car share schemes. Promote bike and car share scheme.	Combined	No. and location of bike and car schemes; Percentage usage	Annual	11.2
	5	Identify and map areas most susceptible to climate related extreme weather events on the road network	Adaptation	Portal with susceptible road network mapped areas	QR2 2027	11.2, 11.5
	6	Promote & publicise the benefits of using the Home Energy Kits from the Library.	Mitigation	Number of times the kits dispensed from libraries/number of promotional events held	Annual	7.3
	7	Increase number of safe routes to school scheme, where feasible.	Mitigation	No. of active safe route to school schemes in County	Annual	11.2
	8	To liaise with the OPW in the identification of new or the reinforcement of existing flood defences and protection measures.	Combined	No. of schemes identified	Annual	13.1
	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	Combined	No. of schemes identified and implemented	Annual	11.5, 13.1
	10	Carry out a Coastal Erosion and Flood Risk Study for County Meath and implement the recommendations while prioritising nature based solutions.	Combined	Study complete; No. of recommendations implemented	Study QR4 2024; Implementation ongoing	11.5, 13.1
	11	Develop and provide information on Sustainable Living to engage Council Tenants on how they can reduce consumption of energy, water and waste	Mitigation	Percentage of tenants receiving information	Annual	6.1, 13.3
	12	Promote, support the Sustainable Energy Communities Programme and deliver workshops	Mitigation	No. of active SECs; 2 No. SEC workshops per year	Annual	7.1, 7.2, 7.3
	13	Administer and support Strand 1 & 1A of Community Climate Action Programme to deliver selected Climate Action projects.	Combined	Percentage draw down of Community Fund; No. of completed projects	Annual	8.2

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Adaptation / Mitigation	Tracking Measure	Timeframe	UN SDG
	14	Encourage all events approved by MCC to incorporate sustainability and integrated consideration for biodiversity and other environmental sensitives	Mitigation	Guidance produced on Events Updated Terms and Conditions	QR2 2025	11a
	15	Guided by the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the GAA and CCMA, towards working together on sustainability and climate action projects, engage with the Green Club Programme through a nominated lead, working with the CARO and GAA, in the promotion and support of projects by participating clubs, to meet the objectives, and during key phases, of the programme to 2029	Combined	% Clubs Engaged in Green Club Programme	2024-2029	13.3
	16	Develop and introduce a "Greening Festival" funding criteria for a selection of Meath-based festivals.	Mitigation	No. of applications; Evaluation and Recommendations Report	Annual	11.a
Goal 5 Create a culture of sustainability, promoting a circular economy throughout the County Thematic Area Sustainability & Resource Management Objective 5.1 Support circular economy initiatives and infrastructure, focusing on	1	Increase use of recycling and recovery for bulky household items, hazardous waste, electrical waste and green waste.	Adaption	10% increase in free events for householders; Metric tonnes of bulky household items, hazardous waste, electrical waste and green waste recycled	Annual	12.3, 12.4, 12.5
	2	Increase kerbside collection of Household Organic Waste using Brown Bin Scheme. Countywide Awareness Campaign in relation to roll out of Brown Bin using Radio, Print and social media	Adaption	Campaign carried out Percentage uptake of scheme	QR1 2025	12.3, 12.4, 12.5
	3	Support the establishment of 'Circular Economy Hubs' that act as physical material hubs for the drop-off and recirculation of materials and products from and for both commercial and residential activities	Combined	No. of circular economy hubs	Annual	8.2, 9.2
	4	Engage with businesses and residents to support adoption of reused and recycled materials	Combined	4 No. engagements per year	Annual	9.2
	5	Support locally produced sustainable food products and promote sustainable farm practices.	Combined	4 No. of promotions	Annual	8.2

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Adaptation / Mitigation	Tracking Measure	Timeframe	UN SDG
prevention, reuse, repair and recycling and promote green business opportunities.	6	Provision of a 2 Day Green for Business Environmental Audit amongst small businesses in the County (1-50 employees).	Mitigation	20 No. businesses availing of the scheme.	Annual	9.4
	7	Support business in their transition via Government initiatives e.g., green for micro	Mitigation	20 No. businesses supported	Annual	9.1, 10.4
	8	Encourage and promote projects that will contribute positively and grow the circular and bioeconomy to promote sustainable rural and urban low carbon economic development	Combined	4 No. of promotions/events held	Annual	8.2, 9.4
	9	Promotion of local jobs and local workspaces to reduce the amount of commuting outside of the county.	Mitigation	2 No. of promotions/events held	Annual	9.1
	10	Support development of enterprise hubs to facilitate remote working	Mitigation	No. of enterprise hubs facilitating remote working	QR3 2025	9.2, 9.4
	11	Implement improved management of construction and demolition (C&D) waste from LA activities.	Combined	Evaluation and recommendation report/s	QR3 2025	9.2
	12	In4Green Urbact Network project: Complete the Integrated Action Plan for Navan. (plan objectives 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)	Combined	IAP in place	Q3 2025	11.2
	13	Develop a waste management plan with particular attention to the circular economy principles. Promotion of the circular economy e.g., recycling facilities / repair hubs and Bike repair days to be organised. On street waste segregation to be trialled.	Combined	Plan published; 1 No. annual promotion event per DZ	Annual	12.3, 12.4, 12.5

4 Other Relevant Plans and Programmes

4.1 Overview

Meath County Council has prepared this Climate Action Plan, to create a low carbon and climate resilient County, by delivering and promoting best practice in climate action, at the local level.

The Climate Action Plan is aligned to the Government's overall National Climate Objective, which seeks to pursue and achieve, by no later than the end of 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy. This objective is also set out in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, which frames Ireland's legally binding climate ambition, to delivering a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 51% by 2030. This will place the country on a trajectory to achieving climate neutrality by the end of 2050.

In preparing the Climate Action Plan, the Council has taken account of other relevant climate legislation and policy, a climate change risk assessment and a climate mitigation baseline assessment, at a County scale, which are included as part of the Plan.

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 specifically requires all local authorities in Ireland to prepare and make a Climate Action Plan, in consideration of wider national climate and energy targets, addressing both mitigation and adaptation measures.

Climate change is increasingly understood to be the most critical, long-term global challenge of our time, its impacts continue to be felt both worldwide and at home. The *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC's) Working Group I Sixth Assessment Report*, confirms overwhelming evidence that the climate has changed since the pre-industrial era and that human activities, through greenhouse gas emissions, are the principal cause of that change. It states the unequivocal cause of global warming has been human activities, with global surface temperatures reaching 1.1°C above 1850-1900, in the 2011-2020 period.

Climate action is given impetus by the scientific evidence that supports the findings of human influence on climate change and the most recent legally binding international treaty on climate change, which sets the framework for ambitious and strengthened policy responses, the Paris Agreement 2015. Consequently, the Climate Action Plan is set within a broader context of international, EU, national and sectoral climate policy.

4.2 International Climate Change Policy

Effective action on climate change requires international cooperation and ambition. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), established in 1994, aims to foster global co-operation in addressing climate change and its consequences resulting from rising global temperatures.

A significant milestone in this global effort was the signing of the *Paris Agreement* in 2015 at the *Conference of the Parties 21 (COP21)*. This legally binding treaty, endorsed by all 196 member countries, including Ireland, came into force on November 4, 2016. The *Paris Agreement* sets two critical goals:

(i) limiting global temperature increases well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and striving to limit the increase to 1.5°C, and

(ii) enhancing adaptation capabilities to combat climate change impacts.

Another essential international commitment relating to climate change is the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, adopted in September 2015, comprising 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 targets to be achieved by 2030 (Refer to **Figure 4.1**). These goals aim to alleviate poverty, protect the environment, and improve global living conditions. All 17 Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030 can be related to the impacts and opportunities of climate change, particularly relevant is SDG 13 (Climate Action).

Figure 4.1 UN Sustainable Development Goals

To meet emissions reduction targets outlined in the *Paris Agreement*, the European Commission introduced the *European Green Deal* in December 2019. This initiative aims to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050 by decoupling economic growth from resource use. The *European Climate Law* legally enforces these objectives, including a reduction of net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030.

4.3 Ireland's Climate Change Policy

Ireland aligns its climate change policy with EU ambitions and international agreements. The *Climate (Amendment) Act 2021* promotes a sustainable economy where greenhouse gas emissions are balanced by emissions removal. Through carbon budgets, sectoral limits, and various strategies, Ireland seeks to scale up efforts in both adaptation and mitigation to achieve transformative climate action by 2030 and beyond to 2050.

The *Climate Action Plan 2023* aims to halve emissions by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, in line with the *Programme for Government*.

In 2018, Ireland published its first *National Adaptation Framework* (NAF) to assess climate risks and incorporate adaptation measures into national, regional, and local policy making.

The *Long-term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions* sets a roadmap for achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, building upon carbon budgets, sectoral limits, and the *National Climate Action Objective* and the *European Climate Law*.

Sectoral Climate Adaptation Plans have been published across Government departments, in response to the *National Adaptation Framework*. Each Plan identifies the key risks faced across the sector and the approach being taken to address these risks and build climate resilience for the future. The Plans address the following sectors: Agriculture, Forestry and Seafood, Biodiversity, Built and Archaeological Heritage, Transport infrastructure, Electricity and Gas Networks, Communications Networks, Flood Risk Management, Water Quality and Water Services Infrastructure and Health.

The *Local Authority Climate Action Charter* commits local authorities, including Meath County Council (October 2019), to lead climate action efforts at the local and national levels. It involves reducing emissions from Council operations and collaborating with various stakeholders on climate initiatives.

Delivering *Effective Climate Action 2030* (DECA 2030) is a local government strategy, published in April 2021, ensuring a coordinated approach to climate action across all 31 local authorities, emphasizing a strong leadership role in climate action.

The scale of the challenge facing Ireland in addressing climate change is significant, as highlighted in the EPA's *State of Environment Report: 'Ireland's Environment - An Integrated Assessment 2020'*[1] (EPA, 2020). There is an urgent need to accelerate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and implement adaptation measures to increase resilience to climate change.

The *2023 Annual Review* from the Climate Change Advisory Council details the following overall recommendations for initially reducing and ultimately preventing emissions of greenhouse gases:

- Government must address areas of uncertainty in how Ireland will reduce its emissions. The sectoral emissions ceiling for the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry sector must be set, and it must be clear by how much each sector must reduce its emissions.
- Government needs to identify and remove barriers to policy implementation by ensuring adequate funding and planning reform at scale and speed.
- Key actions need to be implemented now to prevent longer term damage and increased costs to society and the economy.
- Government must adopt new approaches to address emission reductions, creating investment and enhancing skills across the economy, particularly in areas such as retrofitting and renewable energy.
- The establishment of a Just Transition Commission is recommended to ensure that Ireland achieves its climate objectives in a way that is fair and equitable and protects vulnerable people and communities.
- The Government should support opportunities that reduce emissions and make Ireland better prepared for the impacts of climate change.

4.4 Other Plans and Programmes

The *County Meath Development Plan 2021-2027* provides for sustainable planning and development management context for all projects in County Meath. The Development Plan also provides the

sustainable development and protective environmental control framework for any development or works deriving from the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029.

A list of relevant Plans and Programmes is provided in Appendix 4.1 to the Report. The relationship with other plans and programmes is discussed, as appropriate, under the Current State of the Environment in Section 5 of this Report.

5 Current State of the Receiving Environment (Environmental Baseline and Issues)

5.1 Introduction

The *SEA Directive* requires that the information on the baseline environment is focused upon the relevant aspects of the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected and the likely evolution of the current environment in the absence of the Meath CAP. Being consistent with the strategic provisions of the CAP, this section provides a strategic description of aspects of environmental components and any existing environmental issues which have the greatest potential to be affected by implementation of the CAP, if unmitigated.

5.2 Likely Evolution of the Environment in the Absence of the Climate Action Plan

The Meath CAP has been prepared to align to the Government's overall National Climate Objective, which seeks to pursue and achieve, by no later than the end of 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy. The *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021* specifically requires all local authorities in Ireland to prepare and make a Climate Action Plan, in consideration of wider national climate and energy targets, addressing both mitigation and adaptation measures.

It is a requirement of the SEA Directive to consider – *'the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.'* In the absence of the CAP it is envisaged that the baseline environment would primarily evolve in line with the policies and objectives of the *Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027* (CDP) and Local Area Plans (LAPs) for the County. The CDP details policies and objectives specific to climate change, however, the standalone CAP provides significant opportunities for specific set of climate mitigation and adaptation measures and the associated likely positive environmental effects.

The Meath CAP sets a clear pathway for Meath to actively translate national climate policy to local circumstances with the prioritisation and acceleration of evidence-based measures. It also assists MCC to identify and deliver Decarbonising Zones (DZs) within County administrative area to act as a test bed for a range of climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity measures in a specifically defined area, through the identification of projects and outcomes that will assist in the delivery of the *National Climate Objective*.

The CAP sets out a clear pathway for MCC to enhance climate resilience, increase energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, across its own assets, services and infrastructure, whilst also demonstrating a broader role of influencing, advocating and facilitating other sectors, to meet their own climate targets and ambitions. Overall, in the event that the CAP was not implemented, the risk of negative environmental effects occurring as a result of climate change related risks would be higher. This could also result in failure to reduce carbon emissions in line with, national and European environmental objectives.

5.3 Description of the Environmental Baseline

The baseline data helps to assess the current state of the environment, facilitate the identification, evaluation and subsequent monitoring of the effects of the Plan. Thus, this information creates a platform whereby existing issues relevant to the Meath County area can be quantified, where possible, or qualified thereby ensuring that the implementation of Meath CAP does not exacerbate identifiable problems.

Baseline data collection is a first step in the process of evaluating the sensitivity of the environment. The *SEA Directive* requires that information is provided on '*any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the Plan or programme...*'. Information is therefore provided on existing environmental problems which are relevant to the Plan, thus helping to ensure that the Plan does not exacerbate any existing environmental problems in the study area.

The environmental aspects are described in line with the legislative requirements, under the following headings:

- Biodiversity (including Flora & Fauna);
- Population and Human Health;
- Land, Soils and Geology;
- Water Quality;
- Air, Noise and Climate;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Landscape;
- Material Assets;
- Interaction of the foregoing; and
- Cumulative Impacts.

5.3.1 Biodiversity

Biodiversity plays a significant role in the provision of clean air, water, healthy soils and food as well as visually contributing to a plan area with its natural beauty and heritage. The natural heritage of County Meath is an important asset and a unique resource. Biodiversity is vulnerable to climate change as it accelerates the destruction of the natural world through droughts, flooding and wildfires, while the loss and unsustainable use of nature are in turn key drivers of climate change. However, biodiversity and nature are also vital in the fight against climate change.

Habitat biodiversity in County Meath is focused around the Boyne and Blackwater Rivers as well as along the short coastline which supports a wide range of rare or threatened flora and fauna species. Protecting and conserving these habitats is critically important, not just to the residents of the County but also in a national and international context.

5.3.1.1 Ecological Networks and Connectivity

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive recognises the importance of ecological networks as corridors and stepping stones for wildlife, including for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species of flora and fauna. The Directive requires that ecological connectivity and areas of ecological value outside the Natura 2000 network of designated ecological sites are maintained and it recognises the need for the management of these areas through land use planning and development policies. Ecological networks

are important in connecting areas of local biodiversity with each other and with nearby designated sites so as to prevent islands of habitat from being isolated entities. They are composed of linear features, such as treelines, hedgerows and rivers / streams which provide corridors or stepping stones for wildlife species moving within their normal range.

Ecological Corridors are important for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species, particularly for mammals, bats and small birds and facilitate linkages both between and within designated ecological sites, non-designated surrounding countryside and the more urban areas of the County.

Woodlands in Meath tend to be small and fragmented and are more frequent near rivers, particularly along the lower stretches of the River Boyne. The most abundant native woodland habitat type in the County is Oak-Ash-Hazel woodland (WN2) reflecting the limestone derived soils. A large proportion of the County's woodlands are parklands associated with historic demesnes.

Hedgerows are perhaps the most characteristic feature of the County's landscape and provide an important habitat for many species and act as a wildlife corridor in a landscape dominated by large tracts of intensive agriculture.

The County contains significant stretches of both operational and derelict waterways including the River Boyne, River Blackwater, River Nanny, River Inny, River Delvin, River Tolka, River Broadmeadow and the Royal Canal.

5.3.1.2 National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP)

The third *National Biodiversity Action Plan* (NBAP) for Ireland provides a framework for government, civil society and private sectors to track and assess progress towards Ireland's Vision for Biodiversity over a five-year timeframe from 2017 to 2021. When developing the Meath CAP, it is important to consider measures to enhance ecological biodiversity as outlined in the NBAP 2017-2021. NBAP targets relevant to the Plan are listed below:

- enhance appreciation of the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- optimise opportunities under agriculture and rural development, forestry and other relevant policies to benefit biodiversity;
- aim to reduce principal pollutant pressures on terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity;
- optimise benefits for biodiversity in Flood Risk Management Planning and drainage schemes;
- promote the control of non-native invasive species; and
- promote sustainability in the aquaculture industry.

Ireland's fourth *draft National Biodiversity Action Plan* (NBAP) sets national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2027. The Key considerations of the Draft NBAP are as follows:

- Build on the successes of previous NBAPs, while addressing shortfalls and implementation challenges
- Expand the governance and oversight of the NBAP and develop a robust Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to track progress
- Achieve buy-in and ownership of the NBAP across all levels of government and society
- Embed biodiversity at the heart of climate action
- Achieve greater coherence between biodiversity policy and other policy areas
- Strengthen compliance and enforcement of existing legislation

- Increase focus on addressing the root causes and drivers of biodiversity loss rather than consequences of biodiversity loss
- Determine biodiversity priorities, allocate financial and other resources, internalise the value of nature and recognise the cost of inaction
- Significantly strengthen the science base and enhance data accessibility

The *Meath Biodiversity Action Plan* (MBAP) 2015-2020 was prepared to address the way in which wildlife resources of the County, including native plants, animals and the ecosystems, will be managed and protected over the five year period of the Plan. This plan shares the goals of the **Convention on Biological Diversity** and the NBAP, and translates them into actions at County level. The MBAP sets out the following objectives:

- **Objective 1:** To raise awareness of biodiversity in Meath, its value and the issues facing it.
- **Objective 2:** To better understand the biodiversity of Meath.
- **Objective 3:** To conserve and enhance habitats and species in Meath, taking account of national and local priorities.

5.3.1.3 Designated European Sites

Within the County, there are a number of areas designated for protection under the Natura 2000 network. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are legally protected under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and are selected for the conservation of Annex I habitats and Annex II species. Special Protection Areas are protected under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 2009/147/EC.

All designated European Sites located within County Meath are listed in **Table 5.1** below. There are a further 13no. SPAs and 19no. SACs within the ZoI of the Meath CAP listed in **Table 5.2** below.

Conservation objectives for SACs and SPAs have been set for the habitats and species for which the sites have been selected. Site specific detailed conservation objectives are available on the NPWS website[15]. Any potential for impact on European Sites have been fully addressed in the NIR that accompanies the Meath CAP and SEA Environment Report.

Table 5.1 European sites located in County Meath

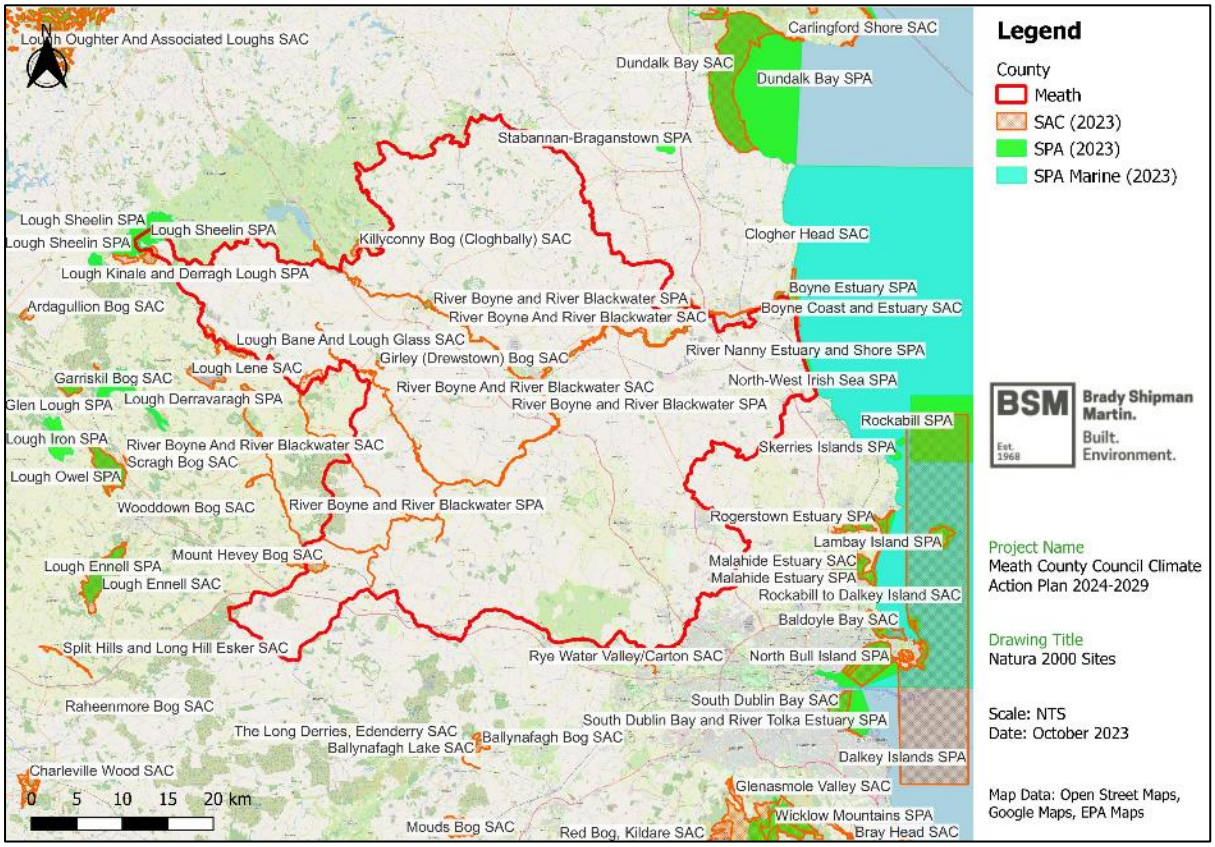
Site Code	Special Protection Area (SPA)	Site Code	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
004232	River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA	002299	River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC
004065	Lough Sheelin SPA	002342	Mount Hevey Bog SAC
004080	Boyne Estuary SPA	000006	Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally) SAC
004158	River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA	002340	Moneybeg & Clareisland Bogs SAC
004236	North-West Irish Sea SPA	002120	Lough Bane and Lough Glass SAC
		002203	Girley (Drewstown) Bog SAC
		001957	Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC
		001398	Rye Water Valley / Carton SAC
		001810	White Lough, Ben Loughs & Lough Doo SAC

[15] NPWS website 2019: https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/conservation-management-planning/conservation-objectives

Table 5.2 European sites located within the zone of influence of the County Boundary

Site Code	Special Protection Area (SPA)	Site Code	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
004061	Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough SPA	002201	Derragh Bog SAC
004043	Lough Derravarragh SPA	002121	Lough Lene SAC
004102	Garriskill Bog SPA	000679	Garriskil Bog SAC
004044	Lough Ennell SPA	002341	Ardagullion Bog SAC
004006	North Bull Island SPA	002205	Wooddown Bog SAC
004024	South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA	000582	Raheenmore Bog SAC
004016	Baldoyle Bay SPA	000685	Lough Ennell SAC
004025	Malahide Estuary SPA	000925	The Long Derries, Edenderry SAC
004015	Rogerstown Estuary SPA	000391	Ballynafagh Bog SAC
004122	Skerries Islands SPA	001387	Ballynafagh Lake SAC
004014	Rockabill SPA	001831	Split Hills and Long Hill Esker SAC
004091	Stabannan-Braganstown SPA	000206	North Dublin Bay SAC
004026	Dundalk Bay SPA	000210	South Dublin Bay SAC
		000199	Baldoyle Bay SAC
		000205	Malahide Estuary SAC
		000208	Rogerstown Estuary SAC
		003000	Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC
		001459	Clogher Head SAC
		000455	Dundalk Bay SAC

Figure 5.1 European Sites in County Meath and in the surrounding zone of influence



5.3.1.4 Nationally Designated Sites

Nationally Designated Sites include *Natural Heritage Areas* (NHAs) which are legally protected areas that are considered important for their habitats or which holds species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection. *Proposed Natural Heritage Areas* (pNHAs) are also of significance for wildlife and habitats but have not yet been statutorily designated. However, under the Wildlife Amendment Act (2000) NHAs are legally protected from damage from the date they are formally proposed for designation[16].

Refer to **Tables 5.3** and **5.4** and **Figure 5.2** below for the NHAs and pHNAs located in County Meath and within the zone of influence of the County boundary.

Table 5.3 Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) located in County Meath

Site Code	Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs)	Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)
001324	Jamestown Bog NHA	000006	Killyconny Bog (Cloghbally)
001580	Girley Bog NHA	000987	Lough Sheelin
001582	Molerick Bog NHA	001814	Lough Naneagh
		001810	White Lough, Ben Loughs And Lough Doo

[16] NPWS website 2019: https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/nha

Site Code	Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs)	Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)
		000556	Lough Shesk
		002103	Royal Canal
		001398	Rye Water Valley/Carton
		001584	Mount Hevey Bog
		001357	Trim
		000557	Rathmoylan Esker
		001592	Boyne Woods
		000553	Crewbane Marsh
		001591	Slane Riverbank
		001589	Rossnaree Riverbank
		001593	Thomastown Bog
		001578	Duleek Commons
		001579	Balrath Woods
		001576	Cromwell's Bush Fen
		000554	Laytown Dunes / Nanny Estuary
		001957	Boyne Coast And Estuary
		001861	Dowth Wetland
		001862	Boyne River Islands
		001587	Mentrim Lough
		000552	Corstown Loughs
		001594	Ballyhoe Lough
		001558	Breakey Loughs
		001573	Ballynabarny Fen

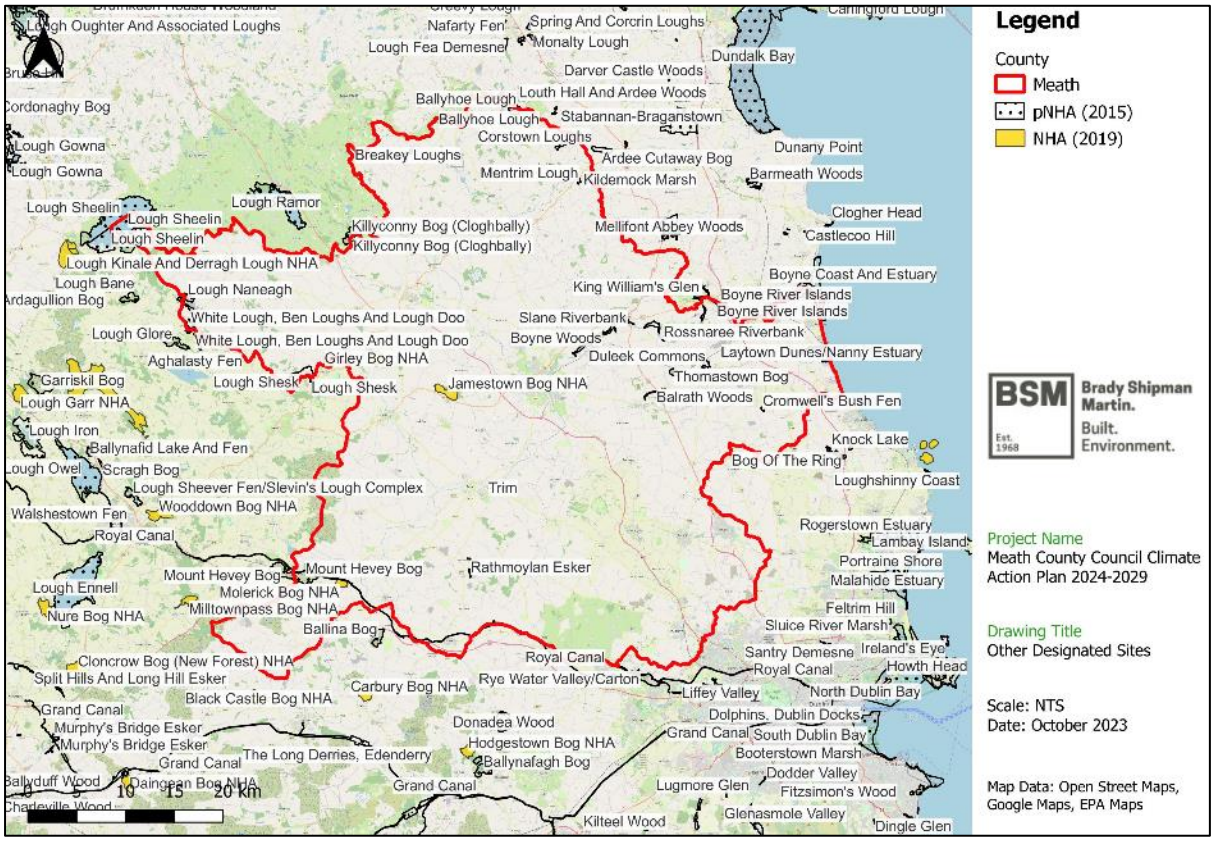
Table 5.4 Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) located within the zone of influence of the County Boundary

Site Code	Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs)	Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)
000985	Lough Kinale and Derragh Lough	001203	Knock Lake
000684	Lough Derravaragh	001204	Bog of the Ring
000694	Wooddown Bog	002000	Loughshinny Coast
002323	Milltownpass Bog	000207	Rockabill Island
000677	Cloncrow Bog (New Forest)	001616	Louth Hall and Ardee Woods
001725	Nure Bog	001856	Dunany Point
000570	Black Castle Bog	001801	Barmeath Woods

001388	Carbury Bog	001454	Ardee Cutaway Bog
001393	Hodgestown Bog	001464	Melifont Abbey Woods
001218	Skerries Islands NHA	001293	Blackhall Woods
		000208	Rogerstown Estuary
		000205	Malahide Estuary
		001215	Portraine Shore
		001208	Feltrim Hill
		000199	Baldoyle Bay
		001763	Sluice River Marsh
		000178	Santry Demesne
		000206	North Dublin Bay
		000128	Liffey Valley
		000390	Ballina Bog
		001391	Donadea Wood
		001387	Ballynafagh Lake
		000391	Ballynafagh Bog
		002104	Grand Canal
		000925	The Long Derries, Edenderry
		000582	Raheenmore Bog
		000685	Lough Ennell
		000690	Lough Sheever Fen/ Slevin's Lough Complex
		002069	Ardagullion Bog
		000679	Garriskil Bog
		000672	Aghalasty Fen
		000686	Lough Glore
		000681	Hill of Mael and the Rock of Curry
		000992	Lough Gowna
		000008	Lough Ramor
		001608	Monalty Lough
		001671	Spring and Corcrin Lough
		001828	Reaghstown Marsh
		000560	Lough Fea Demesne
		000561	Lough Naglack
		002077	Nafarty Fen
		000456	Stabannan-Braganstown
		001806	Kildemock Marsh

	001464	Mellifont Abbey Woods
	001804	King William's Glen
	001721	Lough Bane
	001459	Clogher Head
	001458	Castlecoo Hill
	000692	Scragh Bog
	000978	Cordonaghy Bog
	000690	Lough Sheever Fen / Slevin's Lough Complex
	001599	Creevy Lough
	001461	Darver Castle Woods
	001462	Drumacg, Toprass and Cortial Lough
	000455	Dundalk Bay
	001803	Stephenstown Pond
	000991	Dodder Valley
	000211	Slade of Saggart and Crooksling Glen
	001212	Lugmore Glen

Figure 5.2 Other Designated Sites in County Meath and in the surrounding zone of influence

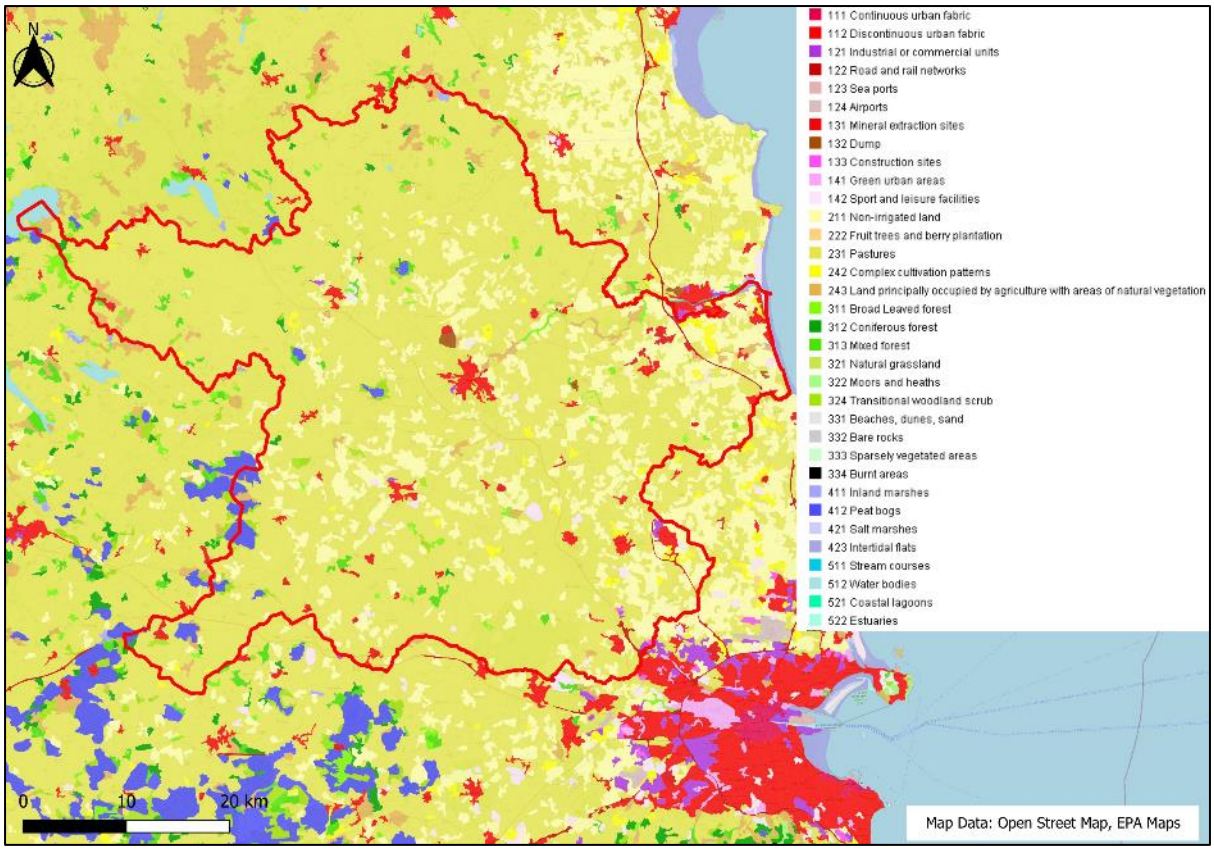


5.3.1.5 CORINE Land Cover Mapping

The CORINE land cover mapping (2018) for Meath County Council indicates a clear breakdown between the urban areas at major town centres at Navan, Trim, Kells, Dunshaughlin, Ashbourne, Dunboyne etc. Agricultural land cover makes up the majority of the county, with some bogs and forests scattered throughout, refer to **Figure 5.3**.

The most common land covers within the Plan area are classified as arable land, agricultural areas / pastures for the majority of the county and urban fabric / discontinuous urban fabric, industrial, commercial and transport units at urban areas. Marine waters / estuaries, wetlands / intertidal flats, along coastal zones and bogs and forests in the inland areas.

Figure 5.3 CORINE land cover (2018) for Meath County



5.3.1.6 Water Framework Directive (WFD) Register of Protected Area

Under the requirements of the *Water Framework Directive* (WFD) a number of waterbodies (or parts of) must have extra controls on their quality by virtue of how their waters are used by people and by wildlife have been listed on Registers of Protected Areas (RPAs). This register is split into five categories as outlined by the EPA:

- Areas designated for the abstraction of water intended for human consumption under Article 7;
- Areas designated for the protection of economically significant aquatic species (i.e. shellfish);
- Bodies of water designated as recreational waters, including areas designated as bathing waters under Directive 76/160/EEC;

- Nutrient-sensitive areas, including areas designated as vulnerable zones under Directive 91/676/EEC and areas designated as sensitive areas under Directive 91/271/EEC; and
- Areas designated for the protection of habitats or species where the maintenance or improvement of the status of water is an important factor in their protection, including relevant European sites (Natura 2000) designated under Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 79/409/EEC.

A number of these protected areas are present within Meath and these are as follows:

- The entire ground waterbody beneath the county is included on the Drinking Water - Ground Waterbody.
- WFD RPA Nutrient Sensitive Areas (Lake, Coastal & Transitional waterbodies) – Boyne Estuary.
- WFD RPA Nutrient Sensitive Areas (Rivers) - River Boyne.
- WFD RPA Recreational Waters – Bettystown bathing water
- WFD RPA Shellfish Areas - Balbriggan \ Skerries Shellfish Area.
- Salmonid Rivers – River Boyne.

5.3.1.7 Designated Shellfish Waters

The *EU Shellfish Waters Directive* (2006/113/EC) aims to protect and improve shellfish waters in order to support shellfish life and growth.

Pollution reduction programmes are in operation for these areas. The identified pressures on these designated waters include urban wastewater systems, on-site wastewater treatment systems and port activities. The coastal waters provide an important resource, supporting and generating employment and recreational activities and must be protected.

There is one area of Shellfish waters - Balbriggan / Skerries (IE_EA_020_0000) off the Meath coast designated as Shellfish Waters pursuant to the Shellfish Directive and Section 6 of the *Quality of Shellfish Waters Regulations (S.I. No. 268 of 2006)* require the development of Pollution Reduction Programmes (PRPs) for designated shellfish areas in order to support shellfish life and growth and to contribute to the high quality of directly edible shellfish products. Shellfish PRPs relate to bivalve and gastropod molluscs, including oysters, mussels, cockles, scallops and clams. They do not cover shellfish crustaceans such as crabs, crayfish and lobsters.

5.3.1.8 Salmonid Waters

The *Salmonid Regulations* (S.I. No. 293 of 1988) designate the waters capable of supporting salmon (Salmo *salar*), trout (*Salmo trutta*), char *(Salvelinus*) and whitefish (*Coregonus*) as protected. Thirty-four rivers, tributaries and lakes are listed and protected under these Regulations that prescribe quality standards for salmonid waters, sampling programmes and methods of analysis and inspection to be used by local authorities to determine compliance with the standards.

The River Boyne in County Meath is a designated Salmonid Water under the EU Freshwater Fish Directive.

5.3.1.9 Other Designations

RAMSAR Sites

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention. Wetlands are important ecosystems, which improve water quality, provide storm protection, flood mitigation, stabilise shorelines, maintain biodiversity, and provide natural products such as fish and shellfish. Ireland presently has 45no. RAMSAR sites. There are no Ramsar sites located in County Meath. However, relevant authorities are expected to manage their Ramsar Sites so as to maintain their ecological character and retain their essential functions and values for future generations. The nearest Ramsar Site to County Meath is Lough Derravaragh, <10km south-west of the County boundary in County Westmeath.

Wildfowl Sanctuaries

Wildfowl sanctuaries are areas that have been excluded from the 'Open Season Order' so that game birds can rest and feed undisturbed. There are 68no. sanctuaries in the State[17]. Shooting of game birds is not allowed in these sanctuaries. The Boyne Estuary (part) (WFS-41) is located within Meath County.

Nature Reserves

Other nature conservation designations are *Statutory Nature Reserves*, which are protected under Ministerial order.

In January 2019 the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht published notice of making Statutory Instrument (S.I. No. 602 of 2018) under Section 16 of the *Wildlife Act* established the first Nature Reserve in County Meath at Newcastle Lough. The reason for recognising the land as nature reserve is the presence of lake, reed bed, wet grassland and woodland habitats and an associated diversity of flora and fauna.

Newcastle Lough (private Nature Reserve) is located in the northern most part of the County Meath, 4km south of Kingscourt.

Tree Preservation Order (TPO)

A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) enables local authorities to preserve any single tree or group of trees and brings them under planning control. Tree preservation orders are only made if it appears that a tree or group of trees, need to be protected in the interests of amenity in the environment. The *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended) has further outlined the legal framework and procedures provided in the 1963 Act to make a TPO. There are 9no. TPOs within County Meath.

5.3.1.10 Invasive Species

Invasive species constitute a threat to biodiversity and eco-systems and can have economic costs. In Ireland, there are currently 377no. recorded non-native species and 342no. non-native 'potential invaders', 66% are considered to have a low impact risk, 21% to have a medium impact risk and 13% have a high impact risk. The majority of invasive species in Ireland are plants, however, there is potential for rising trends of invasive vertebrate and invertebrate species.

In Meath, c.350no. species of alien vascular plant, accounting for around one third of the county's total vascular plant species, though only a handful of these cause problems. The most destructive of these

[17] NPWS (2021).

species are Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*), Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), Zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*) and Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), usually occasionally found along watercourses, completely taking over areas of the riverbank. Landowners are responsible for preventing the spread of Japanese Knotweed on their own land.

To date, an invasive species audits have been carried out along the Boyne and it is an objective of the *Meath Biodiversity Action Plan 2015-2020* to continue to monitor alien invasive species in the County and ensure adequate training is carried out to contain, manage and effectively dispose of such species.

5.3.1.11 Biodiversity Issues

Ireland is currently experiencing a decline in floral and faunal populations. Implementation of measures to achieve the requirements of the Habitats Directive and the objectives of the WFD are likely to benefit protected sites in the future.

Certain developments and activities associated with agricultural activities, afforestation, urban developments, windfarms, quarries, tourism and recreation, peat extraction, commercial fishing, ports, coastal and fluvial flood defence schemes as well as a wide range of infrastructural works (including road works, water abstraction and wastewater disposal) that are located within, or close to, ecologically sensitive sites can give rise to significant environmental pressures. Within Meath, the protection of waterways, wetlands and coastal areas and the avoidance of the spread of invasive species are major issues.

Existing biodiversity issues / pressures and threats on Ireland's habitats and species, which are also relevant to the County Meath, include:

- Direct habitat loss within European Sites e.g. developments occurring on undeveloped sites, coastal protection works.
- Indirect effects on the ecological networks supporting European Sites e.g. linear developments forming barriers to movements of mobile species or loss of sites that support an overall population of species.
- Construction and use of residential, commercial, industrial and recreational infrastructure and areas. For example development on greenfield sites, and changes in farming practices.
- Indirect threat to water quality including changes to surface and groundwater quality and volumes e.g. wastewater treatment plants, septic tanks, changes to agricultural drainage, changes to flood regime.
- Direct / indirect disturbance of sensitive habitats / species e.g. recreation at coastal sites, riverside walkways etc.
- Direct / indirect threats to European Sites by invasive species e.g. landscaping, forestry, urbanization.
- Direct / indirect threats to native flora and fauna from pathogens / diseases – including on imported material (e.g. Ash Dieback - *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*).
- Climate Change - For example the loss of wetlands, due to climate change events i.e. storms and flood events.
- Geological events, natural catastrophes - For example flooding, storms / extreme weather events.
- Land Management - conversion of land / sites and sealing of soils can release CO_2 into the atmosphere and further reduce areas of 'carbon sinks'.

- Invasive Species and problematic species - continued control and management of invasive species. For example the loss of biodiversity as native species are shaded out, but also diseases and pathogens.
- Mixed source pollution - For example emissions from transport, heating homes, leachate from landfills, water pollution from wastewater treatment systems, eutrophication and acidification from forestry.

5.3.2 Population & Human Health

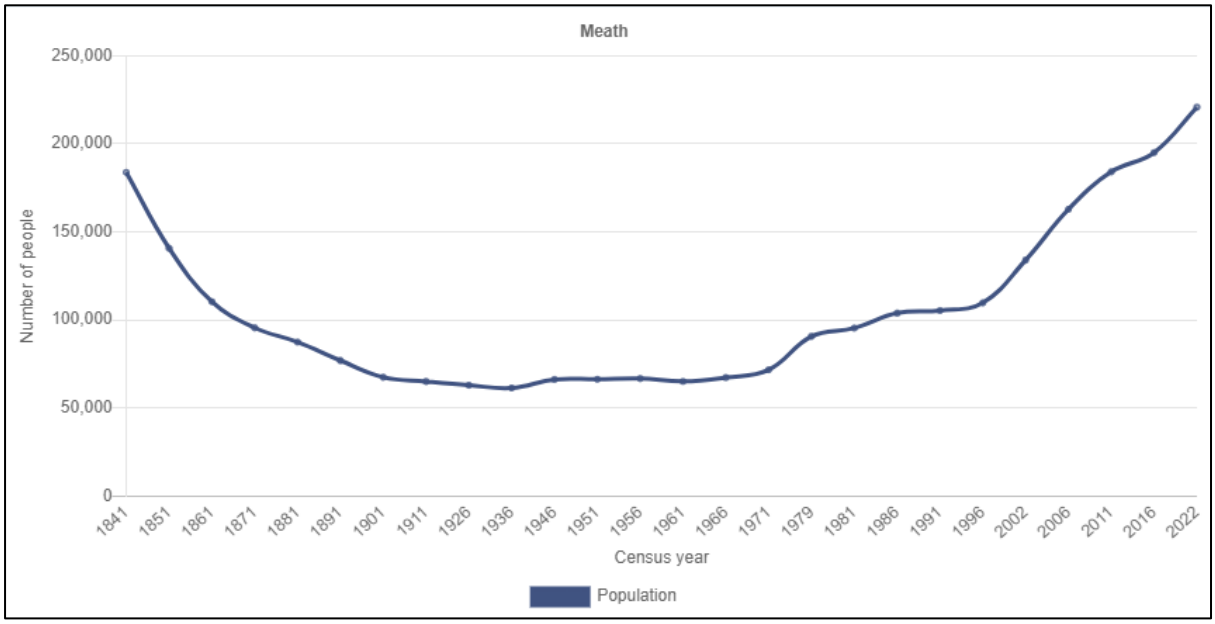
5.3.2.1 Population

The administrative area of Meath covers an area of over 230,000 hectares (ha) and is the second largest county in Leinster. It shares its boundary with counties, Dublin, Louth, Monaghan, Cavan, Westmeath, Offaly and Kildare. Meath adjoins Dublin to the south and is a vital supporting partner in the recent growth of the Greater Dublin Area. The 2022 Census results showed that the population for County Meath was 220, 826[18] persons, an increase of 13.2% from the 2016 census (195, 044 persons)[19]. The 2016 Census showed that the population of Meath was an increase of 5.9% from the 2011 census (184, 135 persons)[20].

The *National Planning Framework* (NPF) outlines that by 2040 there will be roughly an extra one million people living in Ireland. The population of Meath is growing at a slightly faster rate than both the region as a whole and the E*astern Strategic Planning Area*. There was a rapid growth in population in Meath between 2006-2011 when the population increased by 13% with 5.9% increase during the following five-year period (2011-2016). Over the 10-year period between 2006-2016 the population increase was 20%. Between 2016-2027 it is projected that the population of Meath will increase by 17.3% (*Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027*). Refer to **Figure 5.4** below.

[18] 2022 Census - https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/population/censusofpopulation2022/
[19] 2016 Census - https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/ima/cop/2016&boundary=C03849V04599&guid=2ae19629-1494-13a3-e055-000000000001
[20] 2011 Census - https://visual.cso.ie/?body=entity/ima/cop/2011&boundary=C03994V04752&guid=C11

Figure 5.4 Population change for County Meath, 1841 to 2022[21]

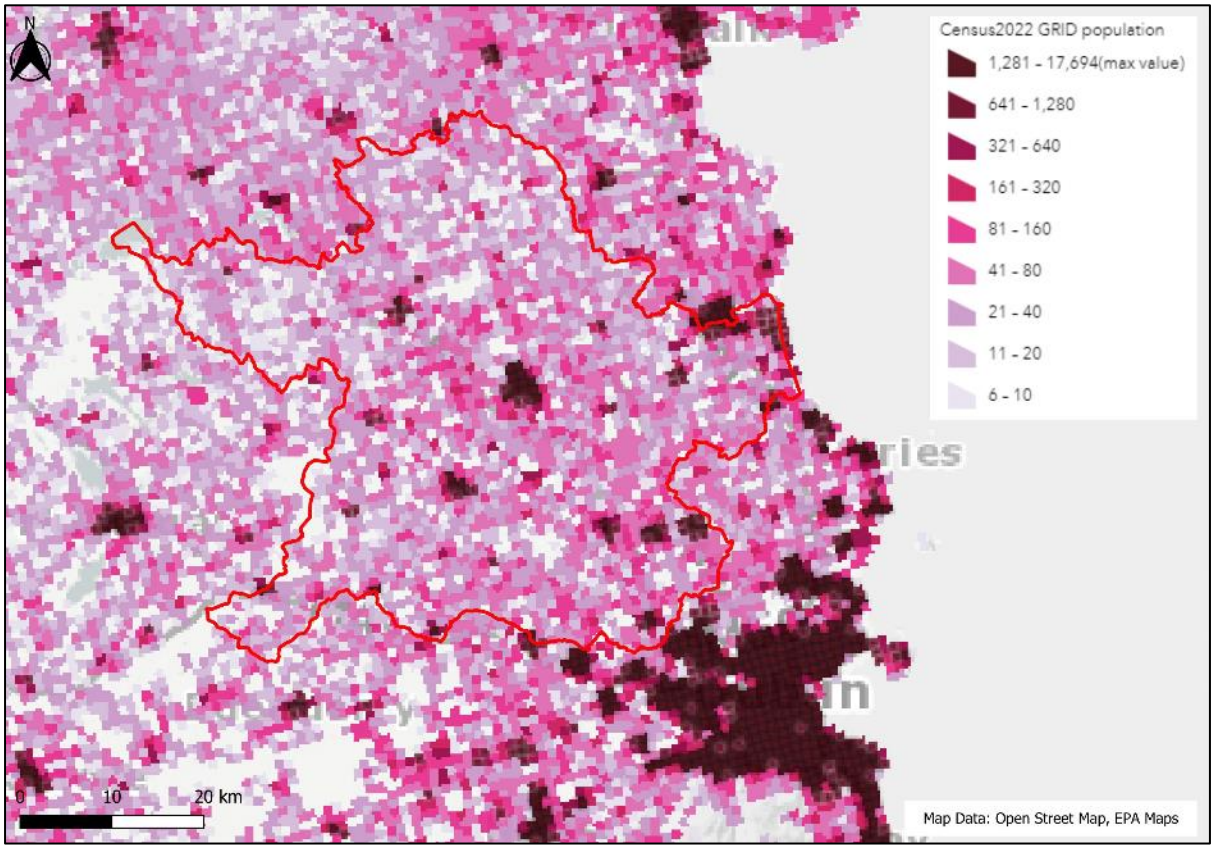


In 2016 Ashbourne was the fastest growing town in the County (south-east of the County, closest to Dublin) as the population increasing by 11.7% to 12,679. This was twice the rate of growth recorded in Navan, which increased its population by 5.7% to 30,173.

In Census 2022, the population density of the State was 73 people per km^2. **Figure 5.5** below indicates the population density per square kilometre (km^2) in County Meath.

[21] 2022 Census : Population Distribution and Movements - https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpp1/censusofpopulation2022profile1-populationdistributionandmovements/populationdistribution/

Figure 5.5 Population density per km^2 in County Meath[22]



5.3.2.2 Socio-Economic Trends

Age profiles / Age dependency ratio

The age structure of a population is influenced by patterns of natural increase and migration. The age dependency ratio is the proportion of population in the young (0-14 years) and old (65 years and above) cohorts to the working population cohort (15-64 years). The age structure of the population of County Meath reflects the future housing requirements, school requirements and community services.

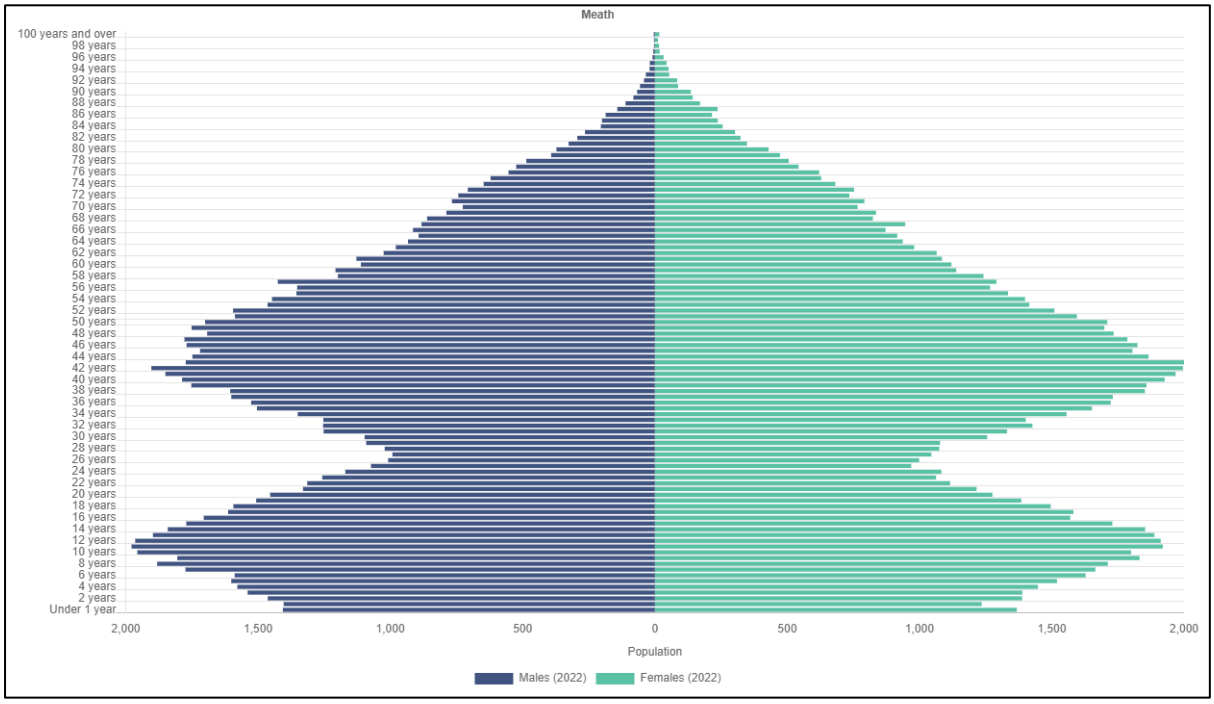
The age structure of the population indicates that the County in 2022 has a relatively young and working population (42 years and 11 years in 2022) and corresponds to that of the State (41 years).

Child dependency[23] in County Meath is high with 22.7% of the population under the age of 14 in comparison to an average of 19.65% for the State. Old age dependency[24] in the County has an average of 15% for the State, while for County Meath is 12.25%. The working population (15-64 years) for County Meath is 64.9% and corresponds to that for the State (65.02%).

The increased numbers in the young population (0-14 years) reflects a more immediate requirements for additional childcare and schools for the younger population. The slight increase in the older populations (65 years and above) will also have long-term implications relating to healthcare, social services and transport. **Figure 5.6** below shows the population by age distribution for County Meath.

[22] Census 2922 1km Grid Population - https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/population/censusofpopulation2022/
[23] CSO Census 2022: Persons aged 0-14
[24] CSO Census 2022: Persons aged 65+

Figure 5.6 Population by age distribution for County Meath 2022[25]



Housing

The *Planning and Development Act* (PDA) places a statutory obligation on planning authorities to ensure that an adequate housing supply and sufficient lands for residential development are provided through the course of the County Development Housing.

As per 2022 Census, the total stock of habitable permanent housing in Census 2022 was 2,112,121, over 5% higher than in Census 2016. County Meath (housing stock 2022 - 78,759) has one of the fastest growth in housing stock, c.11.48% higher than 2016 census (housing stock 2016 – 70,649). The population for County Meath has grown at a similar rate to that of the housing stock and the increase in housing stock is this area is mainly driven by increase of new dwelling completion in these areas.

In recent years, Meath has experienced significant pressure in the rural area for one-off rural housing which has resulted in the open rural character of many areas being eroded by piecemeal housing development. It is a necessity to manage future rural housing development in County Meath and to facilitate the provision of more sustainable housing options for rural communities, through building up capacity of rural villages and rural nodes to absorb more residential development which will sustain their futures.

It is clear that the capacity of the environment and the road network to accommodate further new residential development is reaching its limit in many areas of the County.

It is essential to promote and facilitate the development of sustainable communities in the County by managing the level of growth in each settlement to ensure future growth is in accordance with the Core Strategy and County Settlement Hierarchy in order to deliver compact urban areas and sustainable rural communities. Placemaking, compact growth, active land management, and addressing the impact of

[25] Census 2022 Population by age - https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpp1/censusofpopulation2022profile1-populationdistributionandmovements/populationdistribution/

climate change are some of the key themes of the growth strategy in both the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

As per the *Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027*, new buildings are designed to take account of the potential implications of climate change including higher temperatures, different rainfall patterns and a potential increase in extreme events such as flooding and storms. Improving the energy efficiency of buildings reduces energy consumption and therefore reduce greenhouse gas emissions. New developments include a suitable mixture of house types that will support the creation of a sustainable community.

Tourism

Tourism has been identified as one of the country's most important economic sectors and is credited with playing a significant role in the economic recovery in recent years. Tourism is particularly important in that it can assist in providing business and employment opportunities across regions and leads to jobs across the spectrum of skills requirements.

The quality and diversity of Meath's tourism is particularly strong in relation to its rich heritage, quality rural landscape and many towns and villages, meaning the County has a lot to offer as a tourist destination.

The Boyne Valley is identified as the birth place of *Ireland's Ancient East* and Meath in particular is the gateway to this destination. Meath has a unique collection of pre-historic sites and monuments in particular the Brú na Bóinne, UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Hill of Tara, Trim Castle, Newgrange, Knowth and Hill of Slane are all significant tourism attractions in the Meath with excellent visitor numbers.

Meath also has a number of annual festivals and events such as Hinterland book festival, Kells type trail and Guth Gafa film festival all located in Kells, Nobber Harp festival, Spirits of Meath throughout the County and many more, which attract domestic and overseas visitors each year. Family attractions such as Emerald Park provides a new tourist attraction into Meath, deviating from the traditional heritage and cultural attraction. Slane Distillery also provides a form of tourism diversification within the County which attracts a different target market not previously captured by the County.

5.3.2.3 Human Health

Human health has the potential to be impacted upon by environmental factors such as air, water or soil through which contaminants could accumulate and have potential to cause harm through contact with human beings. Hazards or nuisances to human health can arise due to exposure to these vectors, for example arising from incompatible adjacent land uses. The impact of development on human health is also influenced by the extent to which new development is accompanied by appropriate infrastructure and the maintenance of the quality of water, air and soil.

Infrastructure / Amenity and Human Health

Sporting, leisure and recreational facilities are essential to promoting good health, social cohesion, a sense of community and enhancing quality of life and well-being. Nationally there has been, in recent years, an increased focus on fitness, sports and recreation generally.

Sport is an important contributor to the life of the citizens of Meath, with facilities ranging from GAA facilities, horse racing courses, equestrian centres, golf courses, walking routes, beaches, public

swimming pools as well as private facilities in hotels, all of which play an important role to play in the tourism economy. The *Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027* has objectives for delivery of several greenways and upgrade of townpaths in the County.

The presence of beaches, watercourses, equestrian and related activities, along with golfing facilities and swimming pools etc., has a growing and an important role to play in the tourism economy.

Public open space has an important function and serves a variety of purposes. Accessible, useable, dedicated open spaces and recreational facilities to meet both passive and active recreational needs are vital for residential and recreational amenity. The Council will encourage, where possible, the development of open spaces as an accessible recreation amenity.

Radon and Human Health

Radon is a radioactive gas, which is naturally produced in the ground from the uranium present in small quantities in all rocks and soils. Tiny radioactive particles are produced by the gas which when inhaled can cause lung cancer. The risk of contracting lung cancer as a result of Radon depends on how much Radon a person has been exposed to over a period of time. Radon risk map levels in the County have been collated from the EPA *Radon Risk Map of Ireland* and are shown in Figure 5.7 below. Areas in red are most at risk from radon and are called High Radon Areas, the areas of the map in orange and yellow are areas of medium and low risk respectively. However, a high radon level can be found in any home in any part of the country.

Dublin Airport

Dublin International Airport is located within Fingal and while being of national and strategic significance, it is also a significant source of noise for County Fingal. Parts of the County Meath are located within the noise zones B & C and the outer public safety zone for Dublin Airport and planning restrictions are in place for these zones. Refer to Figure 5.8.

Figure 5.7 Radon Risk map for County Meath[26]

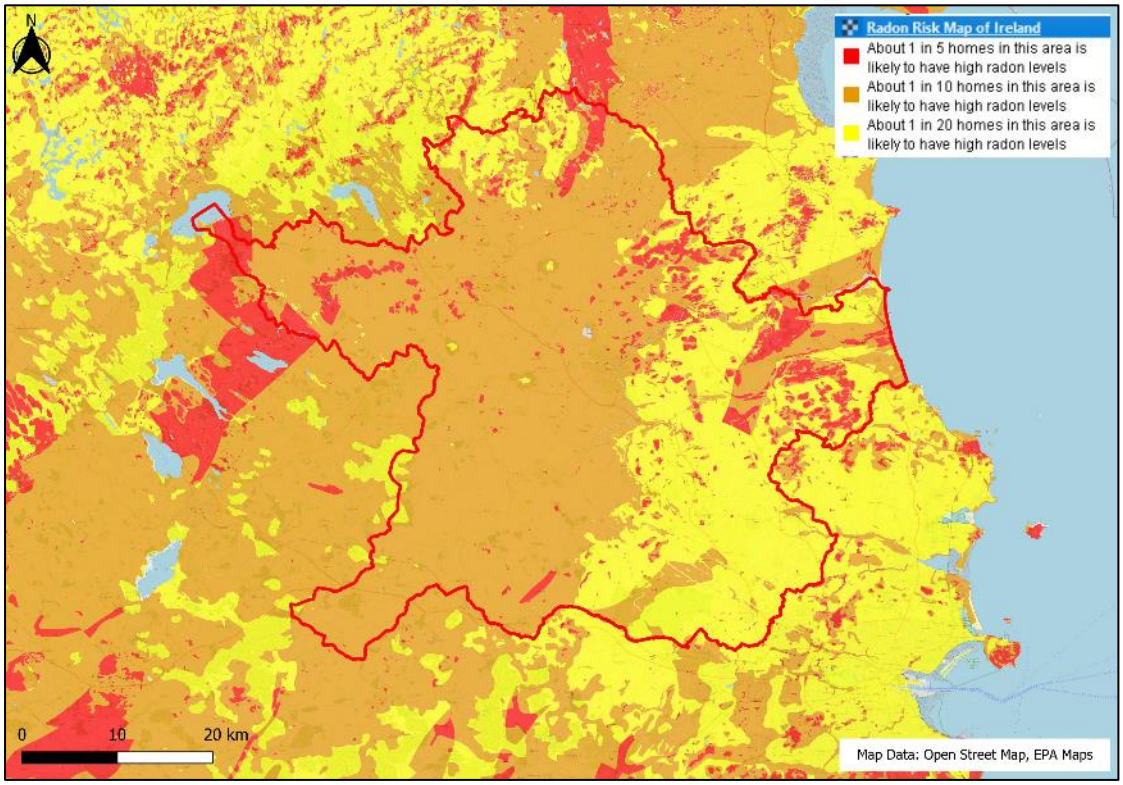
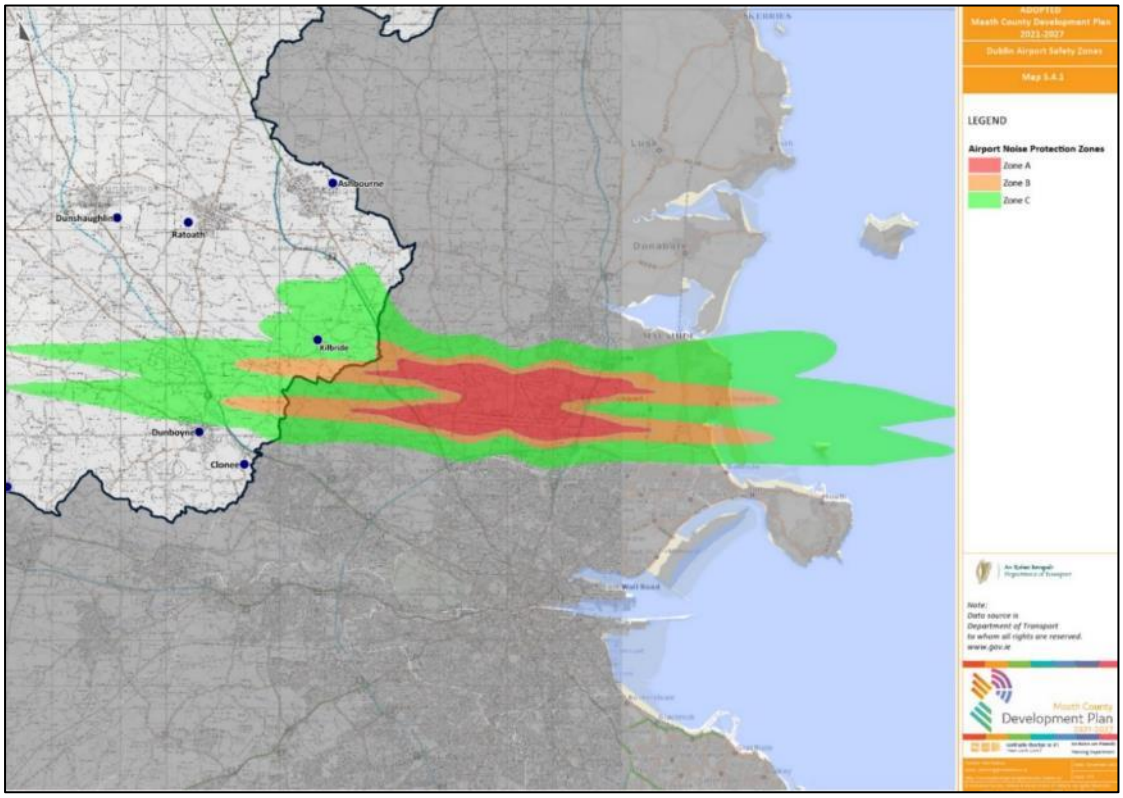


Figure 5.8 Airport Noise Protection Zones extending into County Meath (Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027)



[26] EPA Radon Risk Map of Ireland- https://gis.epa.ie/geonetwork/srv/eng/catalog.search#/metadata/3b2e9226-c40a-44c9-b4f0-7234c0810769

5.3.2.4 Existing Population and Human Health Issues

Provision of more sustainable travel choices to the residents should be a strategic priority to reduce transport carbon emissions while delivering number of key economic, social and community benefits. A focus on residential development in sustainable locations, accessible to public transport infrastructure utilising brownfield lands in our existing settlements is essential to deliver a reduction in emissions. Furthermore, provision of surface water and flood risk management measures throughout developments is essential to climate-proof any future developments.

Existing population and human health issues / pressures on the population of the Meath administrative area, include:

- Population / Households - there is an increasing demand for housing units in the county. This also influences the energy requirements within the county.
- Health and Well-being - continue the development of recreation and leisure facilities.
- Flooding - Over the past number of years there have been significant instances where flooding has occurred in areas of the County causing damage to homes and businesses. However, relative to other counties the extent of flooding in the County has been low.
- Radon - Radon risk map levels in the County have been collated from the EPA Radon Risk Map of Ireland, refer to **Figure 5.7**.
- Climate Change - potential impacts of climate change on human health from changes to local weather, including prolonged periods of hot or cold weather - which can lead to heat and cold stresses and their associated effects.
- Airport / Noise - potential adverse impacts from noise levels associated with exposure to undesirable noise levels from aircraft / flight paths. Health impacts include cardiovascular disease, effects on sleep / sleep patterns, cognitive impairment, becoming or increasingly disturbed or bothered by noise, impacts on quality of life and mental health, hearing impairment and tinnitus.
- Information on the status of drinking water, wastewater climate change are provided in other sections of this Report.

5.3.3 Land, Soils & Geology

Land is the solid surface of the Earth that is not permanently covered by water, while soil is the ecosystem in the uppermost layer of the ground in which plants can grow. Soil is composed of mineral particles, organic matter, water, air and living organisms. Land degradation is a global problem, often caused by a combination of factors such as poor land management and unsustainable development. Land degradation may exacerbate the impacts of natural disasters.

Soils comprise the most part organic matter, minerals and fine to course grained weathered rocks. The variability in the constituent parts and the percentage content of each in the soil matrix results in differing characteristics. This has implications for suitable land use and the appropriateness for differing land use practices. Geology encompasses the understanding and study of the solid and liquid matter that constitutes the earth and the processes by which they are formed, moved and changed.

5.3.3.1 Land

Agriculture

County Meath's rich pasturelands support a wide variety of farming types. Agriculture has been the most important contributor to the rural economy of County Meath and it plays an important role in environmental management and landscape protection.

Land use patterns from agriculture to uses for residential developments, business parks and light industry can result in the loss of hedgerow boundaries and alteration or culverting of stream channels. The loss of agricultural and soil resources close to the metropolitan area of Dublin also increases dependency on imported food produce with corresponding increased 'food miles' and higher carbon emissions.

Forestry and Woodlands

Forests and woodlands play an important role within the Greater Dublin Area in terms of supporting rural employment and rural diversity, climate change management and carbon sequestration, biodiversity and as a source of renewable/alternative energy sources.

The introduction of large-scale forestry areas can have negative impacts on an area if they are not in harmony with the surrounding environment. Forestry activities must be appropriate in terms of nature and scale to the surrounding area, so they are not visually obtrusive on the landscape or cause damage to important habitats or the ecology of the area.

5.3.3.2 Soils

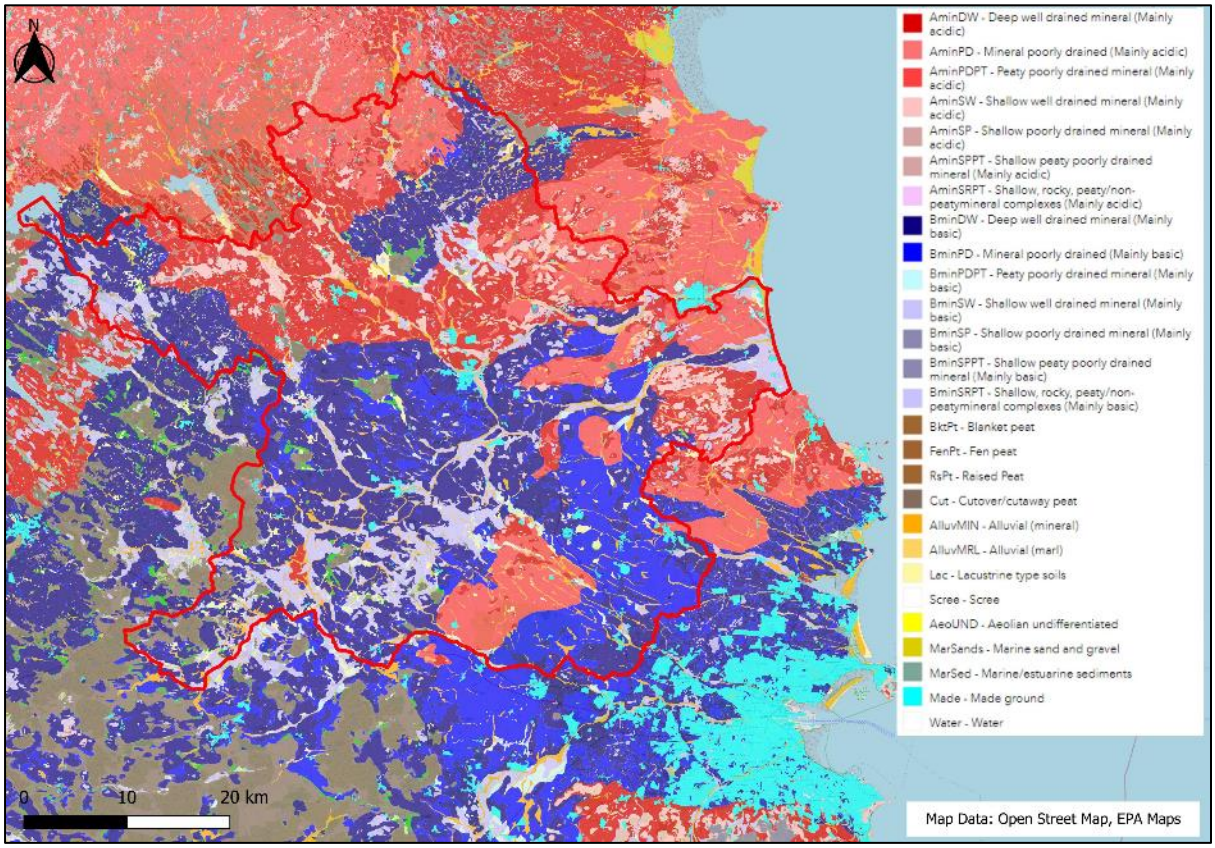
Soil is a non-renewable resource that performs many vital functions: food, storage, filtration and transformation of many substances including water, carbon, and nitrogen. Soil has a role as a habitat and gene pool, serves as a platform for human activities, landscape and heritage and acts as a provider of raw materials.

The *Irish Soil Information System* (SIS) concludes a 5 year programme, supported by the EPA and Teagasc, to develop a 1:250,000 scale national soil map. The Irish Soil Information System adopted a unique methodology combining digital soil mapping techniques with traditional soil survey application.

County Meath contains a range of soils that support various habitats and land uses and provide valuable mineral resource potential. Fertile soils also provide the basis for a thriving agricultural and food sector, see Figure 5.9 below. The soils in County Meath are mainly derived from a mixture of calcareous, non-calcareous, mineral alluvium and cutaway / cutover peat materials. The soils in Meath range from mineral poorly drained (mainly basic) (BminPD), mineral poorly drained (mainly acidic) (AminPD), deep well drained mineral (mainly basic) (BminDW), deep well drained mineral (mainly acidic) (AminDW) to shallow well drained mineral (mainly acidic) (BminSW).

These soils can be impacted upon by development, land use changes and water quality.

Figure 5.9 Teagasc Subsoils Map for County Meath[27]



Extractive Industries

Meath contains a variety of raw materials critical to the construction industry, in the form of sand, gravel, stones reserves including high purity limestones and shale used in cement and magnesia manufacture and base metal deposits. A balance must be sought between permitting extraction to meet economic demands and the prevention of undue harm to the environment and amenities. Extraction activity should not have adverse impacts on Natura 2000 sites and geological features of national and international importance.

Extractive industries by their nature can give rise to detrimental environmental and residential amenity effects including traffic generation, vibration, dust, noise, water pollution, visual intrusion and loss of groundwater supplies. Quarrying has been historically undertaken throughout the county due to the presence of deep deposits of sand, gravel and bedrock. There are 76no. operators on the Extractive Industries Register in County Meath[28].

Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Quarries and Ancillary Activities published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) in 2004 and a number of other guidelines relating to quarrying have been produced by various bodies for example *'Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry'*[29], '*Guidelines for the Preparation of Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology*

[27] EPA Maps - https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/
[28] EPA Enforcement, 2023: http://www.epa.ie/enforcement/extractiveindustriesregister/
[29] GSI (2008).

Chapters of Environmental Impact Statements'[30] and '*Wildlife, Habitats and the Extractive Industry'*[31] to provide guidance on the management of extractive industries.

Seveso Sites

The *Seveso III Directive* (European Directive 2012/18/EU) and the *European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations, 2000* (S.I. No. 476 of 2000) apply to companies where dangerous substances are present in quantities equal to or above specified thresholds. There are two thresholds, a lower one of 50 tonnes ('lower tier sites') and a higher one of 200 tonnes ('upper tier sites'). Lower tier sites are required to have a *Major Accidents Prevention Policy* and a *Safe Work Systems Plan*. Upper tier sites are required to carry out, in conjunction with the local competent authority (which includes the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Local Authority and An Garda Síochána) a *Major Accidents External Emergency Plan*.

Emergency Plans must take full account of objectives established for nearby waters in river basin plans. The legislation deals with the prevention of major accidents. At present there are 3no. Seveso III sites in the County. In addition, there are 6no. Seveso III sites in neighbouring counties Louth, Fingal and Kildare where the 'Seveso Consultation Distance' extends into the County or whose consultation distance overlaps with the consultation distance of adjoining sites which extend into the County. Refer to Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Seveso Sites in the Meath Administrative Area or Sites where Consultation Distances extend into the County[32]

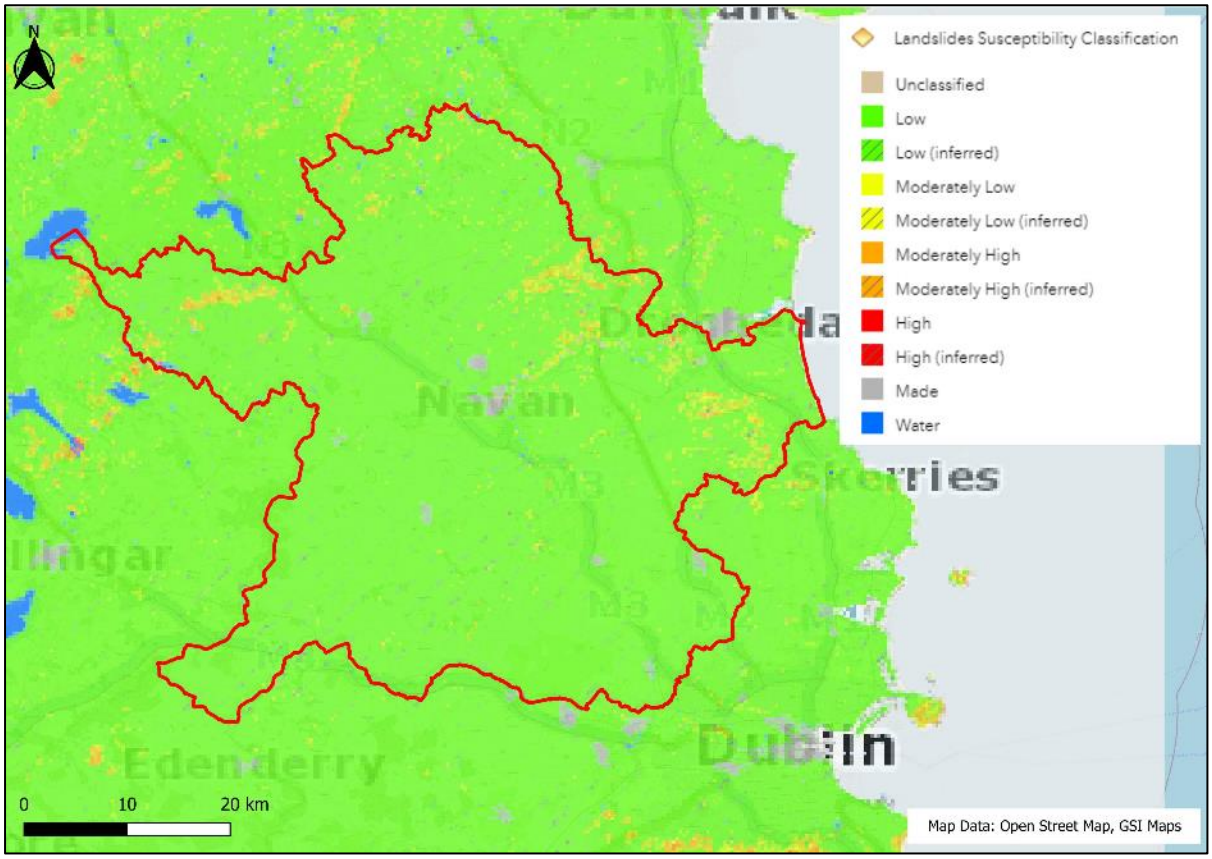
Upper Tier Seveso Sites		
Site Name	**Address**	**Consultation radius distance from the facility**
Boliden Tara Mines DAC	Knockumber Road, Navan, Co. Meath	1,000m
Flogas Ire. Ltd.	Marsh Drogheda Road	600m
Irish Industrial Explosives Limited	Clonagh, Enfield	1,000m
Chemco (Ireland) Limited	Macetown, North Damastown Industrial Estate, Mulhuddart	1,000m
Guerbet Ireland ULC	Damastown Industrial Mullhuddart Estate	1,000m
Lower Tier Seveso Sites		
Xtratherm Limited	Liscarton Industrial Estate, Kells Road, Navan	1,000m
Grassland Fertilizers Limited	The Pound Sane Road	700m
Clarochem Ireland Ltd	Damastown, Mullhuddart	1,000m
Aestellas Ireland Co. Ltd	Damastown Industrial Mullhuddart Park	1,000m

[30] IGI (2013).
[31] DEHLG (2006).
[32] Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

Landslides

Meath has a low landslide risk as much of the county is low-lying ground. According to Geological Survey, Ireland landslide susceptibility mapping, the vast majority of the county has been rated as having 'low' landslide susceptibility, with the risk rising to 'moderately low' in isolated patches throughout the county. Refer to **Figure 5.10**. There are four recorded landslide within Meath.

Figure 5.10 GSI Landslide Susceptibility for County Meath[33]



5.3.3.3 Geology

Geological Heritage

The *Geological Survey of Ireland* (GSI) provides information available on bedrock, subsoil, aquifer classifications and vulnerability. County Meath is a place with a subtle but distinctive landscape compared to other parts of Ireland. The bedrock foundation, with hundreds of millions of years in the formation and shaping, and the more recent history of geomorphological processes involving river channels and glaciers are what have created the underlying geological diversity, or geodiversity. Geological understanding and interpretation is best achieved on the ground at sites where rocks and landforms are displayed. County Meath has a range of such natural and man-made sites.

County Meath is underlain by several different rock formations. To the north by the Clontail Formation (Calcareous red-mica greywacke), the Fingal Group (Dark limestone, shale and micrite) and the Rathkenny Formation (Black mudstone, siltstone, greywacke) to the west and centre by the Lucan Formation (Dark limestone & shale), the south by Waulsortian Limestones Formation (massive

[33] GSI Spatial Resources - https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a30af518e87a4c0ab2fbde2aaac3c228

unbedded lime-mudstone) and the east by the Loughshinny Formation (Dark micrite & calcarenite, shale)[34].

The GSI has identified 28no. geological sites in Meath which are important Irish Geological Heritage (IGH) sites, see **Table 5.6** below. Geological Sites do not receive statutory protection like Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) but receive an effective protection from their inclusion in the planning system.

Table 5.6 Geological Heritage Sites in Meath[35]

IGH[36] Theme	Site Name	Site Code	Description
IGH 3	Poulmore Scarp	MH007	Swallow hole cliff section, which may also be a disused quarry
IGH 3	Barley Hill Quarry	MH005	A working quarry
IGH 7	Mullaghmore	MH013	Gravel pits and agricultural land
IGH 9	Carrickleck (Silica Sand)	MH025	A working quarry
IGH 3	Cregg	MH006	Natural rock outcrops
IGH 8	Altmush Stream	MH018	Natural rock outcrops along the banks of a stream over a distance of 1.5km
IGH 8	Nobber	MH022	Natural rock outcrops along the banks of the river dee over a distance of 360m
IGH 8	Kilbride Quarry	MH021	A disused quarry
IGH 7	Blackwater Valley	MH010	River Valley and outwash plain
IGH 8	Rockwood Cliffs	MH024	Cliff section along the River Boyne
IGH 1	St. Keeran's Well	MH002	Natural rock outcrop and springs
IGH 7	Rathkenny	MH015	Hummocky topography with gravel pit
IGH 7	Murrens	MH014	Wooded ridge - esker and hummocky ground including grave pit
IGH 1	Gibstown Castle	MH001	Natural rock outcrop and spring
IGH 2	Grangegeeth	MH004	An overgrown depression which may have been quarried or maybe a natural head of stream gully and waterfall
IGH 7	Boyne Valley	MH011	River valley
IGH 8	Painestown Quarry	MH023	A disused quarry now heavily vegetated
IGH 8	Duleek Quarry	MH020	A working quarry
IGH 2	Bellewstown	MH003	Working quarry and natural exposures in agricultural fields with rock close to the surface beneath soil
IGH 7	Laytown to Gormanston	MH008	Coastal plain, including sea cliffs
IGH 14	Boyne River, Trim	MH027	A section of the Boyne River
IGH 8	Bray Hill	MH019	A working quarry

[34] OSI, GSI 2019: https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=de7012a99d2748ea9106e7ee1b6ab8d5&scale=0
[35] GSI, Online Map Viewer 2019: https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a30af518e87a4c0ab2fbde2aaac3c228
[36] Irish Geological Heritage Sites

IGH[36] Theme	Site Name	Site Code	Description
IGH 7	Trim Esker	MH017	A 6km long section of a predominantly wooded esker ridge
IGH 7	Galtrim Moraine	MH012	Partially wooded, much quarried moraine ridge
IGH 12	Dunshaughlin	MH026	This site is unexposed at the surface
IGH 7	Rathmolyon Esker	MH016	Remnant face in former sand & gravel quarry
IGH 7	Benhead	MH009	A high coastal cliff face
IGH 16	St. Gorman's Spring	MH028	Warm spring

5.3.3.4 Soils and Geology Issues

The development of green field sites resulting from urban expansion and population growth is a significant issue facing Meath. This places pressure on the agricultural potential and food production potential of soil. Soil is lost annually through the development of agricultural land. The challenge is to manage future population growth within Meath whilst minimising impacts on surrounding agricultural production and maintaining production levels.

Existing land, soil and geology issues / pressures with environmental considerations include:

- Soil - the loss / damage of soil from the construction of greenfield sites for development.
- Soil - contamination can occur from unauthorised waste-related activities, leakages and accidental spillages of chemicals. Technical and financial constraints on development and the threat contaminated soils pose to the health of the population.
- Soil - erosion of soils in the county from intensive agricultural / forestry practices, quarrying activities and major infrastructural projects.
- Soil - disturbance of contaminated soils could result in potential for water pollution and potential further land contamination.
- Pressure on soil - from land-use change, intensification of agriculture, erosion, overgrazing, disposal of organic wastes to soils, afforestation, industry and urbanisation.
- Land Management - conversion of land / sites can release CO_2 into the atmosphere and further reduce areas of '*carbon sinks*'.
- Geological Heritage - the protection of sites of geological importance within the county, see Table 5.6.
- Climate change - carbon stored in soils plays an important role in maintaining soil functionality, in water and air quality and in climate change. Proper land use management is essential to prevent carbon stored in soil from being released into the atmosphere.
- Groundwater - rock types in the county that provides for a productive groundwater aquifer.
- Quarries - pose a potential impact on the level of water tables and potential exposure of water table and contaminant to water tables.

5.3.4 Water Quality

Water is fundamental to all life; for humans, plants and animals alike. It is also critical in economic terms in generating and sustaining wealth in a number of key areas such as agriculture, fishing, power generation, industry, transport and tourism. However, it is also a fragile resource requiring continued

protection. In general terms Ireland's waters are of good quality, however, preserving the high standard of water is essential for human health and the natural environment.

For the purposes of this section, the water environment is taken to include natural features such as lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater waterbodies. In addition flooding is also dealt with in this section. Meath has a rich and extensive aquatic environment consisting of coastline, rivers, streams, lakes and estuarine waters (surface waters) and ground waters.

Wastewater treatment and drinking water are discussed under Material Assets in Section 5.7 below.

5.3.4.1 The Water Framework Directive (WFD)

The *EU Water Framework Directive* (WFD) (2000/60/EC) establishes a framework for the protection of both surface water and groundwater waterbodies. Since 2000, Water Management in the EU has been directed by the WFD 2000/60/EC, which was transposed into Irish law under the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 722 of 2003). This legislation requires governments to take a holistic approach to managing all their water resources based on natural geographic boundaries, *i.e.* the river catchment or basin. The WFD establishes a common framework for the sustainable and integrated management of all waters covering groundwater, inland surface waters, transitional waters and coastal waters. The WFD requires Member States to manage all of their waters and ensure that they achieve at least *'good status'* by 2015 and beyond. The ultimate deadline for Member States for achievement of *'good'* status is 2027 at the latest.

5.3.4.2 Surface Waterbodies

For the purpose of implementing the WFD, Ireland was divided into eight River Basin Districts (RBDs) or areas of land that are drained by a large river or number of rivers and the adjacent estuarine / coastal areas. The first cycle of the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) ran from 2009-2015, where the eight RBDs devised separate plans with the objective of achieving at least '*good*' status for all waters by 2015.

The second cycle of the RBMP 2018-2021 merged all eight RBDs to form one national RBD. The RBMP sets out the actions that Ireland will take to improve water quality and achieve *'good'* ecological status in waterbodies (rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters) by 2027. The third cycle of the RBMP 2022-2027 is currently being prepared by Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) in line with the *EU Water Framework Directive* (WFD) (2000/60/EC).

Water quality data is also collected by the EPA to provide an overall status of water quality. The monitoring programme, as part of the WFD, assesses water quality but also water trends of rivers in relation to ecological and physico-chemical quality. The WFD status of rivers ranges from *'high'* to *'bad'*. The EPA also undertakes water quality surveys for transitional and coastal waterbodies.

Water quality in Ireland has deteriorated over the past two decades. Overall, the water quality is declining and the number of water bodies in satisfactory condition (high or good status) across rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwaters has decreased under the last WFD monitoring cycle 2016-2021 as compared to the previous assessment which covered the period 2013-2018.

Table 5.7 below has a list of the **WFD Catchments** and **WFD Sub-Catchments** in County Meath.

Table 5.7 WFD Catchments and Sub-Catchments in Meath

Catchment (WFD Catchment Code)	Sub-catchment Name (WFD Sub-catchment Code)
Newry, Fane, Glyde and Dee Catchment (06)	Glyde_SC_010 (06_7)
	Dee_SC_010 (06_3)
	Dee_SC_020 (06_1)
	Dee_SC_030 (06_4)
Boyne Catchment (07)	Moynalty_SC_010 (07_14)
	Blackwater[Kells]_SC_020 (07_10)
	Blackwater[Kells]_SC_030 (07_8)
	Boyne_SC_070 (07_13)
	Boyne_SC_050 (07_12)
	Boyne_SC_100 (07_18)
	Boyne_SC_120 (07_15)
	Boyne_SC_130 (07_17)
	Boyne_SC_110 (07_1)
	Boyne_SC_080 (07_3)
	Boyne_SC_060 (07_20)
	Boyne_SC_090 (07_19)
	Boyne_SC_040 (07_9)
	Boyne_SC_030 (07_2)
	Boyne_SC_010 (07_4)
	Boyne_SC_020 (07_16)
	Blackwater[Longwood]_SC_10 (07_6)
	Deel[Raharney]_SC_010 (07_7)
	Yellow[Castlejordan]_SC_010 (07_11)
Upper Shannon Catchment (26F)	Inny[Shannon]_SC_010 (26F_6)
	Mountnugent_SC_010 (26F_3)
	Inny[Shannon]_SC_020 (26F_7)
Nanny-Delvin (08)	Nanny[Meath]_SC_020 (08_5)
	Nanny[Meath]_SC_010 (08_4)
	Delvin_SC_010 (08_1)
	Broadmeadow_SC_010 (08_3)
Liffey and Dublin Bay (09)	Tolka_SC_010 (09_10)
	Liffey_SC_080 (09_5)
	Liffey_SC_100 (09_1)
	RyeWater_SC_010 (09_3)

5.3.4.3 Surface Water Quality

The latest *Water Quality in Ireland* report 2016-2021 was published by the EPA in 2022. This report contains the most up-to-date and comprehensive assessment of the ecological health of Ireland's

groundwater, rivers, lakes, canals, transitional waters and coastal waters following the completion of the first six-year cycle of the WFD. The results shows that a considerable amount of work is still required to meet the environmental objectives of the WFD.

The status of the **river waterbodies** in County Meath range from '*poor*' to '*high*', however the majority of the major river waterbodies range from '*poor*' to *'moderate'*.

EPA data, on the biological quality of watercourses, based on monitoring up to 2021, indicates that 1no. river achieved '*high*' status; 21no. of monitored river waterbodies in County Meath achieved a '*good*' status; 29no. achieved a '*moderate*' status; and 33no. were 'poor'.

There are 8no. **lakes** in the County Meath which are designated WFD operational monitoring lakes. They are as follows:

- Lough Sheelin;
- Lough Doo;
- Lough Ben;
- Lough Glass
- Lough Ervey (poor);
- Lough Bracken;
- Lough Bane; and
- Annagh - White Lake.

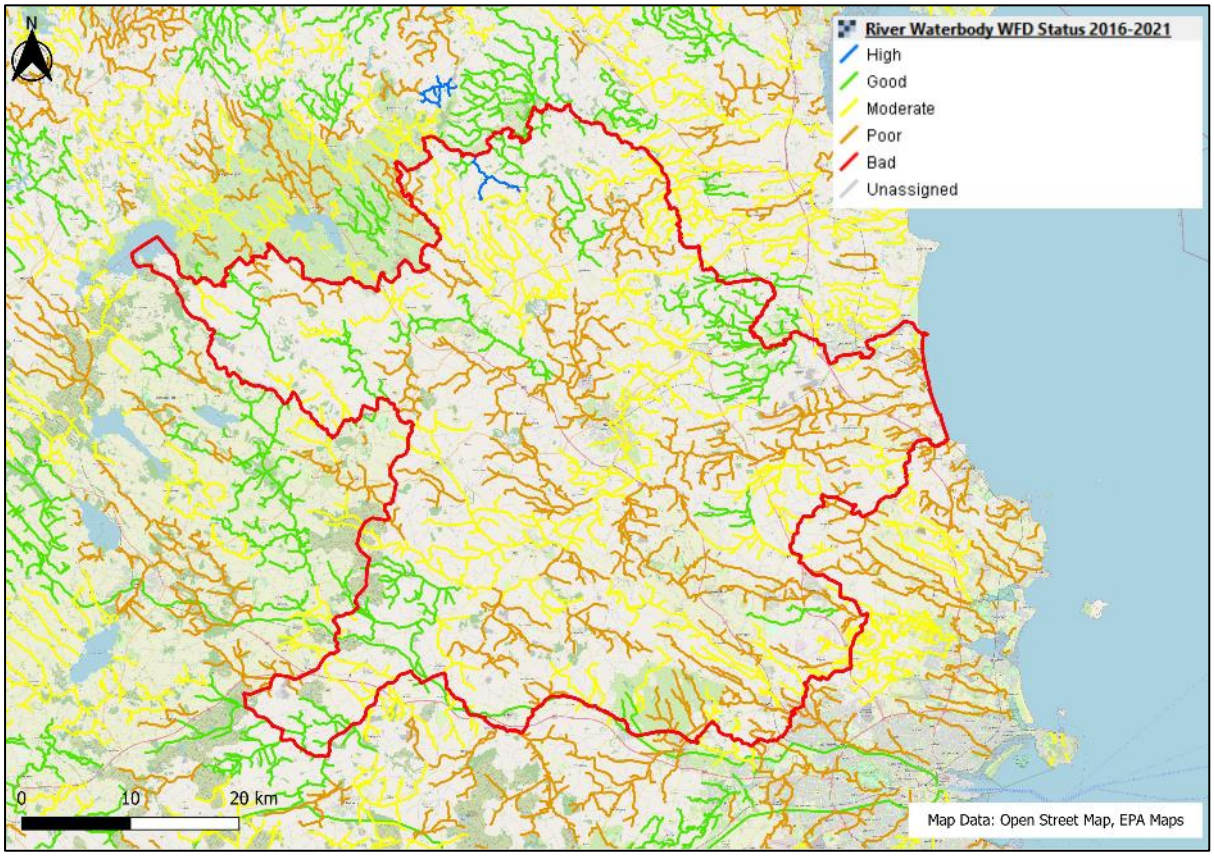
The Water Quality in Ireland report 2016-2021, reports that the water quality in Annagh / White lake was classified as 'high' status, Lough Bane, Lough Ben, Lough Glass and Lough Doo were classified as being of 'good' status, Lough Sheelin and Lough Bracken were both classified with a 'moderate' status and Lough Ervey was classified as 'Poor'.

The Meath coastline extends for a distance of c.10km and stretches from the mouth of the River Boyne at Mornington, bordering County Louth to Gormanston at the mouth of the River Delvin, bordering County Dublin. The coastal waterbody of County Meath is the Northwestern Irish Sea (IE_EA_020_0000) waterbody and has a 'good'[37] water quality status, while the Boyne Estuary transitional waterbody and Nanny Estuary both have a 'moderate' status.

The WFD water quality status of the river waterbodies in the Meath area is shown in **Figure 5.11** below.

[37] EPA 2019, Coastal Waterbody WFD Status 2016-2021: https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/default

Figure 5.11 WFD River Waterbody Status 2016-2021[38]



5.3.4.4 Groundwater Quality

The *EU Groundwater Directive* (2006/118/EC) uses a holistic approach to groundwater by addressing the relationships between groundwater, surface water and ecological receptors.

Groundwater aquifers form important sources of drinking water both locally and regionally, which provides between 20% and 25% of drinking water supplies in County Meath. In rural areas that are not served by public or group water schemes, groundwater is usually the only source of supply. Much of the summer seasonal flow in many rivers is also derived from groundwater sources. To maintain high quality water resources within the County, it is important that development is controlled and managed appropriately, in particular in areas of high groundwater vulnerability to avoid transmission of pollutants into important aquifers.

Groundwater Quality Status between 2016 and 2021 was generally '*good*'[39], across 46no. groundwater bodies in County Meath, with the exception of two groundwater bodies. These are the Bettystown (IE_EA_G_016) and the Wilkinstown (IE_EA_G_010) groundwater bodies which have a status of *'poor'*.

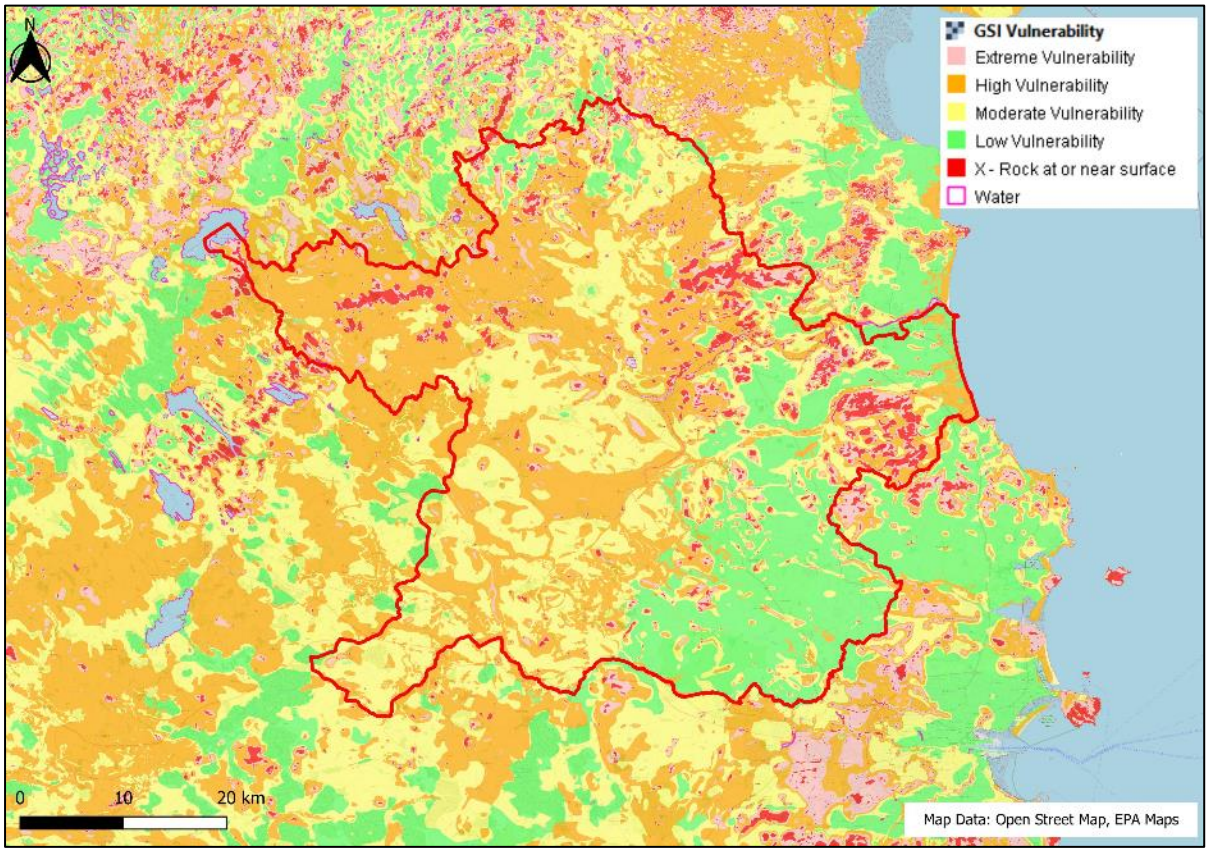
The groundwater vulnerability of County Meath is a mixture of *'low'* to *'extreme'*. The GSI rates aquifers according to both their productivity and vulnerability to pollution. Aquifer vulnerability is the ease with which pollutants of various kinds can enter underground water. County Meath is underlain mainly with both a '*locally important aquifer - bedrock which is moderately productive only in local zones'* and with

[38] EPA, 2022: https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/
[39] Water Quality in Ireland 2016-2021: https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/freshwater--marine/EPA_WaterQualityReport2016_2021.pdf

a *'poor aquifer - bedrock which is generally unproductive'.* The groundwater vulnerability of County Meath is shown in **Figure 5.12** below.

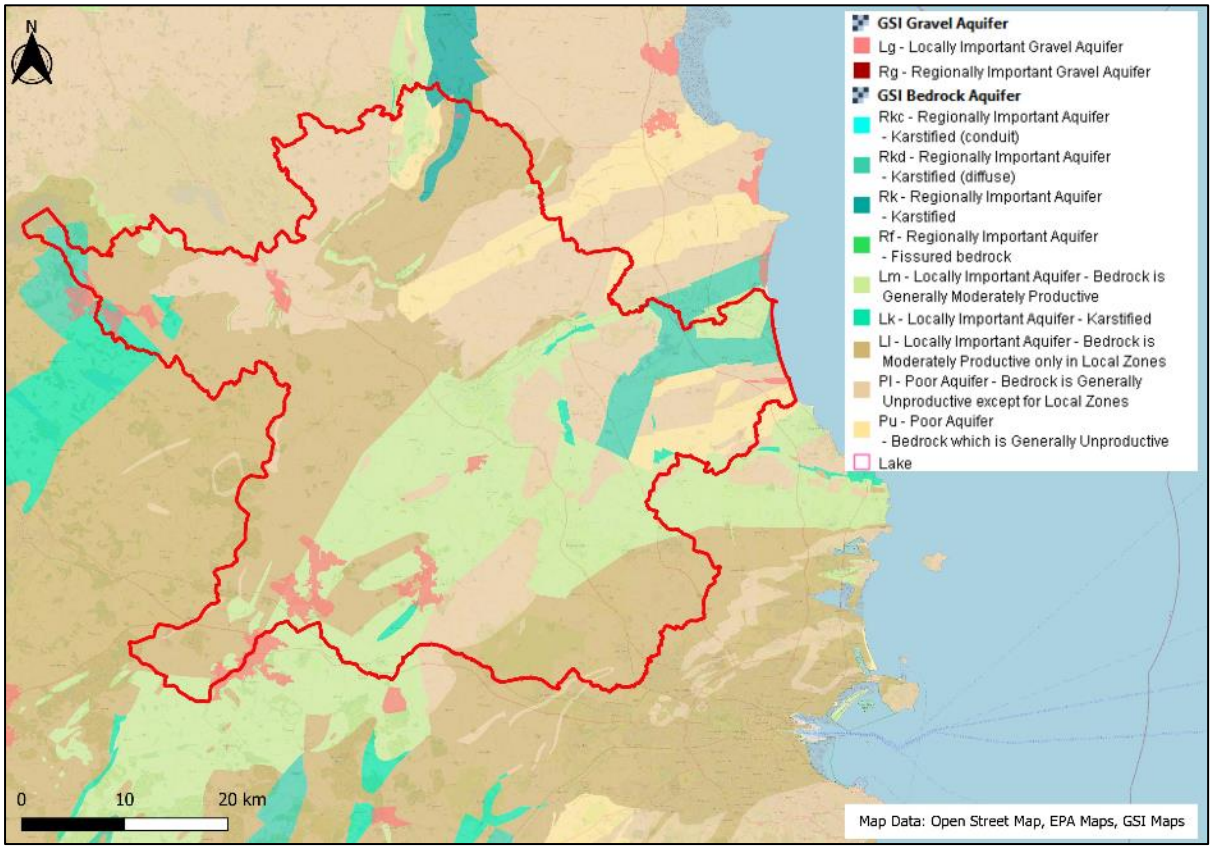
Groundwater aquifers form important sources of drinking water both locally and regionally, which provides between 20% and 25% of drinking water supplies in County Meath. In rural areas that are not served by public or group water schemes, groundwater is usually the only source of supply. Much of the summer seasonal flow in many rivers is also derived from groundwater sources. To maintain high quality water resources within the County, it is important that development is controlled and managed appropriately, in particular in areas of high groundwater vulnerability to avoid transmission of pollutants into important aquifers. Aquifer vulnerability is the ease with which pollutants of various kinds can enter underground water. Meath is underlain mainly with both a '*locally important aquifer - bedrock which is moderately productive only in local zones*' and with a '*poor aquifer - bedrock which is generally unproductive*', and locally important gravel aquifer. Refer to **Figure 5.13**.

Figure 5.12 Groundwater Vulnerability in County Meath[40]



[40] AIRO Environmental Sensitivity Viewer 2019: http://airomaps.nuim.ie/id/ESM/?mobileBreakPoint=400/

Figure 5.13 Bedrock and Gravel Aquifer – County Meath[41]



5.3.4.5 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Surface water on all new development sites should be managed through Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) in accordance with the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. SuDS aims to reduce the rate and quantity of surface water runoff, and improve water quality from the site. On large developments, SuDS may provide an opportunity to enhance biodiversity and amenity.

The objective of SuDS in new developments is to replicate, as closely as possible, the surface water drainage regime to the predevelopment *'greenfield'* situation. This is achieved through the use of surface water source control and site control measures. Source control measures include rainwater harvesting, natural infiltration, infiltration trenches, filter drains, filter strips, swales and permeable paving. Site control measures include attenuation by means of tanks or retention ponds. The surface water runoff rate from the site must be limited to the *'greenfield'* runoff rate to reduce the risk of flooding.

5.3.4.6 Flooding and Flood Risk

The underlying causes of flooding, heavy rain and high sea levels are, essentially uncontrollable. Floods are usually caused by a combination of events including overflowing river banks, heavy rains, coastal storms or blocked or overloaded drainage systems and an increase in development and impermeable surfacing. Numerous severe floods have occurred throughout the County in the last decade causing significant damage to and loss of property.

[41] Geological Survey Ireland Spatial Resources- https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a30af518e87a4c0ab2fbde2aaac3c228

The Office of Public Works (OPW) is the lead State body for flood risk management. MCC in partnership with Fingal County Council (FCC) and the OPW completed a catchment based flood risk assessment and management study of 19 rivers and streams in the Fingal and East Meath area, the *Fingal East Meath Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (FEM-FRAMS*). The FEM-FRAMS was completed in 2012 and covered the east of the County including inter alia the Broadmeadow, Mosney, Delvin, Mayne and Nanny rivers. In 2018, the OPW launched *'Flood Maps'* to provide information on the likelihood of flood risk and the extent of flooding across Ireland.

As part of the preparation of the *Meath CDP 2021-2027*, Flood Risk Assessment and Management Plan 2021-2027 has been prepared. Over the past number of years there have been significant instances where flooding has occurred in areas of the County causing damage to homes and businesses. However, relative to other counties the extent of flooding in the County has been low.

5.3.4.7 Coastal Waters - Bathing & Designated Shellfish Areas

Coastal Waters are important for tourism, for bathing locations and for supporting marine wildlife. The process for monitoring and assessing bathing water quality is set out in the *EU Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC)* and transposed into Irish Legislation as the *Bathing Water Regulations S.I. No. 79 of 2008*. The most recent report on bathing water quality '*The Quality of Bathing Water in Ireland - A Report for the Year 2022'*[42] sets out the status of Irish Seawater and Freshwater Bathing areas. "*The purpose of the Bathing Water Regulations is the protection of human health*", and the relevant local authorities, where appropriate, "*should ensure that where any bathing water fails the mandatory bathing standards that the public are made aware of this fact by means of information notices posted at the bathing area*."

Bathing water information is compiled by the EPA from data submitted from local authorities. Bathing water is assessed for compliance with two sets of EU standards, as specified in the Directive (2006/7/EC), minimum quality standards (EU mandatory values) and more stringent quality targets (EU guide values).

The coastal zone of Meath contains important resources that provide economic, recreational, aesthetic and conservation benefits. The coastline of the County is classified as a soft coast and stretches between the Boyne Estuary in the north and the River Delvin in the south. The coastline is home to a variety of natural habitats and there are several species of flora and fauna, reflected in the SAC, SPA, cSPA and pNHA designations that cover much of the area.

The bathing water quality of the coastal waters adjacent to the County Meath are monitored by the EPA at Laytown / Bettytown (IEEABWC020_0000_0700)[43]. The latest bathing quality (2022) for these waters is currently *'excellent'*.

There is one designated shellfish area off the coast of County Meath, Balbriggan / Skerries (IE_EA_020_0000). Since 2012, *Pollution Reduction Programmes* (PRPs) have been put in place for shellfish waters, to protect and improve the water quality in these areas. The PRPs are to ensure shellfish waters compliance with the standards and objectives that were established in the *Quality of Shellfish Waters Regulations 2006* and the *EU Directive 2006/113/EC* on the quality required for shellfish waters. The PRPs report determined that Urban Wastewater Treatment (UWWT) systems (at

[42] EPA, 2022: https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/freshwater--marine/bathing-water-quality-in-ireland-in-2022.php
[43] Bathing Water Quality EPA, 2022: https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/

Balbriggan UWWT Plant) and on-site wastewater treatment systems (septic tanks) were the key pressures for Balbriggan / Skerries.

5.3.4.8 Water Quality Issues

The principal threat to water is pollution which can adversely impact on all parts of the water cycle from groundwater to rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters. Any development as part of the Meath CAP can have the potential to impact waterbody status, water usage, flood risk and generate wastewater. The Plan must comply with the requirements of the WFD and the Groundwater Directive and aim to drive improvement to water quality in both the short and long-term. Existing water quality issues / pressures with environmental considerations include:

- **Water** - the surface waterbodies in Meath need to be improved to achieve 'good' ecological status in waterbodies by 2027.
- **Water** - pressure on water sources include excessive nutrient enrichment which leads to eutrophication; agriculture and municipal sources are the most important suspected causes of pollution to rivers.
- **Water** - pressure on water sources also comes from land-use changes, intensification of agriculture, erosion, afforestation, industry and urbanisation.
- **Water** - water contamination arising through poor working practices, leakages or accidental spillage of materials if efficient pollution control measures are not fully implemented and maintained.
- **Surface, ground & coastal waters** - are at risk of pollution from septic tanks and wastewater treatment systems in the vicinity of waterbodies, potential pressures and impacts on water body status, water usage and flood risk from the construction projects i.e. increased sedimentation, groundwater recharge and accidental spillages.
- **Coastal** - the coastal zone is subject to growing pressures from increasing population and increasing and sometimes conflicting social, economic and recreational uses.
- **Flooding** - flood risk to be considered as a key environmental criteria.

5.3.5 Air Quality & Noise

5.3.5.1 Air Quality

Air quality legislation[44] in Ireland highlights the need '*to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole*'. In addition, it requires that Local Authorities where appropriate '*shall preserve through appropriate measures the best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development'*.

EU legislation on air quality requires that Member States divide their territory into zones for the assessment and management of air quality. The EPA manages the national ambient air quality monitoring network and measures the levels of a number of atmospheric pollutants. The current trends in air quality in Ireland are reported in the EPA publication '*2022 Annual Report on Air Quality in Ireland*' which is currently the most up to date analysis of air quality data for Ireland. Four national air quality zones have been designated in Ireland, these are:

- Zone A is the Dublin conurbation;

[44] S.I. No. 739/2022 – Ambient Air Quality Standards Regulations 2022 - https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2022/si/739/made/en/print

- Zone B is the Cork conurbation;
- Zone C comprises of 23 large towns in Ireland with a population of >15,000; and
- Zone D is the remaining area of Ireland.

County Meath is located within Zone D, within the 'Rural Ireland' zone and Navan Town is located within Zone C in the 'other cities and large towns' zone. The designated zones have been defined to meet the criteria for air quality monitoring, assessment and management as defined in the aforementioned regulations. The air quality monitoring site in County Meath is located at Navan (Station 68).

The air quality index for health (AQIH) regions are calculated on an hourly basis at various locations around Ireland. The AQIH is based on measurements of air pollutants which can harm health. The five pollutants are:

- Ozone gas;
- Nitrogen dioxide gas;
- Sulphur dioxide gas;
- $PM_{2.5}$ particles; and
- PM_{10} particles.

Air Quality Map show whether air quality is 'good', 'fair', 'poor' or 'very poor' in each region. The current air quality across County Meath is 'good'. Monitoring is done using continuous monitors for ozone and nitrogen oxides in various locations around Ireland. The pollutants of most concern are those whose main source is traffic such as Particulate Matter (PM) and Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2). There is need to protect and improve (as appropriate), air quality in County Meath, particularly in areas zoned for increased urban and transport related development.

5.3.5.2 Noise

The objectives of EU and Irish noise legislation is '*to avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole*', and this includes noise nuisance. The Noise Directive - Environmental Noise Directive (END) 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise - is part of an EU strategy setting out to reduce the number of people affected by noise in the longer term and to provide a framework for developing existing community policy on noise reduction from source. The Directive requires competent authorities in Member States to:

- draw up strategic noise maps for major roads, railways, airports and agglomerations, using harmonised noise indicators and use these maps to assess the number of people which may be impacted upon as a result of excessive noise levels; and
- draw up action plans to reduce noise where necessary and maintain environmental noise quality where it is good; and inform and consult the public about noise exposure, its effects, and the measures considered to address noise.

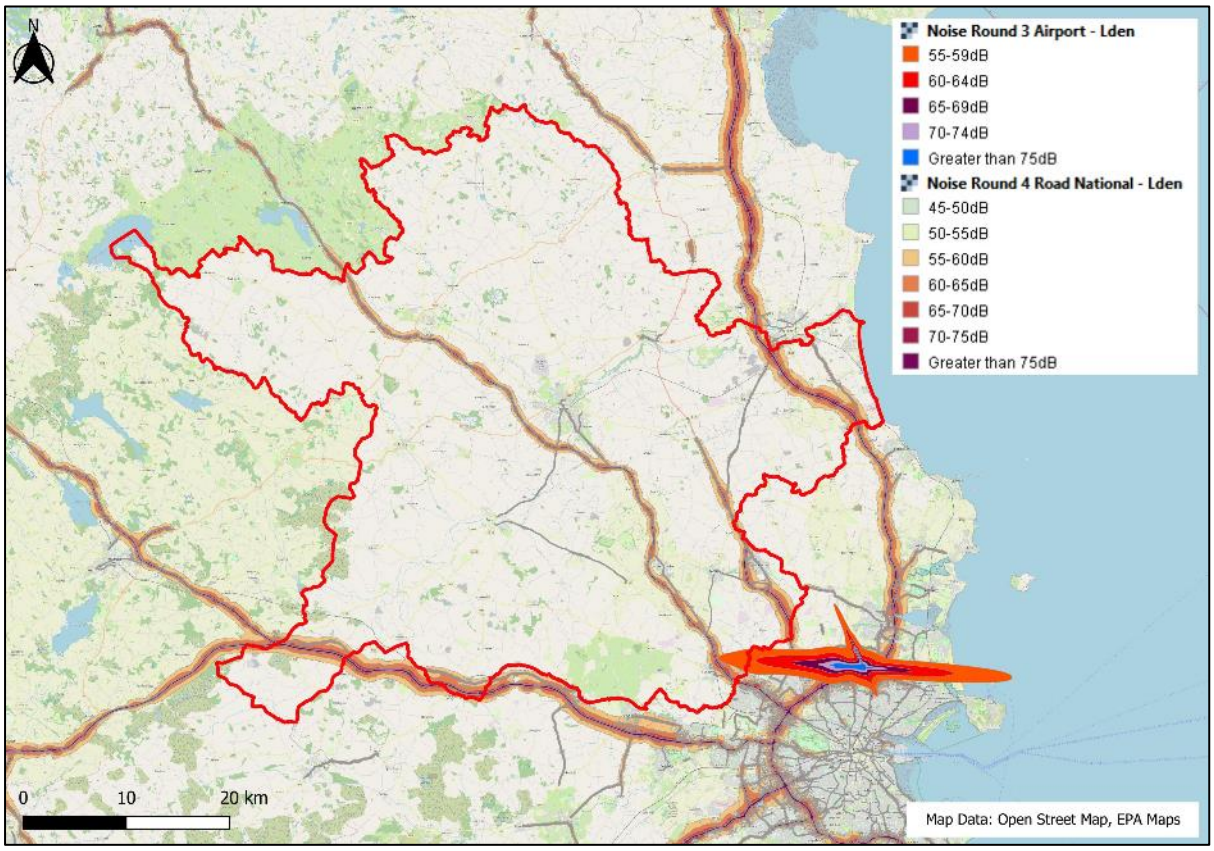
The Directive does not set any limit value, nor does it prescribe the measures to be used in the action plans, which remain at the discretion of the competent authorities.

In accordance with *Environmental Noise Regulations (S.I. No. 140 of 2006)*, a *Noise Action Plan* was prepared by MCC (2019). This *Noise Action Plan* is aimed at managing environmental noise from road, rail and industrial sources within Meath.

Noise Strategic Maps from EPA (2022) are presented below in **Figures 5.14** and **5.15**. These strategic noise maps are to be used to identify priorities (Important Areas and Priority Important Areas) for noise action plans, which are to be made or revised every 5 years by designated action planning authorities. They can also be used to identify potential quiet areas in the three noise agglomerations.

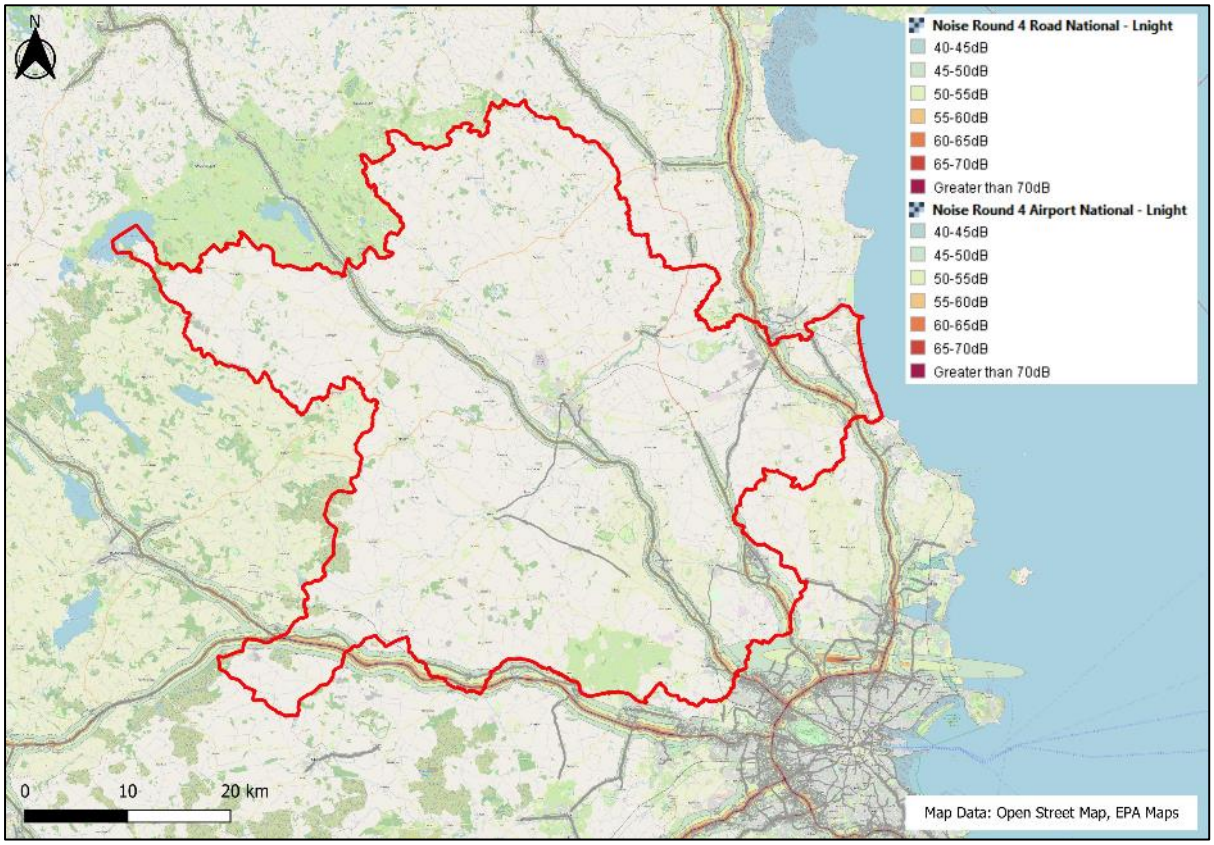
During the implementation of the Meath CAP, consideration should be given to protect, where relevant, any designated quiet areas in open country.

Figure 5.14 the EPA Noise Map for the Day, Evening & Night Period (Lden)[45]



[45] EPA, 2023: https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/

Figure 5.15 EPA Noise Map for the Night Period (Lnight)[46]



5.3.5.3 Air Quality & Noise Issues

Agriculture, transport and industrial emissions are the greatest source of air pollution. In urban areas, concern has clearly shifted to a range of pollutants associated with road traffic which may be considered relatively new in the context of air quality control. The most important of these pollutants are NO_2, particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM_{10}), carbon monoxide (CO) and a wide variety of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), including carcinogens such as benzene. Advances in engine technology and fuel development will, it is predicted, offset rises in tail pipe emissions from increased car usage due to an increased population. Therefore, it is important that a good quality road infrastructure is provided and alternatives to the private car are encouraged as much as possible. Overall the Meath CAP is likely to have positive effects on air quality due to the nature of the plan. However, any new construction projects have potential during construction phase to result in temporary negative impacts on air quality and create noise pollution.

5.3.6 Material Assets

Material assets are resources that are valued and intrinsic to a development and the surrounding area. Material assets may be of either natural or human origin and the value may arise for economic or cultural reasons. Material assets include water supply, wastewater treatment infrastructure, waste disposal including recycling, transport infrastructure (road, rail, airports and ports), energy and supply networks and telecom services. Material assets also includes economic assets such as coastal and water

[46] EPA, 2023: https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/

resources which support fisheries and aquaculture. The sustainable growth of the County is dependent on the provision of services and infrastructure.

5.3.6.1 Seafood Industry

Coastal communities have an important socio-economic reliance on Ireland's seafood industry and fishing and food security is a key part of Government Policy. Food Vision 2030 recognises and values the role of primary food producers. This is in the context of ever-increasing demand on the marine space from Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE), Marine Spatial Planning, Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), and other environmental measures.

The seafood industry, through both the Sectoral Adaptation Plan (*Agriculture, Forest and Seafood Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan*) and the annual *Climate Action Plan* (CAP23) continue to support initiatives to improve understanding of our marine area and ensure sustainable resource use, including through bio and circular economy initiatives.

The European Commission's Communication on the energy transition of the fisheries and aquaculture sector as part of its *Fisheries Policy Package* proposes the establishment of an *Energy Transition Partnership* (ETP) to develop a roadmap for the energy transition of the sector towards climate neutrality by 2050.

5.3.6.2 Water and Wastewater services

Water Services and Water Supply

There have been significant changes in responsibilities for water supply and wastewater treatment services. As of January 2014 Uisce Éireann (formerly known as Irish Water) replaced local authorities as a single provider of water supply and wastewater services. Uisce Éireann have prepared the Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP), '*A Plan for the Future of Water Services*' and it provides for the first time at national level an opportunity to consider the way water services are delivered in Ireland. The WSSP sets out strategic objectives for the delivery of water services up to 2040.

Uisce Éireann is responsible for providing and developing public water services; and ensuring drinking water quality meets the standards in the Drinking Water Regulations. The EPA is the drinking water quality regulator, responsible for enforcing the Drinking Water Regulations. Private bored wells used as a source of water supply to single dwellings are the responsibility of the householder, and are therefore not regulated and Uisce Éireann has no regulatory function in this regard.

The latest *Drinking Water Quality in Public Supplies 2021*[47] was published by the EPA in 2022. The report outlines the most important issues which should be addressed on a national level, to protect and improve public drinking water supplies

Practical water conservation measures including active leakage detection, demand management and pressure management played and will continue to play a major role in reducing the demand for potable water, thus facilitating additional development and improving the level of service to existing consumers in the County through the existing watermain networks.

[47] EPA Drinking Water Quality - https://www.epa.ie/publications/compliance--enforcement/drinking-water/annual-drinking-water-reports/EPA_DrinkingWaterQualityinPublicSupplies2021.pdf

Wastewater Services

The Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC) (amended by Directive 98/15/EEC) aims to protect the environment from the adverse effects of wastewater discharges by ensuring that wastewater is appropriately treated before it is discharged to the environment. Such treatment is essential in order to meet the requirements of the WFD.

There are c. 40no. Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTPs) and more than 1,000kms of sewer network in County Meath. These include Ardcath, Athboy, Ballinabrackey, Ballivor, Batterstown, Bellewstown, Bohermeen, Carncross, Casteltown, Clonalvey, Cortown, Crossakeel, Donore, Drumconrath, Duleek, Dunderry, Dunshaughlin, Enfield, Hill of Tara, Kells, Kentstown, Kilberry, Kilcloon, Kildalkey, Kilmainhamwood, Lloyd, Kells, Lobinstown, Longwood, Moynalty, Navan, Nobber, Oldcastle, Rathmolyan, Robinstown, Skreen, Slane, Stamullen, Summerhill, Trim.

Uisce Éireann currently collects and treats the wastewater from the majority of the counties' urban centres. Wastewater from a number of these centres is discharged to and treated in WWTPs outside the County as follows:

- Wastewater from Ashbourne, Ratoath, Kilbride, Dunboyne and Clonee is discharged into Dublin where it is treated in Ringsend WWTP;
- Wastewater from the Kilcock Environs is discharged into the Leixlip WWTP; and
- Wastewater from the Southern Environs of Drogheda, Bettystown / Laytown / Mornington / Donacarney and Julianstown discharge to the Drogheda WWTP.

MCC will continue to work with Uisce Éireann to advance and realise capital expansions and upgrades of wastewater infrastructure for the continued sustainable growth of the County.

In un-serviced areas and outside the main settlements, the main method of sewage disposal is by means of individual septic tanks and proprietary wastewater treatment systems. The requirements for these systems are set out in the EPA *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment Systems and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses*[48].

5.3.6.3 Waste Management

Waste management in Ireland is regulated by the Waste Management Acts 1996 (as amended), which require Local Authorities to prepare detailed plans for the management of waste. Under the Waste Management Acts, a Development Plan is deemed to include the objectives of the Waste Management Plan (WMP) for its area.

The Eastern Midlands Region WMP 2015-2021 was adopted in May 2015. The Eastern Midlands Region WMP defines waste as '*any substance or object which the holder discards, intends to discard or is required to discard, by the Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC)*'. The overall vision of the Eastern Midlands Region WMP is to rethink the approach taken towards managing waste and that waste should be seen as a valuable material resource. The CAP also supports a move towards achieving a circular economy which is essential if the region is to make better use of resources and become more resource efficient.

The European Commission's Circular Economy Action Plan: A New Circular Economy Action Plan for a Cleaner More Competitive Europe, March 2020, forms one of the main blocks of the European Green

[48] EPA, 2010: https://www.epa.ie/pubs/advice/water/wastewater/code%20of%20practice%20for%20single%20houses/

Deal. A Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy[49] was published in 2020 and outlines Ireland's National Waste Policy for 2020-2025.

In line with the Eastern Midlands Region WMP, MCC will continue to:

- promote a waste prevention and minimisation programme to target all aspects of waste; and
- promote awareness and an increase in the amount of waste reused and recycled.

Meath is well served with a wide range of waste facilities from:

- waste transfer stations,
- Waste to Energy facility, landfill,
- a Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste facility and
- a network of recycling facilities supported by the MCC.

Recycling is a key component of sustainable waste management. Navan, Trim, Kells and Dunboyne are served by recycling centres. The remainder of the County is served by a network of bring banks which accept a broad diversity of materials. The *Waste Management Plan* notes that finding suitable locations for bring banks is a challenging task for all Local Authorities. The Council will continue to promote awareness of and promote an increase in the amount of waste that is re-used and recycled to reflect the objectives of the waste hierarchy.

The Indaver Waste to Energy (WtE) facility in Duleek is a privately owned recovery facility with capacity beyond the lifetime of this Plan. The Knockharley regional landfill, near Kentstown, accessed off the N2 road is a privately operated landfill facility. Construction and Demolition (C&D) Waste is generally collected by authorised collectors and often used for backfilling.

5.3.6.4 Transport

Transport is fundamental to how we live and work. A well performing transport system is essential to the functioning of society and the economy as a whole. The maintenance and delivery of an efficient, integrated and coherent transport network in line with national and regional policy is essential to the future economic, social and physical development of the County. Land-use planning and transport planning are inextricably linked and their proper integration is a key determinant to sustainable development.

'*National Sustainable Mobility Policy Action Plan 2022-2025*' is a national document which seeks to achieve a shift to more sustainable means of transport by setting actions and timeline for Modal Change. This policy sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel and public transport to support Ireland's overall requirement to achieve a 51% reduction in carbon emissions.

The Policy aims to improve the delivery of sustainable mobility by –

- *Implementing the accompanying action plan to 2025 and a reviewed and updated action plan for 2026 to 2030.*
- *Establishing a Leadership Group to oversee and drive implementation of the Policy and delivery of the action plan, and agree a programme of "pathfinder" projects at local level.*
- *Introducing a new annual National Household Travel Survey to measure progress against the Policy's targets.*

[49] DCCAE (2020).

- *Convening a new National Sustainable Mobility Forum to provide a platform for collaborative engagement with national, regional and local stakeholders.*
- *Increasing public engagement around the benefits of sustainable mobility and raising awareness of the availability of alternative options to the private car.*
- *Establishing a new National Transport Authority Advisory Council to engage with the NTA around the discharge of its functions.*
- *Developing a transport research network to support existing research programmes and draw on the sustainable mobility expertise available across academia and industry, both in Ireland and internationally.*

Road

County Meath is strategically placed within the Greater Dublin Area between the cities of Dublin and Belfast. As a result the County is well served by a high quality Motorway, National, Regional and local road network. The residents of County Meath rely heavily on the use of private cars for transport and towns nearest Dublin have the highest number of commuters. A fully operational road network is therefore essential to the efficient functioning of the region.

The Motorways, National primary and secondary roads play a central role in providing ready access to all regions of the Country. They connect the County with the adjoining regions, provide direct access to Dublin City, to Dublin and Belfast International Airports and to the regional rail network and ports.

Meath is serviced by the national road network with the M1 Dublin - Belfast, the N2 Dublin - Derry, M3 Cavan Dublin, and M4 Dublin - Galway, Castlebar and Sligo, all traversing through the County linking the Dublin metropolitan area to the regions. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) recognises the importance of maintaining, improving and protecting the strategic function of the key transport corridors including the imperative to improve and protect the strategic function of the Dublin to Belfast International road corridor, which forms part of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) core network. The national secondary roads, N51 and N52, are medium distance through-routes connecting important towns. The N52 is a particularly important infrastructural development and strategic route, linking Dundalk and Mullingar-Athlone-Tullamore. The County is very reliant on its road infrastructure for intra and inter county movement and access.

Although responsibility for National Roads comes under the auspices of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), MCC in conjunction with TII carries out major upgrading and improvements to National Roads in the County. Regional and local roads serve an important economic, social and community function and account for 81% of the Country's roads.

Rail

At present, rail services are available at stations located in Dunboyne, Pace (M3 Parkway), Enfield, and a limited service provided from Gormanston Village. There are rail stations located immediately adjoining the County which are also used by Meath residents, these are Maynooth, Kilcock, Clonsilla, Drogheda and Balbriggan.

At present, there is no rail service from Navan to Dublin, putting it at a competitive disadvantage. The delivery of the Navan Rail Line Phase II infrastructure will strengthen the transport links in the County and will significantly improve the County's economic competitiveness as well as having a meaningful

improvement on the quality of life of the County's residents. The delivery of the Navan Rail Line is in accordance with the Transport Strategy for the GDA 2022-2042.

MCC is committed to working with Irish Rail to review the operation of the Short Hop Zone (SHZ) rail prices, as currently the pricing discrepancy is having an undesirable impact on user behaviour. It is diverting rail users to a considerable extent to utilise stations outside of the County in order to avail of cheaper fares thereby creating more congestion at certain locations.

Bus

Meath has already seen significant improvements to the quality and frequency of bus services to and from the urban centres of the County to Dublin and to other regional centres. Bus Éireann currently operates commuter and / or Expressway services to and from all major employment centres in Meath to Dublin. Bus Éireann also provides public transport services linking population centres in Meath and adjoining counties such as Drogheda to Navan, Navan to Kells and Navan to Trim. There are also a number of private services which serves the population centres in East Meath and play an important role in meeting the overall demand for transport services.

The National Roads Authority (NTA), as part of the transport strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), have identified significant routes that require investment in order to minimise delays. Improvements will include, enhanced bus lane provision on these corridors, removing current delays on the bus network in the relevant locations and enabling bus services to provide a faster alternative to car traffic along these routes.

As part of the Core Bus Network, three bus corridors pass through County Meath and include;

- M1, via Dublin Port Tunnel
  - Serves long distance bus routes from Belfast, Dundalk, Derry, Monaghan and Drogheda; and
  - Serves other regional bus routes from Balbriggan, Skerries and East Meath.
- M2, via Dublin Port Tunnel
  - Serves regional bus routes from Ashbourne and Slane.
- M3 / N3, via the Navan Road
  - Serves regional bus routes from Cavan, Navan, Trim and Dunshaughlin.

Cycling & Walking Infrastructure

Cycling and walking is environmentally friendly, fuel-efficient and a healthy mode of transport to work, school, shopping and for recreational purposes. Cycling and walking are considered an efficient, fast and relatively inexpensive form of transport and its promotion is in line with the principles of sustainable development and promotion of healthy lifestyles.

The NTA's strategy for Transport in the GDA emphasises the need for additional walking and cycling infrastructure in the region and outlines a number of improvements required to encourage more people to walk which includes improvements to the existing environment for people with mobility, visual and hearing impairments.

Planning can encourage walking to become the principal method of movement for shorter journeys by utilising good urban design. Providing a network of safe, well-lit and convenient footpaths (both road-

side and segregated) within new residential areas with links to schools, local neighbourhood centres, public transport stops and workplaces will encourage people to walk more.

MCC will continue to improve walking facilities in the County in conjunction with the NTA.

5.3.6.5 Energy

The Department of Communication, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE) is responsible for the development of Ireland's energy and climate policies. Ireland's long-term energy policy framework is set out in the 2015 Energy White Paper, Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030. The Paper sets out a framework to guide Irish energy policy in the period up to 2030 and sets out a vision for a transformation of Ireland's energy systems. This includes:

- moving to lower emissions fuels and ultimately towards a lower reliance on fossil fuels;
- significantly increasing renewable generation;
- achieving a step change in energy efficiency performance;
- implementing smart and interconnected energy systems;
- strong regulatory structures and markets to underpin these changes; and
- repositioning energy consumers to have a more active role within the energy sector.

Ireland is committed to a range of renewable energy and efficiency targets. In 2014 the European Council adopted a new framework, the 2030 Climate and Energy Framework, which includes EU-wide targets and policy objectives for the period from 2021 to 2030. The 2030 framework proposes new targets and measures to make the EU's economy and energy system more competitive, secure and sustainable[50].

The built environment accounted for 12.7% of Ireland's greenhouse gases in 2017. It is important that we improve the energy efficiency of our buildings, including our homes, workplaces and schools, by meeting higher energy performance standards and by increasing retrofit activity. This will reduce Ireland's dependence on fossil fuels, but will also improve our living standards by making our buildings healthier, safer, and less costly to heat.

The National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) 2021-2030[51] takes into account energy and climate policies developed to date, demographic and economic growth (outlined in Project 2040) and includes all of the climate and energy measures set out in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2027.

MCC has a critical and overarching role in progressing a sustainable energy future for Meath by recognising the central role of land use planning in promoting a low carbon society and mitigating the impacts of Climate Change.

The two main energy sources currently serving the County are electricity and gas. The RSES (Eastern & Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA)) highlights the importance of reducing energy consumption from fossil fuel sources and promotes the use of more sustainable sources (wind, wave solar and biomass), as the overreliance on non-indigenous supplies of energy is still a major issue for the region. The RSES (EMRA) also outlines the need to identify '*Strategic Energy Zones*' as areas suitable for larger energy generating projects, the role of community and micro energy production in urban and rural settings and the potential for renewable energy within industrial areas. A regional landscape strategy should be

[50] European Council (2017).
[51] DCCAE (2019).

developed to support the delivery of projects within '*Strategic Energy Zones*'. Furthermore the use of smart technology systems and the recognition that buildings can act as both generators and consumers of energy and the promotion of electric vehicles will all place greater pressure on the national electricity grid.

Renewable energy potential feasible options, in line with the National Planning Framework (NPF) for Ireland, for Meath include, but are not limited to, a balanced mix of:

- Bioenergy - crops, forestry;
- Biomass - anaerobic digestion, combined heat and power (CHP);
- Geothermal - hot dry rock reservoirs, groundwater aquifers;
- Hydro energy - small and micro hydro systems;
- Solar - passive solar heating, active solar heating;
- Waste - landfill methane gas collection;
- Wave - wave action; and
- Wind - onshore wind, offshore wind (single turbines and groups).

MCC seeks to ensure that all new developments contribute positively towards reducing energy consumption and the associated carbon footprint. The Council will promote and facilitate new and innovative technologies seeking to provide renewable energies. The Council will also ensure a balance is achieved between the development of renewable energy sources and the protection of the natural heritage, visual amenity, biodiversity and food producing lands.

Local community engagement will form a key part of the Council's future energy strategy, and this engagement could be developed through the Public Participation Network (PPN) which could be used to inform people of the economic, environmental and social benefits of moving away from solid/fossil fuels towards a low carbon economy.

The Council will endeavour:

- To promote the rational uses of energy;
- To promote renewable energy;
- To promote and disseminate energy information;
- To protect the environment;
- To reduce energy waste in all sectors of society; and
- To encourage the replacement of imported fossil fuels with regionally generated renewable energy in an effort to ensure security of energy supply, where it is feasible.

5.3.6.6 Telecommunications

High-speed broadband and telecommunications is core to competitiveness. The National Broadband Plan 2019[52] (NBP) sets out the strategy to deliver high speed broadband throughout Ireland. Ireland has made significant progress in recent years in terms of broadband connectivity at all levels: international connectivity, backhaul networks, Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) and local access networks. Since its publication, significant investment has been made in upgrading and modernising networks which

[52] DCCAE, 2019: https://www.dccae.gov.ie/documents/Delivering%20the%20National%20Broadband%20Plan.pdf

support the provision of broadband and telecommunications services, with significant additional investment expected over the coming years.

The '*Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework*' (2022) is intended to assist Ireland in maximising the socio-economic benefits from the digitisation trend.

MCC recognises the essential need for high quality communications and information technology networks in assuring the competitiveness of the county's economy and its role in supporting development.

5.3.6.7 Utilities

Gas and electricity are the energy utilities which have traditionally supported homes and businesses across Meath.

ESB Networks and EirGrid are the utility providers responsible for the electricity distribution and transmission systems. EirGrid manages the higher capacity electricity network which supplies power to industry and businesses that use large amounts of energy and electricity, whilst the ESB manages and operates the distribution network supplying electricity to homes, businesses, schools and institutions. EirGrid has a number of ongoing and planned projects in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) for the purpose of reinforcing the transmission and distribution networks.

Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) are the utility provider responsible for the supply, transmission and distribution of natural gas. GNI operates and maintains a modern gas network in Meath whilst Ervia is responsible for the delivery of gas infrastructure and services through GNI.

Public lighting is an important component of placemaking and is essential for the operation of the city. While the city is generally an illuminated area, excessive light pollution can arise when external lighting is not properly designed or managed. Insensitive lighting can cause light pollution. Light pollution can have a negative impact on biodiversity by affecting the normal diurnal patterns of plants and animals.

5.3.6.8 Material Assets Issues

The increased growth at the Country level will result in increasing demand for water, wastewater treatment, waste management, transport infrastructure / links and energy and telecommunications services.

Existing material assets issues / pressures within County Meath, include:

- Seafood Industry – socio-economic importance to coastal communities in an increasingly challenging marine environment.
- Water Supply – new developments (including housing, offices and retail development), will generate pressure on existing water sources to meet demands and provide a suitable, safe and secure quantity and quality of drinking water supply. Provision of rural housing development presents challenges in terms of adequate servicing with potable water and wastewater infrastructure, in protection of environmental resources such as biodiversity, landscape, surface water and groundwater, and increasingly in terms of climate change and climate change adaption.
- Water Supply - on-going investment in water conservation / leak detection and fixing.
- Water Supply and Wastewater Services - new developments (including housing, offices and retail development), will generate pressure on existing water and wastewater sources to

meet demands. Inadequate infrastructure, including inadequate capacity, contribute to the contamination of receiving surface water and groundwater waterbodies.

- **Wastewater Services -** new developments, should only be permitted where there is adequate capacity in the wastewater infrastructure in accordance with urban wastewater treatment disposal requirements and standards. Currently, municipal wastewater discharges are creating significant pressure on the receiving waterbodies.
- **Energy** - there is a need to phase out the reliance on fossil fuels, with a shift to renewable energy resources, however, renewable energy will require large scale investment (public and private) in energy efficiency and innovative systems. Identifying and enabling indigenous renewable energy will also support Ireland's energy security. New developments and large developments require excellent energy and power services which create direct and indirect emissions, particularly CO_2, methane and dioxins.
- **Telecommunications -** the rollout of connectivity in the urban environment can be complex. Lack of coordination between infrastructure and utility providers can lead to the spatially inefficient and uncoordinated provision of utilities and connectivity infrastructure.
- **Transport -** the movement of people is key to the success of new development and areas, where adequate transport infrastructure (*i.e*. road, rail, cycle and pedestrian routes) to these developments and accessibility throughout the development / area (safe footpath and cycle paths) is fundamental to the development of Meath. The development of road infrastructure services, has major implications for biodiversity, landscape and air quality, as it causes habitat and landscape fragmentation and has health and Climate Change implications.
- **Waste -** population growth and development, and challenges in providing sustainable recycling infrastructure continues to put pressures on the local authorities to provide better waste management and access to waste services.
- **Light Pollution** - can arise when external lighting is not properly designed or managed which can in turn lead to inappropriate or excessive light spillage.
- **Utilities -** provision, protect and maintenance of adequate utilities to support existing and envisaged development.

5.3.7 Climate

Climate Change is a phenomenon that has widespread economic, health and safety, food production, security, and other dimensions. Climate change refers to a long term, large scale change in global or regional climate patterns. In recent years, global temperatures have been rising. Urgent action is needed to address climate change and to move Ireland towards a low carbon, climate resilient economy and society.

The ever increasing rate of carbon dioxide combustion, and the emission of other greenhouse gases (GHG) such as methane and nitrous oxide since the industrial revolution, has resulted in the 'greenhouse affect'. Most greenhouse gases emissions are related to the energy generation, transport, agriculture, and industry sectors.

In Ireland, the expected effects of Climate Change are increased frequency of extreme weather events within the next century. This will include a 20%-30% increase in precipitation, greater rainfall intensity coupled with flash floods and an average annual temperature increase of ~2°C. The potential impacts

of Climate Change could have serious consequences for both people and infrastructure along Ireland's coastal areas as well as its rivers[53].

The recent *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021* was established to provide for the approval of plans by the Government in relation to climate change. This aims at pursuing the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich and climate neutral economy by no later than the end of the year 2050. Ireland's *Climate Action Plan 2023* sets out Ireland's national and sectoral targets in this regard.

Future changes in climate and associated impacts on sea level, rainfall patterns/intensity and river flow will influence flooding frequency and extent in the future. Local Authorities in compliance with the *Regional Planning Guidelines* are attempting to adopt sustainable flood risk strategies in areas likely to be at risk of flooding in the future in the context of climate change and changing weather patterns. Changes to climate could lead to an increase in flooding events in Ireland. The OPW has undertaken a number of *Flood Risk Management Studies* for different River Basin Districts (RBDs) in Ireland. These studies have identified the areas which are most at risk and future management plans have been advised; these are adopted by the OPW. In some cases, mitigation measures will involve the construction of physical flood defences.

The *Climate Action Plan* identifies actions to decarbonise electricity generation, the built environment and transport and to move towards carbon neutrality for agriculture, forest and land use sectors.

5.3.7.1 Climate Change Issues

The potential effects of climate change resulting in an increase in the frequency and severity of weather events, including flooding, storms, heavy snowfall, and variation in temperature. Severe rainfall events, or very cold events with or with snowfall could adversely impact upon town's and people in Meath leading to water shortages, residential flooding and disruption to infrastructure and to movement. Towns and villages along the coast will become increasingly vulnerable to rises in the sea level and coastal erosion.

Therefore, it will be important to improve resilience of existing and planned critical infrastructure, systems and procedures to the effects and variability of climate change.

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.

Overall, the Meath CAP will have an overall positive effect in addressing climate change issues for the county and also to achieve national targets.

5.3.8 Cultural Heritage

The physical traces left in the landscape by previous generations in archaeological monuments and sites and in historic buildings, townscapes and vernacular structures forms part of the tangible cultural heritage linking the past and present. County Meath is intrinsically linked to its cultural heritage, and is central to how individuals, communities and the County see themselves. MCC recognises the importance of identifying, valuing and safeguarding the archaeological and architectural heritage of

[53] GOI (2019).

Meath for future generations which can be achieved through the proper management, sensitive enhancement and / or appropriate development of this resource.

Meath's wealth of archaeological and built heritage makes it exceptional in Ireland. It includes the *UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne*, the seat of the High Kings of Ireland at Tara, the passage tombs of Loughcrew, the largest Anglo-Norman castle in Europe at Trim, the historic towns and villages (Navan, Trim, Kells and Slane), great country houses, demesne landscapes, and a significant industrial heritage of canals and mills. Meath's natural heritage includes scenic river valleys, rolling farmland, a network of mature hedgerows and diverse coastal habitats.

A positive approach to heritage management enhances quality of life and environmental sustainability and ensures that the cultural and natural heritage is a resource that helps the County to compete as a cultural tourism destination.

5.3.8.1 Archaeological Heritage

The archaeological heritage of an area includes structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, moveable objects, monuments of other types as well as their context, whether situated on or under land or water.

The *National Monuments Acts 1930-2014* provide for the protection of archaeological heritage. The *Record of Monuments and Places* (RMP) was established under *Section 12* of the *National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994* and structures, features, objects or sites listed in this Record are known as Recorded Monuments.

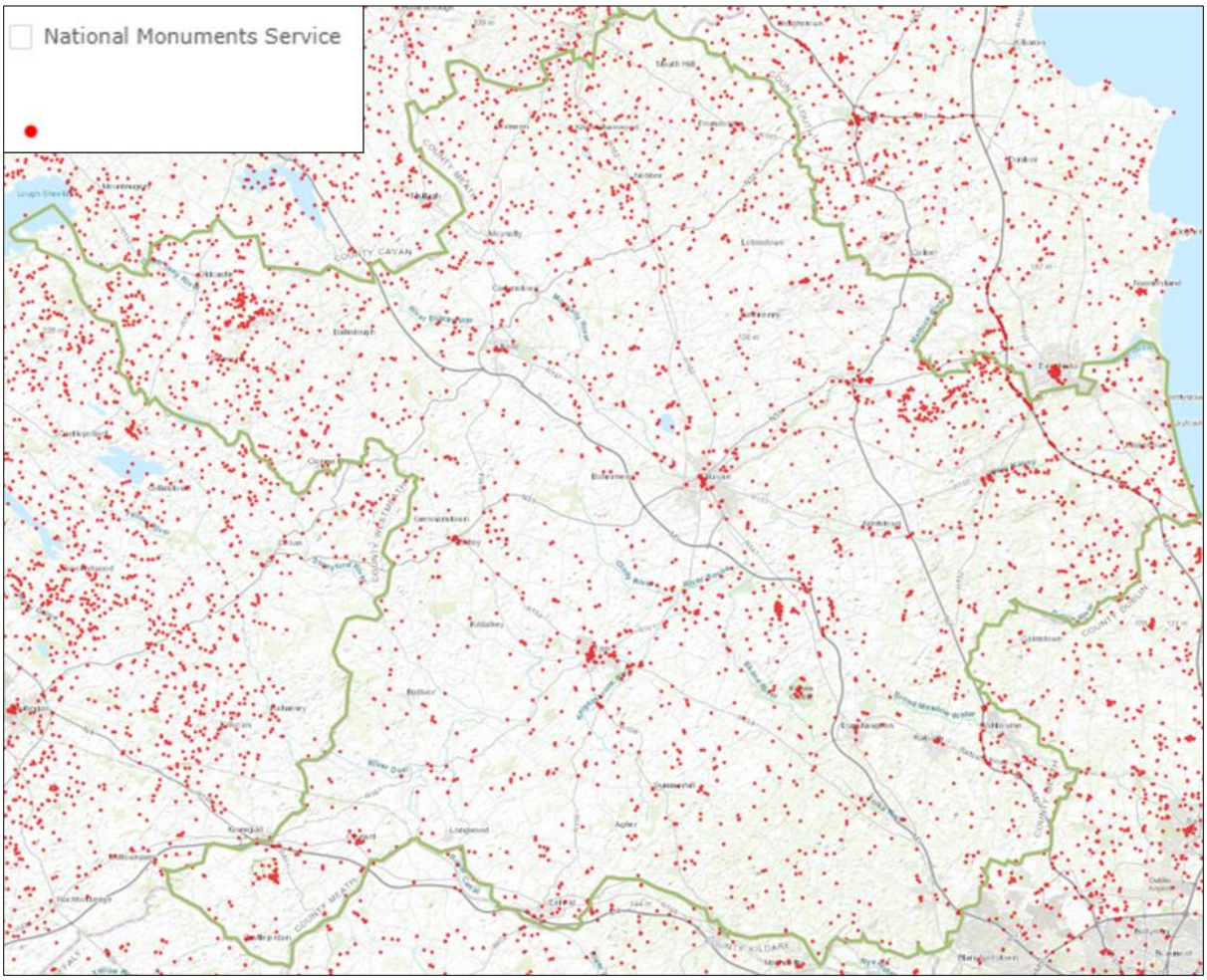
Nationally there are over 1,000 monuments in State Care. In Meath there are 53no. archaeological national monuments in guardianship and ownership of the State[54]. The wealth of archaeological sites ranges from passage tombs, churches, enclosures and ringforts to castles and round towers.

Monuments on the *Register of Historic Monuments* are established under the Section 5 of the *National Monuments (Amendment Act) 1987*. Under the provisions of Section 5(8) of the *National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987*, any person who plans to carry work in the vicinity of a monument recorded on the *Register of Historic Monuments* must give two months' notice to the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Owners of lands on which a monument listed on the *Register of Historic Monuments* is situated have been notified of the presence of the monument and the legal protection which applies. Refer to Figure 5.16 for *Sites and Monuments Records* within County Meath.

The discovery of unrecorded monuments can often occur during excavations. *Section 26* of the *National Monuments Act 1930* (as amended) requires that excavations for archaeological purposes must be carried out by archaeologists acting under an excavation licence. The *Database of Irish Excavation*[55] contains summary accounts of excavations carried out in Ireland from 1969 to the present year.

[54] National Monuments in State Care, 2009: https://www.archaeology.ie/sites/default/files/media/pdf/monuments-in-state-care-meath.pdf
[55] Irish Excavation Ireland website: http://www.excavations.ie/

Figure 5.16 Map of the Sites and Monuments Record in County Meath[56]



UNESCO World Heritage Site

In December 1993 the *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation* (UNESCO) inscribed Brú na Bóinne as a World Heritage Site. Brú na Bóinne contains many outstanding archaeological features, including the largest assemblage of megalithic art in Europe, large and varied grouping of monuments, and evidence of continuous settlement and activity in the area for some 7,000 years. The international significance of Brú na Bóinne has gradually been revealed through an ongoing process of discovery and research which began 300 years ago. MCC is committed to the protection and conservation of the *UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne*.

World Heritage Tentative List

The protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage is of importance for present and future generations. A Tentative List is an inventory of those properties which a country intends to consider for nomination to the World Heritage List. The 2022 Tentative List consists of Tara, County Meath (a serial transboundary nomination to include Emain Macha/Navan Fort, County Armagh) under the Royal Sites of Ireland[57].

[56] Historic Environment Viewer, 2019: http://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/
[57] UNESCO World Heritage in Ireland Tentative List - https://www.worldheritageireland.ie/the-tentative-list/2019-2022-tentative-list-review-process/

5.3.8.2 Architectural Heritage

The term architectural heritage is defined in the *Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments Act 1999* as meaning all structures and buildings together with their settings and attendant grounds, fixtures and fittings; groups of structures and buildings; and, sites which are of technical, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest.

The architectural heritage of Meath contributes to its unique sense of place. The Council wishes to ensure that those buildings, streetscapes and features which are of merit are protected and managed so that they retain their character and special interest.

In 2019, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht published the *Built & Archaeological Heritage Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan* (Prepared under the National Adaptation Framework). The adaptation strategy and accompanying action plan presented in the document aim to:

- Build adaptive capacity within the sector
- Reduce the vulnerability of built and archaeological heritage to climate change
- Identify and capitalise on the various potential opportunities for the sector

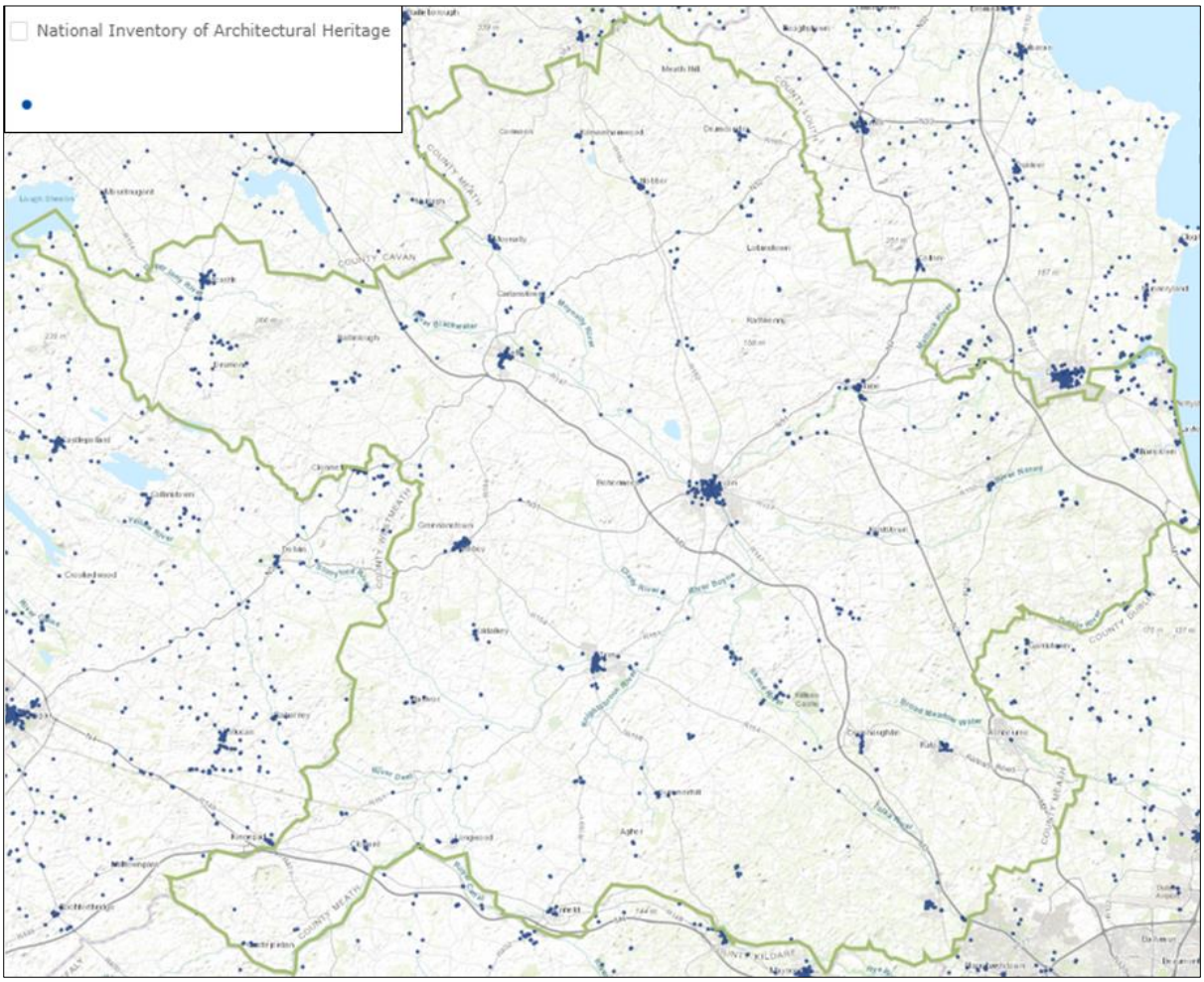
5.3.8.3 Record of Protected Structures (RPS)

A *Protected Structure*, unless otherwise stated in the RPS, includes:

- the interior of the structure;
- the land lying within its curtilage;
- any other structures within the curtilage, and their interiors; and
- all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of any of these structures.

Owners or occupiers of a protected structure may request the Council to issue a declaration as to the type of works, which may or may not be permitted in their structure. The record of protected structures for Meath are presented in Figure 5.17 below.

Figure 5.17 Map of the Architectural Heritage Sites in County Meath[58]



Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)

Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) are of great importance for the protection and enjoyment of our heritage. In considering an application for permission for development in relation to land situated in an ACA, a planning authority, or the Board on appeal, must take into account the material effect that a development proposal would be likely to have on the character of the ACA. Planning permission is required to substantially or completely demolish any building within an ACA. Generally, there is a presumption in favour of retaining buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of an ACA. This does not prevent alterations, extensions or new development within the area but seeks to ensure that any new development is compatible with the special character of the area.

There are 23no. areas designated as ACAs in Meath which are listed in **Table 5.8** below.

[58] Historic Environment Viewer, 2019: http://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/

Table 5.8 Architectural Conservation Areas in County Meath

Architectural Conservation Area	Architectural Conservation Area
Ardbraccan Demesne	Navan Historic Core
Athboy	Oldbridge Demesne
Dunboyne	Oldcastle
Dunsany Castle Demesne	Slane
Headfort Demesne	Slane Castle Demesne
Julianstown	Slane Mill Complex
Kells Historic Core	Somerville Demesne
Kells – Headfort Place	Stackallen Demesne
Kilmessan	Summerhill
Laytown – Netterville and Victoria Terrace	Trim Historic Core
Longwood	Trim Porch Fields
Moynalty	

5.3.8.4 Cultural Heritage Issues

Construction activities have the potential for direct negative impacts on heritage features and their setting. Development of infrastructure, in addition to development resulting from economic growth and increasing population, can potentially impact on the integrity of sites or features of architectural, archaeological or cultural heritage interest. This could directly impact upon the cultural amenity resource and tourism potential of Meath.

Existing cultural heritage issues / pressures include:

- **Development of infrastructure** - development resulting from economic growth and increasing population, can potentially impact on the integrity of sites or features and their views to / from architectural, archaeological or cultural heritage interest.
- **Development** - in close proximity to sites and areas of cultural heritage may adversely impact upon the cultural landscape setting.
- **Development** - development has the potential to impact archaeological heritage which is sub-surface. This includes the insertion of services (e.g. cycleways), landscaping works, ground levelling and tree planting.
- **Architecture** - impact on heritage streetscapes of regional and local importance.
- **Archaeology** - impact on archaeological monuments and their settings including undiscovered sites / features.
- **Climate change** - the direct effects of climate change on heritage may be immediate or cumulative. Potential impacts are flooding, storm damage, coastal erosion, soil movement, changing burial-preservation conditions, pest and mould and maladaptation.
- **Risk** - protection of built and archaeological heritage to identify the heritage assets at risk

5.3.9 Landscape & Visual

The concept of landscape encompasses all that can be seen by looking across an area of land, *i.e.* it is the visible environment in its entirety. The landscape supports a wide range of ecological habitats despite growth in its resident population. The interaction of all of these elements influences landscape character for future generations.

A National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025[59] was published, in line with Ireland's obligations under the European Landscape Convention. The key objectives of this Strategy are the recognition of landscape in law and the provision of a policy framework to put measures in place for the management and protection of landscape, the production of a national Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) through data gathering and an evidence based description of character assessment, raising awareness and public consultation.

5.3.9.1 Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is a process that describes maps and classifies landscapes. Landscape character is defined as *'a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse*'. Defining landscape character enables an understanding to be formed of the inherent value and importance of individual landscape elements and the processes that may alter landscape character in the future. The cultural and ecological aspects of the landscape cannot be divorced from its physical and visual characteristics so all of these elements are considered.

5.3.9.2 Landscape Character Types

Landscape Character Types (LCT) are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character and are generic in nature in that they may occur in different localities throughout the country. Nonetheless, where they do occur, they commonly share similar combinations of geology, topography, land cover and historical land use, *e.g.* Hills and Upland Areas.

The LCA for Meath divides the county into four main LCTs, see **Table 5.9** below. These LCTs are further sub-divided into 20no. geographically specific Landscape Character Areas. The LCA includes recommendations that would, if implemented, to seek to protect and enhance the landscape character, and facilitate and guide sensitively designed development. The location of these areas are shown in **Figure 5.18** below.

5.3.9.3 Landscape Character Sensitivity

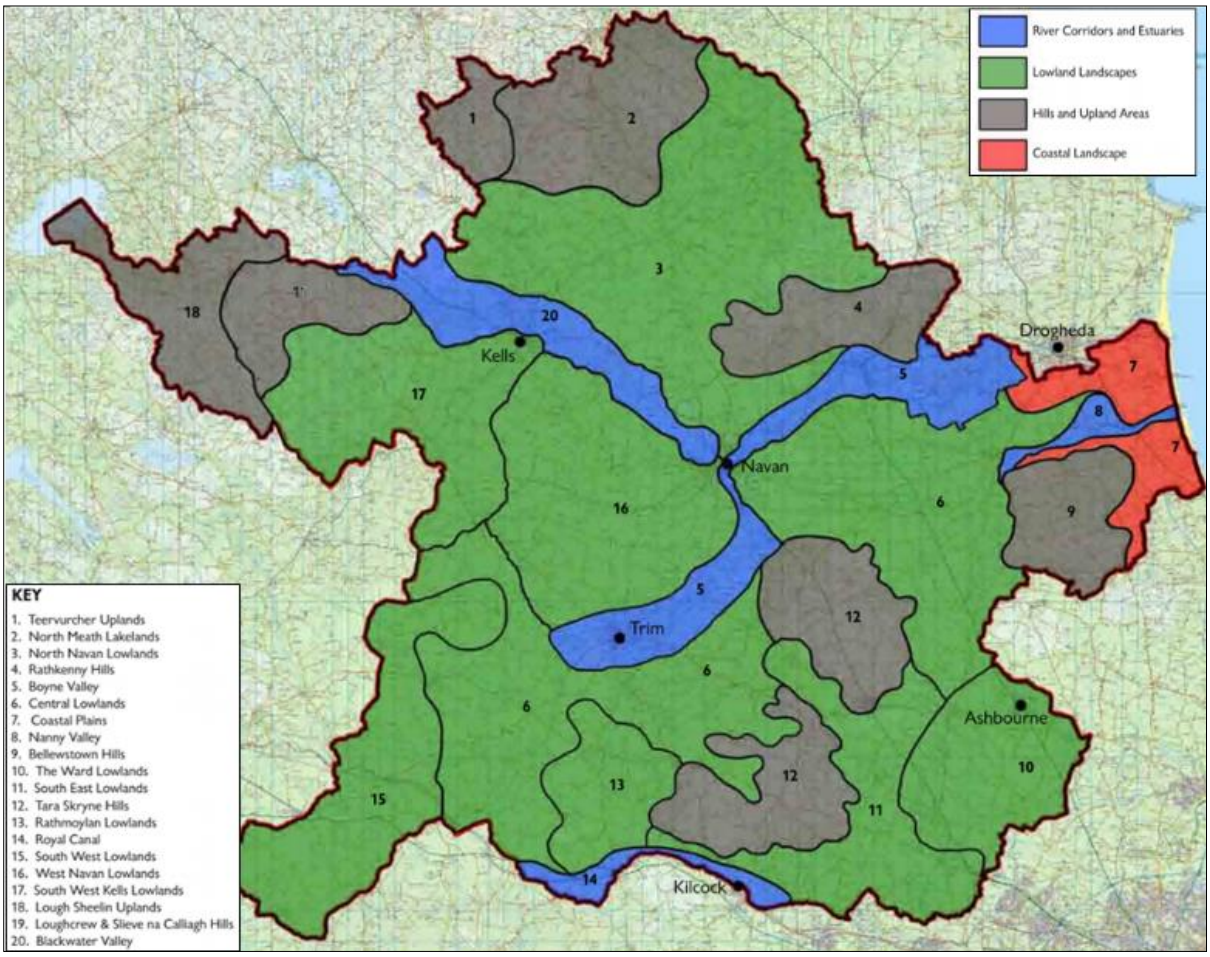
The sensitivity of the Landscape Character Areas is defined as its overall resilience to sustain its character in the face of change and its ability to recover from loss or damage to its components. Sensitivity is evaluated using criteria ranging from 'High' to 'Low' and is based on the interaction of individual components such as landform, amount of evident historical features (time depth) and distribution of viewers. A highly sensitive landscape is likely to be vulnerable, fragile and susceptible to change whereas a landscape with low sensitivity is likely to be more robust and / or tolerant of change.

[59] National Landscape Strategy: https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2015/07/N-Landscape-Strategy-english-Web.pdf

Table 5.9 Landscape Character Types (LCT) in Meath

Landscape Character Types (LCTs)	Landscape Value	Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Character Types (LCTs) Sub-division
Hills and Upland Areas	High	Moderate	Teervurcher Uplands
	Moderate	Low	North Meath Lakelands
	Very High	High	Rathkenny Hills
	Very High	Moderate	Bellewstown Hills
	Exceptional	High	Tara Skryne Hills
	High	High	Lough Sheelin Uplands
	Exceptional	High	Loughcrew and Slieve na Calliagh Hills
Lowland Areas	Moderate	Moderate	North Navan Lowlands
	High	Moderate	Central Lowlands
	Low	High	The Ward Lowlands
	Very High	Moderate	South East Lowlands
	High	High	Rathmoylan Lowlands
	High	High	South West Lowlands
	Moderate	Moderate	West Navan Lowlands
	Moderate	Moderate	South West Kells Lowlands
River Corridors and Estuaries	Very High	High	Nanny Valley
	High	Moderate	Royal Canal
	Exceptional	High	Boyne Valley
	Very High	High	Blackwater Valley
Coastal Areas	Moderate	High	Coastal Plain

Figure 5.18 Landscape Character Types in County Meath[60]



5.3.9.4 Protected Views & Prospects

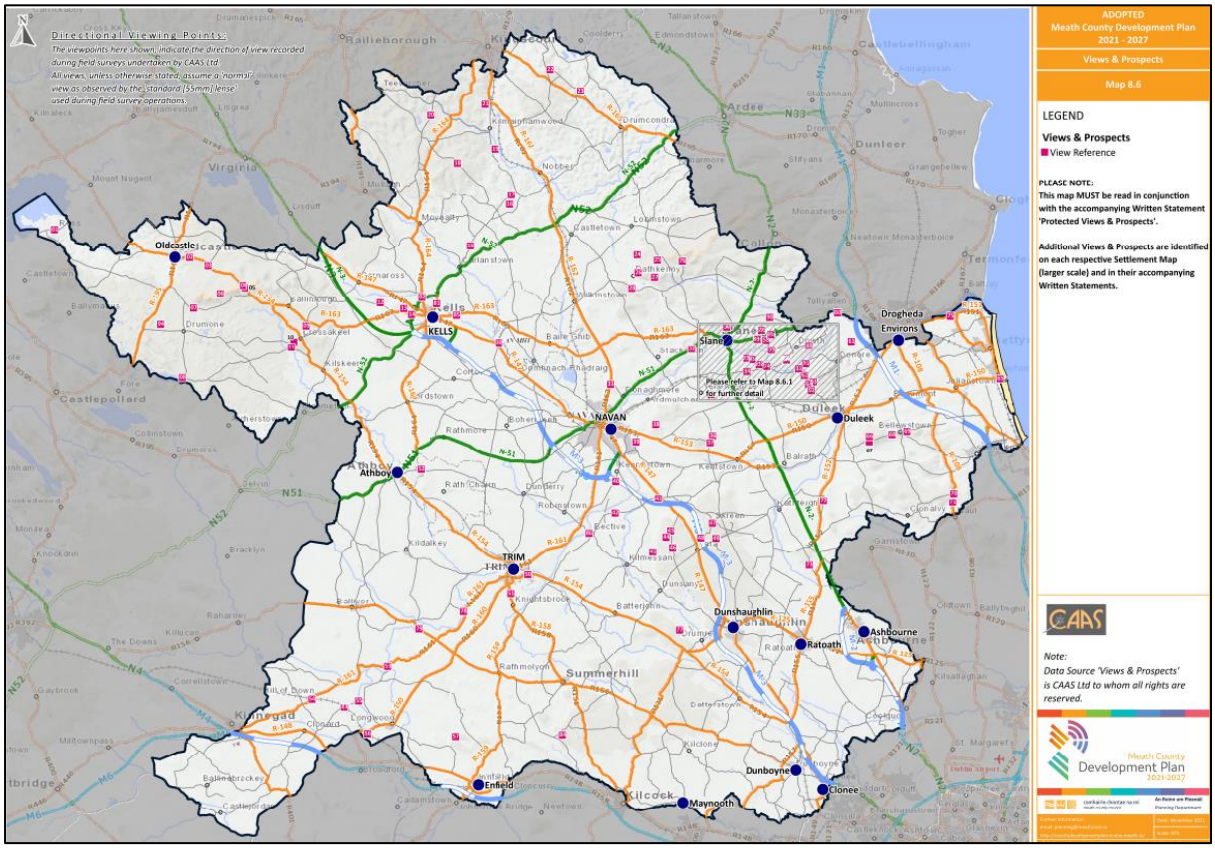
Landscape objectives of the current Development Plan aims to preserve the views and prospects and to protect views from development which would interfere unduly with the visual amenity and character of the landscape, so far as practically possible.

The landscape of the County has many vantage points which offer attractive views from hilltops and upland areas, along river valleys and the coast. Many of these views are associated with heritage and tourism sites and provide vantage points over high quality landscapes. These scenic views are of an amenity and tourism value and contribute to our quality of life.

Within the County Meath, c.94no. views and prospects have been identified. Refer to **Figure 5.19** below.

[60] Source: Meath CDP 2021-2027 Appendix 5

Figure 5.19 Views and Prospects for County Meath[61]



5.3.9.5 Habitats and Landscape Features of Importance for Biodiversity

Many important and significant biodiversity areas occur outside sites that are subject to legal protection under EU and National legislations. There are many habitats and important features that are of particular importance for biodiversity throughout Ireland, including County Meath. Such areas include, hedgerows, woodlands and other field boundary types such as stone walls and ditches, rivers, streams, canals, wetlands, salt marshes and sand dunes. It is important that these areas are protected and enhanced where possible, as these landscape features and habitats cannot be sustained in isolation from one another as they provide ecological 'corridors' that support the movements of species necessary to maintain biodiversity.

5.3.9.6 Landscape & Visual Issues

Landscape can be considered a dynamic rather than static asset. It is constantly changing, and its changes are driven by nature itself, by direct human intervention, and indirectly through the consequences of human activity, notably Climate Change. All physical development undertaken by human impacts on the landscape. At the same time, human activity, especially farming, does much to maintain the landscape.

Areas of a highly sensitive landscape have a low capacity to absorb new development and this can be a challenge to locate new development in these areas without it becoming unduly obtrusive.

[61] Protected Views and Prospects – Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027: https://consult.meath.ie/en/consultation/meath-adopted-county-development-plan/chapter/a10-protected-views-and-prospects

Development of the CAP where feasible should seek to conserve and enhance natural habitats and ecosystems to protect and improve biodiversity.

Existing landscape and visual issues / pressures include:

- **Development -** development having adverse and visual impacts on the landscape.
- **Green Infrastructure** - protecting the existing green infrastructure network from fragmentation and loss due to pressures of urban development within and adjoining the network.
- **Ecosystem Services -** recognising and promoting the value of ecosystem services that the green infrastructure network provides to the County.
- **Coastal** - wind developments are having visual impacts on the coastline.

6 Strategic Environmental Objectives

The SEA Directive requires that *'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.'* 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.

A series of Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) have been prepared in line with current guidance and also with specific reference to the SEA for the CAP (refer to **Table 6.1**). 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.

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. These high-level SEOs are paired with specific targets which can be monitored using indicators (see **Section 10** of this Report).

Table 6.1 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.

Theme	SEO Code	Strategic Environmental Objective
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.
	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.

7 Assessment of Alternatives

7.1 Overview

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 6 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.

7.2 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
Alternative 1 Target reducing GHG from the sectors with highest emissions to mitigate the impacts of climate change	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.	PHH_1 PHH_2	+/- +/-	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. 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. 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. 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.
		B_1 B_2 B_3	+/- +/- +/-	
		LSG_1	0	
		WQ_1 WQ_2	0 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 CH_2	0 0	
		LV_1 LV_2	0 0	

Reasonable Alternative	Description	SEO	Environmental Assessment	Environmental Evaluation
Alternative 2 A balanced focus on both climate mitigation and adaptation across several theme areas and all socio-economic sectors	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.	PHH_1 PHH_2	+/- +	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. 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.
		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
Alternative 3 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	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. 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.	PHH_1 PHH_2	+ +	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.
		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	+ +	

7.3 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 its 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.

8 Assessment of Effects of the Meath Climate Action Plan

8.1 Introduction

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 and described in Section 5 of this Report. The assessment is 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. These SEOs are detailed in Section 6 of this Report.

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. Nevertheless, a number of the proposed actions also have some potential for uncertain or negative effects on the environment, primarily arising from potential works deriving from the actions.

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

The environmental assessment of the 'Goals / Thematic Areas / Objectives' and of the 'Actions' of the Meath CAP are set out separately in the following sections of this Report.

8.2 Environmental Assessment of Goals Thematic Areas and Objectives of the Meath Climate Action Plan

The finding of the environmental assessment of the overall Vision, Mission, Targets, Goals and Objectives of the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 is that they will all have an overall positive effect on all aspects of the environment, but most notably on human health, biodiversity, water, air quality and climate, as well as in terms of interaction between these environmental factors. The assessment is presented in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 Environmental Assessment of Goals, Thematic Areas and Objectives of the Meath Climate Action Plan

Strategic Goals	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
Vision Meath aims to be a climate resilient, biodiverse rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy that supports healthy lifestyles and jobs growth. **Mission** Meath County Council is committed to lead in translating the National Climate Policy into local actions through inclusive engagement, capacity building and leadership to the people of County Meath. **Targets** Meath County Council's Climate Action Plan contains four key targets, as follows: ■ Energy Efficiency – 50% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030. ■ GHG Reduction – 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. ■ Resilience – Making Meath a climate resilient region by reducing the impacts of future climate-change related events. ■ Awareness – Actively engaging and informing citizens, communities and businesses on climate change.	The intent and output of Vision, Mission and Targets of the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 will result in positive effects across all SEOs for environmental factors. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)				No

Strategic Goals	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
Goal 1 Develop appropriate structures and processes for directing and managing effective climate action Thematic Area Governance & Leadership Objective 1.1 Support the development and implementation of positive climate action across all services and operations of Meath County Council, collaborating with others to enable and inspire endeavours to reduce their climate impact.	The governance and leadership intent and output of Goal 1, of the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029, will result in positive effects across the vast majority of SEOs for environmental factors, with neutral effects in relation to delivery of Decarbonising Zones. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)			**PHH** (PHH1) **CC** (CC3)	**No**
Goal 2 Achieve local government carbon emissions and energy efficiency Targets for 2030 Thematic Area Built Environment & Transport Objective 2.1 Minimize the Council's contribution to climate change by increasing energy efficiency, reducing carbon emissions, and encouraging sustainable opportunities for the broader County Meath community.	The built environment and transport intent and output of Goal 2, of the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029, will result in positive effects across the majority of SEOs for environmental factors, with neutral effects in relation to non-related factors. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	**B** (B1, B2) **PHH** (PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2)			**B** (B3) **PHH** (PHH1) **MA** (MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)	**No**

Strategic Goals	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
Goal 3 Protect and enhance Meath's natural environment by supporting biodiversity and increasing climate resilience **Thematic Area** Natural Environment & Green Infrastructure **Objective 3.1** Support the responsible management, protection and enhancement of Meath's natural heritage, biodiversity, and natural environment.	The natural environment and green infrastructure intent and output of Goal 3, of the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029, will result in positive effects across most of SEOs for environmental factors, including biodiversity, land / soils /geology, water, climate and landscape. Goal 3 will have neutral effects in relation to non-related factors. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1) **CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1, MA4) **CH** (CH1) **LV** (LV1, LV2)			**PHH** (PHH1) **WQ** (WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA2, MA3) **CH** (CH2)	**No**
Goal 4 Mobilise Climate Action in Local Communities, whilst achieving a just transition **Thematic Area** Communities: Resilience & Transition **Objective 4.1** Promote through collaboration and partnership sustainable, inclusive, and resilient communities, focusing on actions which promote health and wellbeing benefits and supports local economies.	The intent and output of Goal 4 in relation to communities: resilience and transition, of the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029, will result in positive effects across all SEOs for environmental factors. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3)				**No**

Strategic Goals	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	No Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
		MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)				
Goal 5 Create a culture of sustainability, promoting a circular economy throughout the County Thematic Area Sustainability & Resource Management Objective 5.1 Support circular economy initiatives and infrastructure, focusing on prevention, reuse, repair and recycling and promote green business opportunities.	The intent and output of Goal 5 in relation to sustainability and resource management, of the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029, will result in positive effects across all SEOs for environmental factors. No negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)				No

8.3 Environmental Assessment of Actions of the Meath Climate Action Plan

The Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 includes 71no. Actions set out under the 5 Goals, Thematic Areas and Objectives (refer to **Section 8.2** of this Report). The full environmental assessment of the Actions is provided in **Table 8.1A in Appendix 8.1** of this Report.

The finding of the assessment is that 56no. actions will have either potential positive effects or no effects impact on the environment. The remaining 15no. actions have potential for either potential negative effects or potential uncertain effects on the environment, of which only 6no. actions have potential for negative effects. A summary of the potential negative and uncertain environmental effects is provided in **Table 8.2**.

Where potential negative or uncertain environment effects have been identified appropriate mitigation has been provided in **Section 9.0** of this Report.

Table 8.2 Summary of 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	Environmental Assessment	Potential Negative Effects	Potential Uncertain Effects
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.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. renewable energy, EV charging etc.) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, land / soils / geology, water, air / noise, heritage and landscape.	**B** (B1, B2, B3) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1)	**AN** (AN2) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
9	Undertake deep retrofit and install renewable energy sources as appropriate on LA owned buildings.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. renewable energy) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, water, air / noise, heritage and landscape.	**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	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. renewable energy, EV charging etc.) could have uncertain effects for		**B** (B1, B2, B3) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1) **CH** (CH1, CH2)

Actions	Description	Environmental Assessment	Potential Negative Effects	Potential Uncertain Effects
	Facilities, SuDs, and nature based solutions, where feasible.	biodiversity, land / soils / geology, water and heritage.		
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 Facilities, SuDs, and nature based solutions, as feasible.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. renewable energy, EV charging etc.) could have uncertain effects for biodiversity, land / soils / geology, water and heritage.		**B** (B1, B2, B3) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1) **CH** (CH1, CH2)
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.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. renewable energy, EV charging etc.) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, land / soils / geology, water, air / noise, heritage and landscape.	**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.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions could have uncertain effects for biodiversity (e.g. bats) and heritage (e.g. protected structures).		**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.	While the overall intention is positive, actions could have uncertain effects for existing biodiversity.		**B** (B1, B2, B3), **WQ** (WQ1)
Goal 3				
4	Plant native woodland on appropriate LA owned lands.	While the overall intention is positive, actions could have uncertain effects for existing biodiversity.		**B** (B1, B2, B3)
8	Undertake climate risk assessment of local authority owned heritage assets (natural, built and cultural). Carry out regular programme of	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. renewable energy, EV charging etc.) could have		**B** (B1, B2, B3) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **CH** (CH1, CH2)

Actions	Description	Environmental Assessment	Potential Negative Effects	Potential Uncertain Effects
	inspection, maintenance and phased conservation works to develop climate resilience.	uncertain effects for biodiversity and heritage.		
Goal 4				
7	Increase number of safe routes to school scheme, where feasible.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. new routes) could have uncertain effects for biodiversity and water.		**B** (B1, B2, B3) **WQ** (WQ1)
8	To liaise with the OPW in the identification of new or the reinforcement of existing flood defences and protection measures.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. works) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, land / soils / geology, water, air / noise, material assets, heritage and landscape.	**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.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. works) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, land / soils / geology, water, air / noise, material assets, heritage and landscape.	**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.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. works) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, land / soils / geology, water, air / noise, material assets, climate, heritage and landscape.	**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.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. works) could have negative or uncertain effects for		**B** (B1, B2, B3) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2)

Actions	Description	Environmental Assessment	Potential Negative Effects	Potential Uncertain Effects
		biodiversity, land / soils / geology, water, air / noise, material assets, heritage and landscape.		**AN** (AN2) **MA** (MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
12	In4Green Urbact Network Project: Complete the Integrated Action Plan for Navan. (Plan objectives 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)	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. new routes) could have uncertain effects for biodiversity and water.		**B** (B1, B2, B3) **WQ** (WQ1)

8.4 Screening of minor, non-material modifications to the Meath CAP

The CE's Report provides a summary of the CE's recommendations for 2no. minor, non-material modifications to the Meath CAP as a result of the public consultation process. The minor alterations were screened for the requirement for Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment and no likely significant environmental effects were identified. Refer to **Table 8.3** below.

Table 8.3 Screening of Modifications for AA and SEA

CAP Section and Page	Proposed Modifications	Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA)	Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
Page 20 Impacts of Climate Change on County Meath	Wording changed/nonmaterial change new text to read: The assessment identified windstorms as posing the highest level of climate change risk for County Meath. Key impacts from windstorms include damage to buildings and infrastructure including roads, powerlines, and communications systems. Coastal locations like Laytown and Bettystown will be more exposed to wind as there are no land barriers to slow the wind. Flooding has been identified as posing a relatively high risk for County Meath with impacts experienced on a localised scale including damage to assets and infrastructure and potential for isolation of communities and reduction in business activities. Inland locations through which rivers run are exposed to fluvial flooding. There are many small rivers intertwining throughout County Meath, such as the Inny, Delvin, and Broadmeadow. One of the principal rivers in Meath is the Boyne which flows through large urban centres. Laytown Bettystown will also be exposed to sea level rise in a high warming scenario. Coastal flooding in Laytown and Bettystown is considered to be a	This is a minor non-material change relating to information on potential climate change risks for County Meath. The text does not include any reference to proposed actions or works. No likely significant environmental effects on European sites arise as a result of this text in the Plan and the requirement for Stage 2 AA is screened out. The requirement for Stage 2 AA is screened out.	This is a minor non-material change relating to information on potential climate change risks for County Meath. The text does not include any reference to proposed actions or works. No likely significant environmental effects arise as a result of this text in the Plan and the requirement for SEA is screened out.

CAP Section and Page	Proposed Modifications	Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA)	Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
	potential risk in a four-degree temperature increase scenario to 2050. The impact of heavy snowfall and cold spells on County Meath will likely decrease due to the decrease in intensity and duration of these events. The whole of County Meath will be exposed to drought as the frequency and duration of drought events are projected to increase. Agriculture will be particularly vulnerable to drought and water stress for the growth of crops including grass, this in turn will potentially impact livestock. This Climate Change Risk Assessment is linked with the ongoing planning for Meath County Council in terms of adaptation to the changing climate and continued support services to citizens and businesses. This Climate Change Risk Assessment will be repeated when new more granular scientific data on climate becomes available. Meath County Council's response to climate change will evolve over time as will the impact of future weather events, this residual risk should continue to be modelled alongside the inherent risk.		
Strategic Goals	All 5 Strategic Goals were updated to align to the DECA Goals as per the example shown.	This is a minor, non-material change to align the strategic goals with the DECA Goals.	This is a minor, non-material change to align the strategic goals with the DECA Goals.

CAP Section and Page	Proposed Modifications	Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA)	Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
		The change does not involve proposed actions or works. No likely significant environmental effects on European sites arise as a result of this text in the Plan and the requirement for Stage 2 AA is screened out.	The change does not involve proposed actions or works. No likely significant environmental effects arise as a result of this change to the Plan and the requirement for SEA is screened out.

8.5 Interactions

An overview of the key and minor / no interaction between environmental factors with potential for effects arising from the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 are set out in the matrix in Table 8.4.

Actions within the Plan that give rise to positive or negative environmental effects for one environmental component also have the potential to generate positive or negative environmental effects for inter-related environmental components – e.g. negative effect on soils can have a negative effect on biodiversity, water, and / or landscape. Likewise, actions supporting the delivery of SuDS will improve water quality, which in turn can have a positive effect on aquatic ecology.

An assessment of impact inter-relationships and interactions is already embedded in the evaluation of environmental effects that has been carried out in this environmental report. This ensures that there is adequate coverage of all potential environmental effects associated with the implementation of plan actions. In addition the mitigation measures set out in Section 9.0 of this Report.

Table 8.4 Overview of Key Environmental Interactions

	Biodiversity	Population and Human Health	Land, Soils & Geology	Water Quality	Air Quality & Noise	Material Assets	Climate	Cultural Heritage	Landscape & Visual
Biodiversity		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☒	☑
Population and Human Health	☒		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Land, Soils & Geology	☑	☑		☑	☒	☑	☑	☒	☑
Water Quality	☑	☑	☑		☑	☑	☑	☒	☑
Air Quality & Noise	☑	☑	☒	☒		☑	☑	☒	☑
Material Assets	☒	☑	☑	☑	☑		☑	☒	☒
Climate	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑		☒	☑
Cultural Heritage	☒	☑	☑	☒	☑	☑	☑		☑
Landscape & Visual	☒	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	

Legend: ☑ Key Interaction ☒ Minor / No Interaction

8.6 Potential Cumulative Effects

The Meath CAP could have a relationship with other plans and programmes. However, these plans and programmes will also been subject to environmental assessment, including SEA and AA, for the purpose of preventing and mitigating potential negative environmental effects. Table 8.5 lists the relevant plans and programmes that have potential for cumulative effects with the Meath CAP.

Table 8.5 Potential Cumulative Effects with other Plans and Programmes

Plan, Programme etc.	Potential Cumulative effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
National Planning Framework (NPF) Project 2040 National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030 (*As part of Project Ireland 2040 the National Development Plan sets out the Government's over-arching investment strategy and budget for the period 2021-2030*)	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the National Planning Framework have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2019-2031 for the Eastern Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA)	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the RSES have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the RSES have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
Climate Action Plan 2023	Climate Action Plan 2023 is the second annual update to Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2019. This plan is the first to be prepared under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021. The plan implements the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings and sets a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve our emissions by 2030 and reach net zero no later than 2050, as we committed to in the Programme for Government. The plan notes the requirements of AA and SEA envisaged for the Third Phase.	No
National CFRAMS Programme Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study	Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Studies and their product – Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) – are at the core of national policy for flood risk management and the strategy for its implementation. These studies are required by The Floods Directive [2007/60/EC], which is being implemented in Ireland through the European Communities (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations 2010 [S.I.122/2010]. Each FRMP is	No

Plan, Programme etc.	Potential Cumulative effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
	accompanied by an associated SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement. The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the FRMP have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the FRMP have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	
Greater Dublin Drainage Project	The EIA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the Greater Dublin Drainage Project have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the project have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
National 3rd Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021 and Draft National 4th Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2027	The Biodiversity Action notes the requirements and purposes of AA and SEA and the vision of the plan to conserve and restored for the benefit of all sectors of society.	No
Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042 have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Strategy have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022)	The policy sets a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel and public transport to support Ireland's overall requirement to achieve a 51% reduction in carbon emissions by the end of this decade. The projects which will be implemented as a result of this national policy will be subject to their individual environmental impact assessment and appropriate assessment processes (as appropriate) and hence there would be no potential adverse effects on the overall receiving environment.	No
River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Ireland 2022-2027	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the RBMP have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
County Development Plans (Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029, Kildare County Development	The County Development Plan (CDP) provides the principal planning strategy document for the development of a local authority area over the statutory	No

Plan, Programme etc.	Potential Cumulative effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
Plan 2023-2029, Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027, Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028, Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028, Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027, Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025)	time period of the plan. Each of the CDP with Zone of Influence of County Meath has been subject to SEA and AA processes to ensure that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	

The assessment of cumulative effects above focused on national, regional and local plans, programmes, strategy and policy documents that have the potential to affect the same receiving environment that could be affected by the Meath CAP.

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out policies and objectives for land use, settlement strategy, sustainable development, transport, infrastructure, environmental protection and management, climate change, land use etc. for County Meath. Other higher-level international, national and regional plans are integrated within the Meath County Development Plan and have been assessed as such. The Meath CAP will comply with the provisions set within the Meath County Development Plan which itself has been subject to standalone environmental assessment (SEA, NIR, etc.).

The assessment of cumulative effects concludes that the implementation of the Meath CAP will not result in direct, indirect or cumulative impacts which would have the potential to adversely affect the environment.

9 Mitigation Measures

9.1 Overview

The finding of the environmental assessment in **Section 8.0** of this 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.

9.2 Mitigation Measures

The majority of the mitigation measures are achieved through the detailed environmental protective policies and objectives as set out in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027. The Development Plan provides for sustainable planning and management control of all development in County Meath – including any development or works deriving from the Meath CAP.

The environmental protective policies and objectives of the Development Plan are detailed in **Tables 9.1A and 9.1B of Appendix 9.1** of this Environmental Report. Specific mitigation in relation to environmental impact assessment (EIA) and appropriate assessment (AA) has also been included in the Meath CAP under Section 2.4.2 on Environmental Governance.

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 9.1** (refer also to detail in **Tables 9.1A and 9.1B in Appendix 9.1**).

Table 9.1 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
9	Undertake deep retrofit and install renewable energy	**CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)	**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)
	sources as appropriate on LA owned buildings.		**AN** (AN2)	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.
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 Facilities, SuDs, and nature based solutions, as feasible.		**B** (B1, B2, B3) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1) **CH** (CH1, CH2)	
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
8	Undertake climate risk assessment of local		**B** (B1, B2, B3)	

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)
	authority owned heritage assets (natural, built and cultural). Carry out regular programme of inspection, maintenance and phased conservation works to develop climate resilience.		**WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **CH** (CH1, CH2)	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.
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	**B** (B1, B2, B3) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1) **CC** (CC1, CC2)	**AN** (AN1, AN2) **MA** (MA3) **CH** (CH1, CH2)	

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)
	prioritising nature based solutions.	**LV** (LV1, LV2)		
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; 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.
12	In4Green Urbact Network Project: Complete the Integrated Action Plan for Navan. (Plan objectives 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)		**B** (B1, B2, B3) **WQ** (WQ1)	

9.3 Conclusion

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.

10 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 6) 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 10.1 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 10.1 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 Heath 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.	% change in modal split. Kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network. Kilometres of permanent integrated cycling network. Number of Electric Vehicle charging points in the county. Total Area of road reallocated for sustainable alternatives.	Percentage increase in the number of public transport users in the County Increase kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network. Increase kilometres of permanent segregated cycling network. Increase number of Electric Vehicle charging points in the county. Increase Total Area of road reallocated for sustainable alternatives	Meath County Council Consultation with Transport Infrastructure Ireland / NTA.
	MA_3	Promote sustainable waste management, minimisation and recovery.	Tonnes of hazardous waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually. Tonnes of W.E.E.E. waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually. Tonnes of Bulky waste received at Council Waste Management Facilities annually. Tonnes of garden waste received at Council Waste	Increase waste recycling in the County. Reduce waste generation in the County.	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

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Appendices

Appendix 4.1:

List of Plans and Programmes

List of Plans and Programmes

As part of the SEA process, it is necessary to consider the environmental protection objectives, established at the international; European and national level which are relevant to the Meath Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 and how they have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan. In particular the interaction of the environmental protection objectives and standards included within these plans and programmes with the NPF is considered.

Table 4.1A and **Table 4.1B** below provide a working list of the principal plans and programmes influencing the formulation of the MCC CAP and the Environmental Report, either directly or through European, National and / or County level policy.

Table 4.1A Relevant National Plans and Programmes

National & Regional Plans and Programmes	
National Planning Framework (NPF) Project 2040	National Policy Position on Climate Action and Low Carbon Development
National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2027	Sectoral Climate Change Adaption Strategies and Low Carbon Roadmaps
Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022	National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022)
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2019-2031 for the Eastern Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA)	Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012)
Ireland's Environment - An Integrated Assessment 2020	The Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2014)
National Mitigation Plan 2017	Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042
Our Sustainable Future - A Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland (2012)	Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013)
Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland (2021)	Ireland's First National Cycle Policy Framework 2009
Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2022)	Eastern Midlands Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021
Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness - 2016	The National Renewable Energy Action Plan
National 3rd Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021	National Energy Efficiency Action Plan
Draft National 4th Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2027	National Greenway Strategy
Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland	The National Broadband Plan
Fisheries Natura Plans	National Landscape Strategy
National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture Development 2014- 2020	Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011)
National CFRAMS Programme	Heritage Ireland 2030
River Basin Management Plan for Ireland	Food Harvest 2020

National & Regional Plans and Programmes	
The Planning System and Flood Risk Management (2009)	Climate Action Plan 2019, To Tackle Climate Breakdown
Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study	Water Services Strategic Plan / Capital Investment Programme (Irish Water)
National Climate Change Adaptation Framework 2012 and Review of National Adaptation Framework 2022	

Table 4.1B Relevant Local Plans and Programmes

Local Plans and Programmes	
Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027	Meath Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021
Meath County Council Corporate Plan	County Meath Biodiversity Action Plan 2015-2020
Action Plan for Jobs - Mid East Region	County Meath Heritage Plan 2015-2020
Meath Economic Development Strategy 2014-2022	Boyne Valley Food Strategy

Furthermore, there is a legislative framework for the protection of the environment and our natural resources relevant to the Meath CAP. Table 4.2 below provides a list of the principle legislative framework.

Table 4.2 Legislative Framework

Legislative Framework	
Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended	Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC)
Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended	Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC)
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EEC)	Fourth Daughter Directive (2004/107/EC)
Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU) as amended by (2014/52/EU)	Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC) & EU Directive 2001/77/EC
Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)	European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations) 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011)
Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) on the Conservation of Wild Birds, 1979	Renewable Energies in the 21st Century: Building a More Sustainable Future
Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC)	EU 2020 climate and energy package
Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC)	EU Renewable Energy Road Map
Flood Directive (2007/60/EC)	European Landscape Convention 2000
Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC)	Wildlife Acts 1976-2023
Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC)	The Water Services Act (2007 – 2017)
Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC)	Foreshore Act 1933-2022

Legislative Framework	
Urban Wastewater Directive (91/271/EEC)	Aquaculture Act 1997-2006
Drinking Water Directive (98/83/EC)	Sea Fisheries & Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006
Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC)	The National Monuments Act 1930-2014
EU Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC)	Roads Act 1993, as amended

Appendix 8.1:

Detailed Assessment of Environmental Effects of the Implementation of the Meath Climate Action Plan

Table 8.1A Environmental Assessment of the Actions of the Meath Climate Action Plan

(Key: B – Biodiversity (Flora & Fauna), 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)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
Goal 1 Develop appropriate structures and processes for directing and managing effective climate action **Thematic Area** Governance & Leadership **Objectives 1.1** Support the development and implementation of positive climate action across all services and operations of Meath County Council, collaborating with others to	1	Implement ISO 50001 Energy Management System.	This action will result in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.	**PHH** (PHH1, PHH2), **CC** (CC1, CC2 & CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **LSG** (LSG1), **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2), **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3), **CH** (CH1, CH2), **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	2	Use green procurement where feasible in all procurement of good and services.	This action will result in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.	**B** (B1, B2, B3), **PHH** (PHH2), **LSG** (LSG1), **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2), **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN4), **CC** (CC1, CC2), **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4)			**PHH** (PHH1), **AN** (AN3), **CC** (CC3), **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	3	Prepare a Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Guidance Document to support the inclusion of the global goals in all plans, strategies and grant programmes published by the LA.	This action will result in overall positive effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.	**B** (B1, B2, B3), **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2), **LSG** (LSG1), **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2), **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4), **CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3), **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4), **CH** (CH1, CH2),			

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
enable and inspire endeavours to reduce their climate impact.				**LV** (LV1, LV2)			
	4	Mainstreaming of climate mitigation and adaptation considerations into all policies, strategies and plans adopted by LA.	This action will support in raising awareness regarding climate change and measures to mitigate and adapt to it. This action will have a likely positive effect on climate.	**CC** (CC1, CC2)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **WQ** (WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CH1, CH2, CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	5	Identify an appropriate monitoring and reporting protocol on the implementation of low carbon construction in public tenders and grant schemes.	This action will assist to monitor and report the implementation of carbon reduction measures and will result in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.	**CC** (CC1, CC2)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	6	Undertake annual audits of climate expenditure that considers cost effectiveness, efficiency, governance,	This action will assist in annual monitoring to ensure that effective implementation of the climate budget is undertaken	**CC** (CC1, CC2)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
		relevance, coherence and impacts (environment and societal).	and will result in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.				**WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1 MA2 MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	7	Identify and put in place appropriate business continuity measures to ensure continuity of service provision during severe weather events.	This action will result in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.	**PHH** (PHH2)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	8	Conduct detailed study of staff modal split to identify measures to reduce staff travel emissions.	This action will result in a better understanding of the baseline, encourage modal shift away from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles and encourage use of active travel measures, resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on	**AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1, MA2)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
			the environmental themes and SEOs.				
	9	Organise awareness, information, knowledge sharing and capacity initiatives with staff on mitigation and adaptation measures.	This action will support the implementation of effective climate action measures and support behavioural change resulting in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs.	**CC** (CC1, CC2)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	10	Delivery of EV Charging Strategy for County Meath.	This action promotes energy efficiency and reduction of GHG emission and will have a positive effect on climate and air quality. However, in the absence of mitigation, works involved in the construction of infrastructure to support the strategy can have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effects on biodiversity, lands & soils (e.g. groundworks), water quality (e.g. run off), air quality & noise and cultural heritage.	**AN** (AN1, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA2)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **AN** (AN2, AN3) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
	11	Continue to support and expand the 'Bus It 2 School' Pathfinder Project.	This action promotes energy efficiency and reduction of GHG emission and will have a positive effect on climate, air quality and population and human health.	**PHH** (PHH2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3 AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA2)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	12	Develop strategic partnerships to assist in achieving emissions targets.	This action can potentially result in reduced energy consumption and reduced GHG emissions. This can result in positive effects on climate and assist in achieving national GHG emission reduction targets and requirements	**CC** (CC1, CC2)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	13	Ensure readily available information, advice, knowledge and awareness of climate friendly actions via LA Climate Action Website and social media posts.	This action will support in raising awareness regarding climate change and measures to mitigate and adapt to it. This action will have a positive effect on climate.	**CC** (CC1, CC2)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
							MA (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	14	LA staff to receive climate action training under Local Authority Climate Action Training Programme	This action will support in raising awareness regarding climate change and measures to mitigate and adapt to it. This action will have a positive effect on climate.	**CC** (CC1, CC2)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
Goal 2 Achieve local government carbon emissions and energy efficiency Targets for 2030 **Thematic Area**	1	Incorporate biodiversity, mitigation and adaptation actions into the design and delivery of urban regeneration plans.	This action will ensure biodiversity is appropriately protected and managed at the site along with climate mitigation and adaptation measures and will have a positive effects on the environment.	**B** (B3) **CC** (CC1, CC2)			**B** (B1, B2) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	2	Continue to work with appropriate external	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g.	**WQ** (WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN4)	**B** (B1, B2, B3) **LSG** (LSG1)	**AN** (AN2) **CH** (CH1, CH2)	**AN** (AN3)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
Built Environment & Transport **Objective 2.1** Minimize the Council's contribution to climate change by increasing energy efficiency, reducing carbon emissions, and encouraging sustainable opportunities for the broader County Meath community.		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.	renewable energy, EV charging etc.) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, land / soils / geology, water, air / noise, heritage and landscape.	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1, MA4)	**WQ** (WQ1)	**LV** (LV1, LV2)	**PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA2, MA3)
	3	Reduce and remove where feasible plastic waste generated, through removing single use plastics within LA owned buildings and services.	This action will support proper management of waste, reduce the risk of improper waste disposal and thereby reduce environmental pollution, and will have positive effects on the environment.	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **PHH** (PHH2) **MA** (MA3)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	4	Switch to digital marketing and advertising materials wherever possible. Reduce production/waste on programmes and posters.	This action would result in positive effects for the environment and climate and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA3)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA4)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
							CH (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	5	Switch out on cleansing products to eco-friendly products	This action would result in positive effects for the environment and reduce existing pollution risks.	**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1) **CC** (CC1, CC2),			**PHH** (PHH1) **WQ** (WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	6	Introduce water usage conservation measures within LA owned buildings	This action would result in positive effects for the environment and climate and will not result in adverse environmental consequences.	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA4)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	7	Management of municipal waste from LA owned buildings. Increase recycling/organise waste collection and reduce general waste.	This action will support proper management of waste, reduce the risk of improper waste disposal and thereby reduce environmental pollution and will	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **PHH** (PHH2) **MA** (MA3)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4), **CC** (CC3)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
			have a positive effects on the environment.				**MA** (MA1, MA2, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	8	Management of energy efficient LA fleet including implementation of driving efficiency software and associated eco driving training for all staff driving LA fleet	This action will result in positive effects on the climate and air quality by reduction of emissions.	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **AN** (AN1, AN4)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN2, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	9	Undertake deep retrofit and install renewable energy sources as appropriate on LA owned buildings.	This action will support energy efficiency and reduction of GHG emissions reduction. This action will have positive effects on climate and air. However, in the absence of mitigation, works involved in retrofitting of existing infrastructure can have the potential to result in uncertain or negative environmental effects on biodiversity, water quality, air quality & noise, cultural heritage and landscape.	**AN** (AN1, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1)	**CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)	**B** (B1, B2, B3) **WQ** (WQ1), **AN** (AN2)	**LSG** (LSG1) **AN** (AN3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **WQ** (WQ2) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA2, MA3, MA4)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
	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.	This action promotes energy efficiency and reduction of GHG emission and will have a positive effects on climate and air quality. However, in the absence of mitigation, construction works involved in the provision of this infrastructure can have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effects on biodiversity, water quality, land and soils, and cultural heritage.	**PHH** (PHH2) **WQ** (WQ2) **AN** (AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1)		**B** (B1, B2, B3) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1) **CH** (CH1, CH2)	**PHH** (PHH1) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA3) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	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 Facilities, SuDs, and nature based solutions, as feasible.	This action will support energy efficiency and reduction of GHG emissions reduction. This action will have positive effects on climate and air quality. However, in the absence of mitigation, works involved in retrofitting of existing infrastructure can have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effects on biodiversity, lands & soils, water quality and cultural heritage.	**PHH** (PHH2) **WQ** (WQ2) **AN** (AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1)		**B** (B1, B2, B3) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1) **CH** (CH1, CH2)	**PHH** (PHH1) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA3) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	12	Increase energy efficiency of ICT Infrastructure.	This action will have a positive effects on the environment.	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1)			**B** (B1, B2, B3)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
							PHH (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	13	Deliver public lighting LED retrofit project under PLEEP (Public Lighting Energy Efficient Project).	This action aims to deliver LED lighting infrastructure. This has potential for positive effects on the environment.	**AN** (AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	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.	This action will support energy efficiency and reduction of GHG emissions reduction. This action will have positive effect on climate. However, in the absence of mitigation, works involved in	**WQ** (WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1, MA4)	**B** (B1, B2, B3) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1)	**AN** (AN2) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)	**AN** (AN3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA2, MA3)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
			provision of new infrastructure can have the potential to result in uncertain or negative environmental effects on biodiversity, lands & soils, water quality, cultural heritage and landscape.				
	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.	This action will provide support urban regeneration and have positive to population and human health and climate change. However, in the absence of mitigation, works involved in refurbishment can have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effects on biodiversity and cultural heritage.	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1)		**B** (B3) **CH** (CH1, CH2)	**B** (B1, B2) **PHH** (PHH1**,** (PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA2, MA3, MA4) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	16	Increase active travel usage in town centres through improved sustainable active travel proposals and an enhanced pedestrian and public realm environment.	While the overall intention is positive, actions could have uncertain effects for existing biodiversity.	**PHH** (PHH2) **AN** (AN1, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1, MA2)		**B** (B1, B2, B3), **WQ** (WQ1)	**B** (B1, B2, B3), **PHH** (PHH1) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1) **AN** (AN2) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
	17	Explore the feasibility of sustainable energy and heating solutions in County Meath	This action will result in overall positive or neutral effects on the environmental themes and SEOs	**AN** (AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3) **MA** (MA1)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3) **MA** (MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
Goal 3 Protect and enhance Meath's natural environment by supporting biodiversity and increasing climate resilience **Thematic Area** Natural Environment & Green Infrastructure	1	Installation of water butts at public buildings, to aid tidy towns committees, staff and contractors access a sustainable water source for garden maintenance.	This action will promote sustainable water use and is will not result in any adverse environmental effects.	**WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **MA** (MA4)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4), **CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	2	Commence a programme of auditing of LA lands to carry out ecological and habitat surveys and highlight areas at risk and those suitable for restoration and enhanced carbon storage.	This action will provide useful baseline data and will not result in any adverse environmental effects	**B** (B1, B2, B3) **LV** (LV1)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
Objective 3.1 Support the responsible management, protection and enhancement of Meath's natural heritage, biodiversity, and natural environment							**CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV2)
	3	Develop options for the delivery of a National Implementation Strategy for Nature-Based Solutions and interim guidance to the management of rainwater and surface water run-off in urban areas.	This action will provide useful baseline data for delivery of nature-based solution and water management and will not result in any adverse environmental effects.	**B** (B3) **WQ** (WQ1) **CC** (CC1, CC2)			**B** (B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	4	Plant native woodland on appropriate LA owned lands.	This action is likely to have a positive environmental effect on many environmental factors. However, the action could also have uncertain effects for existing biodiversity.	**LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3)		**B** (B1, B2, B3)	**PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	5	Major Emergency Plan - co-ordinate update of emergency response plans and revise	This action will result in likely positive effects for population and human health. No likely	**PHH** (PHH2)			**B** (B1, B2,B3) **PHH** (PHH1) **LSG** (LSG1)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
		based on learnings of response to events, having regard to environment sensitivities	adverse environmental effect is predicted.				**WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	6	Identification of Critical Infrastructure Routes on the existing network for climate related extreme weather events.	This action will identify potential for extreme weather-related issues on key infrastructure routes for improved management of and reaction to same. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**PHH** (PHH2) **MA** (MA1)			**PHH** (PHH1) **B** (B1, B2, B3) **LSG** (LSG1) **WA** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3) **MA** (MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	7	Develop and implement a County (Local) Biodiversity Action Plan, to protect and enhance local biodiversity, including climate-relevant measures	This action will ensure biodiversity is appropriately protected and managed at the site along with climate mitigation and adaptation measures. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**B** (B1, B2, B3) **CC** (CC1, CC2)			**PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WA** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
							CH (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	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.	This action will provide useful baseline data for climate risk assessment and assist to develop climate resilience measures. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1)		**B** (B1, B2, B3) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **CH** (CH1, CH2)	**PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA2, MA3, MA4) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	9	Carry out an assessment of Section 4 discharges to Water Licenses	This action will provide useful baseline data for Section 4 discharges and water licences. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**B** (B1, B3) **PHH** (PHH2) **WQ** (WQ1)			**B** (B2) **PHH** (PHH1) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	10	Support the creation of community gardens through partnership with local communities and external agencies.	This action will increase engagement with the environment and is likely to have a slight positive environmental effect on biodiversity, water management, carbon	**B** (B1, B2, B3) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2)			**PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
			sequestration, soil management, climate and air quality. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.				**CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	11	Support and facilitate the planting of groups of trees within the boundary/built footprint of existing built-up areas.	This action will increase engagement with the environment and is likely to have a slight positive environmental effect on biodiversity, water management, carbon sequestration, soil management, climate and air quality. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**B** (B2, B3) **LSG** (LSG1) **AN** (AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2)			**B** (B1) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
Goal 4 Mobilise Climate Action in Local Communities, whilst achieving a just transition **Thematic Area**	1	Installation of water refill stations at public buildings / amenity areas, to reduce the use of single use plastics.	This action will reduce the use of single use plastic and reduce the risk of improper waste disposal and thereby reduce environmental pollution. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **PHH** (PHH2) **MA** (MA3)			**B** (B1, B2,B3) **PHH** (PHH1) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
Communities: Resilience & Transition **Objective 4.1** Promote through collaboration and partnership sustainable, inclusive, and resilient communities, focusing on actions which promote health and wellbeing benefits and supports local economies.	2	Expand Trim Air Quality Project to other Decarbonising Zones	This action would provide valuable baseline data on air quality and will thereby assist in air quality reporting. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**PHH** (PHH1) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	3	Monitor implementation of flood risk management guidelines in planning applications, having regard to environmental sensitivities e.g. biodiversity, archaeology, amenity value.	Monitoring programme will lead to positive environmental consequences. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)			**PHH** (PHH1) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA2, MA3)
	4	Expand operation and availability of bike and car share schemes. Promote bike and car share scheme.	This action supports the development of bike and car share infrastructure. The provision of these proposals have the potential for likely positive effects on population and human health through the promotion of active travel modes that benefit human health. The promotion of bike and car share schemes also has potential for likely positive	**PHH** (PHH2) **AN** (AN1, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1, MA2)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **MA** (MA1) **PHH** (PHH1) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN2) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
			effects on climate change and air quality due to reduction of GHG emissions. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.				
	5	Identify and map areas most susceptible to climate related extreme weather events on the road network	This action would provide valuable baseline data on climate change susceptible areas. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**PHH** (PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA4)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA3) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	6	Promote & publicise the benefits of using the Home Energy Kits from the Library.	This action will raise awareness and provide better understanding of the energy usage at home and help improve energy efficiency. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**CC** (CC1, CC2)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	7	Increase number of safe routes to school scheme, where feasible.	This action supports the development of safe routes to school scheme infrastructure. The provision of these proposals	**PHH** (PHH2) **AN** (AN1, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA2)		**B** (B1, B2, B3) **WQ** (WQ1)	**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ2) **AN** (AN2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
			have the potential for likely positive effects on population and human health through the promotion of active travel modes that benefit human health. The promotion of this schemes also has potential for likely positive effects on climate change and air quality due to reduction of GHG emissions. However, in the absence of mitigation, infrastructure works involved as part of these proposals have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effects on biodiversity and water quality.				**MA** (MA1, MA3, MA4) **CC** (CC3) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	8	To liaise with the OPW in the identification of new or the reinforcement of existing flood defences and protection measures.	This action will enhance flood protection measures and provide likely positive effects on water management and population and human health. This action will also support to mitigate and adapt to climate change. However, in the absence of mitigation, infrastructure works for provision of flood defences	**PHH** (PHH2) **WQ** (WQ2) **MA** (MA1, MA4) **CC** (CC1, CC2)	**B** (B1, B2, B3) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1) **MA** (MA3, MA4) **LV** (LV1, LV2)	**AN** (AN1, AN2) **CH** (CH1, CH2)	**MA** (MA1) **PHH** (PHH1) **AN** (AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
			can result in a range of potential slight to significant negative environmental effects on biodiversity, water quality (run-off during construction works), lands and soils, air quality & noise, cultural heritage and landscape.				
	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	This action will enhance flood protection measures and provide likely positive effects on water management and population and human health. This action will also support to mitigate and adapt to climate change. However, in the absence of mitigation, infrastructure works for provision of flood defences can result in a range of potential negative or uncertain environmental effects on biodiversity, water quality (run-off during construction works), lands and soils, air quality & noise, cultural heritage and landscape.	**PHH** (PHH2) **WQ** (WQ2) **MA** (MA1, MA4) **CC** (CC1, CC2)	**B** (B1, B2, B3) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1) **MA** (MA3, MA4) **LV** (LV1, LV2)	**AN** (AN1, AN2) **CH** (CH1, CH2)	**PHH** (PHH1) **AN** (AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
	10	Carry out a Coastal Erosion and Flood Risk Study for County Meath and implement the recommendations while prioritising nature based solutions.	This action will enhance flood protection measures and provide likely positive effects on water management and population and human health. This action will also support to mitigate and adapt to climate change. However, in the absence of mitigation, infrastructure works for provision of flood and coastal defences can result in a range of potential negative or uncertain environmental effects on biodiversity, water quality (run-off during construction works), lands and soils, air quality & noise, cultural heritage and landscape.	**PHH** (PHH2) **WQ** (WQ2) **MA** (MA1, MA4)	**B** (B1, B2, B3) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1) **CC** (CC1, CC2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)	**AN** (AN1, AN2) **MA** (MA3) **CH** (CH1, CH2)	**MA** (MA1) **PHH** (PHH1) **AN** (AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA2)
	11	Develop and provide information on Sustainable Living to engage Council Tenants on how they can reduce consumption of energy, water and waste	This action will raise awareness and provide better understanding of the energy usage, water consumption and waste generation at home and help improve energy efficiency and water/water management. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA3, MA4)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2) **CH** (CH1, CH2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
							LV (LV1, LV2)
	12	Promote, support the Sustainable Energy Communities Programme and deliver workshops	This action will raise awareness and provide better understanding of the energy usage and help improve energy efficiency. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.				**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	13	Administer and support Strand 1 & 1A of Community Climate Action Programme to deliver selected Climate Action projects.	This action will support to build low carbon communities. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**CC** (CC1, CC2)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	14	Encourage all events approved by MCC to incorporate sustainability and integrated consideration for biodiversity	This action will incorporate sustainability and increase awareness of biodiversity and receiving environment as a	**B** (B3)			**B** (B1, B2) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
		and other environmental sensitives	whole. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.				**WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	15	Guided by the Memorandum of understanding signed between the GAA and CCMA, towards working together on sustainability and climate action projects, engage with the Green Club Programme through a nominated lead, working with the CARO and GAA, in the promotion and support of projects by participating clubs, to meet the objectives, and during key phases, of the programme to 2029	No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**CC** (CC1, CC2,)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	16	Develop and introduce a "Greening Festival" funding criteria for a selection of Meath-based festivals.	This action will provide overarching environmental benefits. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**B** (B3)			**B** (B1, B2) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
							AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
Goal 5 Create a culture of sustainability, promoting a circular economy throughout the County **Thematic Area** Sustainability & Resource Management **Objective 5.1** Support circular economy initiatives and infrastructure, focusing on	1	Increase use of recycling and recovery for bulky household items, hazardous waste, electrical waste and green waste.	This action will provide behavioural change and raise awareness on circular economy principles. This action will result in reduction of GHG emissions and provide likely positive effects for climate change and waste management. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA3)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	2	Increase kerbside collection of Household Organic Waste using Brown Bin Scheme. Countywide Awareness Campaign in relation to roll out of Brown Bin using Radio, Print and social media	This action will provide behavioural change and raise awareness on proper waste segregation. This action will result in reduction of GHG emissions and provide likely positive effects for climate change and waste management.	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA3)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA4)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
prevention, reuse, repair and recycling and promote green business opportunities.			No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.				**CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	3	Support the establishment of 'Circular Economy Hubs' that act as physical material hubs for the drop-off and recirculation of materials and products from and for both commercial and residential activities	This action will provide behavioural change and raise awareness on circular economy principles. This action will result in reduction of GHG emissions and provide likely positive effects for climate change and waste management. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA3)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	4	Engage with businesses and residents to support adoption of reused and recycled materials	This action will provide behavioural change and raise awareness on circular economy principles. This action will result in reduction of GHG emissions and provide likely positive effects for climate change and waste management. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA3)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	5	Support locally produced sustainable food products and promote sustainable farm practices.	No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **PHH** (PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
							AN (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	6	Provision of a 2 Day Green for Business Environmental Audit amongst small businesses in the County (1-50 employees).	The audit process will help to raise awareness amongst small businesses on measures to reduce carbon emissions. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	7	Support business in their transition via Government initiatives e.g., green for micro	This action will support to build low carbon communities and will not result in adverse environmental effects. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
							LV (LV1, LV2)
	8	Encourage and promote projects that will contribute positively and grow the circular and bioeconomy to promote sustainable rural and urban low carbon economic development	This action will support to build low carbon communities and will not result in adverse environmental effects. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3) **MA** (MA1)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **MA** (MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	9	Promotion of local jobs and local workspaces to reduce the amount of commuting outside of the county.	This action will promote opportunities for local jobs and reduce travel based emissions. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**PHH** (PHH2) **AN** (AN1, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2, CC3) **MA** (MA1)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN4) **MA** (MA2, MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	10	Support development of enterprise hubs to facilitate remote working	This action will promote opportunities for remote working and reduce travel based emissions. However, in the absence of mitigation, works involved as part of these proposals have the potential for uncertain	**AN** (AN1, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1)		**B** (B1, B2, B3) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN2) **MA** (MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)	**PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **AN** (AN3) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
			environmental effects on biodiversity, water quality (run-off during construction works), air quality & noise, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape.				
	11	Implement improved management of construction and demolition (C&D) waste from LA activities.	This action will provide behavioural change and raise awareness on circular economy principles. This action will result in reduction of GHG emissions and provide likely positive effects for climate change and waste management. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA3)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)
	12	In4Green Urbact Network Project: Complete the Integrated Action Plan for Navan. (Plan objectives 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)	This action supports the development of active travel infrastructure and high quality public transport services. The provision of active travel proposals have the potential for likely positive effects on population and human health and through the promotion of active travel modes that benefit human health. The promotion	**PHH** (PHH2) **AN** (AN1, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA1, MA2)		**B** (B1, B2, B3) **WQ** (WQ1)	**PHH** (PHH1) **CC** (CC3) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ2) **AN** (AN2) **MA** (MA3, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)

Strategic Goals	No.	Action	Potential Environmental Effects	Potential Positive Effects on Environmental Theme (& SEO)	Potential Negative Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Uncertain Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO	Not Likely / Neutral Effects on Environmental Theme & SEO
			of modal shift also has potential for likely positive effects on climate change and air quality due to reduction of GHG emissions. However, in the absence of mitigation, works involved as part of these proposals have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effects on biodiversity, water quality (run-off during construction works), air quality & noise, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape & visual.				
	13	Develop a waste management plan with particular attention to the circular economy principles. Promotion of the circular economy e.g., recycling facilities / repair hubs, and Bike repair days to be organised. On street waste segregation to be trialled.	This action will provide behavioural change and raise awareness on circular economy principles. This action will result in reduction of GHG emissions and provide likely positive effects for climate change and waste management. No likely adverse environmental effect is predicted.	**CC** (CC1, CC2) **MA** (MA3)			**B** (B1, B2, B3) **PHH** (PHH1, PHH2) **LSG** (LSG1) **WQ** (WQ1, WQ2) **AN** (AN1, AN2, AN3, AN4) **CC** (CC3) **MA** (MA1, MA2, MA4) **CH** (CH1, CH2) **LV** (LV1, LV2)

Appendix 9.1:

Protective Environmental Policies and Objectives from the Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027

Environmental Protective Policies and Objectives for the purposes of Mitigation

The following is a list of the key environmental protective policies (Table 9.1A) and objectives (Table 9.1B) 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 9.1A Key Environmental Protective Policies in the Meath Development Plan 2021-2027

Theme	Protective Policies
Chapter 01: Introduction	
International Guidance	INT POL 1: *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.*
Chapter 05: Movement Strategy	
Integration of Sustainable Land Use and Transport Planning	MOV POL 3: *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.*
Meath Road Safety Strategy	MOV POL 25: *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.*
Chapter 06: Infrastructure Strategy	
Water Conservation	INF POL 7: *To continue to support Irish Water's Water Conservation Programme.*
Water and Public Health	INF POL 8: *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.*
Protection of Water Resources	INF POL 10: *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.*
Wastewater Capacity & Access	INF POL 12: *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.*
Surface Water Quality	INF POL 15: *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.*
Surface Water Management	INF POL 16: *To ensure that all planning applications for new development have regard to the surface water management policies provided for in the GDSDS.*
Surface Water Drainage and Flood Management	INF POL 17: *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*

Theme	Protective Policies
	of foul and surface water drainage networks where feasible and undertake drainage network upgrades to help remove surface water misconnection and infiltration.
Flood Risk Management	INF POL 18: *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.*
Flood Risk Assessment	INF POL 20: *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.*
Surface Water Liaison	INF POL 21: *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.*
Riparian Corridor	INF POL 22: *To retain a strip of 10 metres on either side of all channels/flood defence embankments where required, to facilitate access thereto.*
River Basin Management and Groundwater Protection	INF POL 32: *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 stakeholders, the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and ground waters throughout the County.*
Protection of Salmonid Water Courses	INF POL 33: *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.*
Renewable Energy Sources and Protection of the Environment	INF POL 34: *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.*
Chapter 07: Community Building Strategy	
Open space and Protection of Natura Sites	SOC POL 39: *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.*
Chapter 08: Cultural and Natural Heritage Strategy	
Protection of Sites, Monuments, Places, Areas or Objects of Archaeology Heritage Significance	HER POL 1: *To protect sites, monuments, places, areas or objects of the following categories:* • *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;*

Theme	Protective Policies
	• *Monuments and places included in the Record of Monuments and Places as established under the National Monuments Acts;* • *Historic monuments and archaeological areas included in the Register of Historic Monuments as established under the National Monuments Acts;* • *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;* • *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.*
Protection of Archaeological Heritage	HER POL 3: *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.*
Protection of Archaeological Heritage	HER POL 4: *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 a density of known archaeological monuments and history of discovery as identified by a suitably qualified archaeologist.*
Protection of Architectural Heritage	HER POL 13: *To protect and preserve in situ all surviving elements of medieval town defences.*
Protection of Architectural Heritage	HER POL 14: *To protect and conserve the architectural heritage of the County and seek to prevent the demolition or inappropriate alteration of Protected Structures.*
Protection of Protected Structures	HER POL 16: *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.*
Protection of Protected Structures	HER POL 17: *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.*
Protection of Architectural Conservation Areas	HER POL 19: *To protect the character of Architectural Conservation Areas in Meath.*
Protection of Architectural Heritage	HER POL 21: *To encourage the retention, sympathetic maintenance and sustainable re-use of historic buildings, including vernacular dwellings or*

Theme	Protective Policies
	farm buildings and the retention of historic streetscape character, fabric, detail and features.
Protection of Landscape Heritage	HER POL 26: *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.*
Protection of Natural Heritage	HER POL 27: *To protect, conserve and enhance the County's biodiversity where appropriate.*
Protection of Natural Heritage	HER POL 28: *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.*
Protection of Habitats and Species, including European Sites	HER POL 31: *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 (EcIA), Screening Statement for Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment, Natura Impact Statement (NIS), species surveys etc. (as appropriate).*
Protection of European Sites	HER POL 32: *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 out to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, in consultation with National Parks and Wildlife.*
Liaison in relation to Protection of sites of European and National Designation	HER POL 33: *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.*
Protection of Biodiversity	HER POL 35: *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.*
Liaison in relation to Protection of Protected Plants, Animals and Birds	HER POL 36: *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.*
Protection of Woodlands, hedgerows and trees	HER POL 37: *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*

Theme	Protective Policies
	unavoidable, mitigation by provision of the same type of boundary will be required.
Planting of Native Species	HER POL 38: *To promote and encourage planting of native hedgerow species in new developments and as part of the Council's own landscaping works.*
Protection of Townland Boundary Heritage	HER POL 39: *To recognise the archaeological importance of townland boundaries including hedgerows and promote their protection and retention.*
Protection of Trees and Woodlands	HER POL 40: *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.*
Control of Invasive Species	HER POL 43: *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.*
Management of Invasive Species	HER POL 44: *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.*
Protection of Geological Sites and Heritage	HER POL 46: *To maintain the geological and geomorphological heritage values of County Geological Sites listed in Table 8.7* (of the Meath County 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: *To protect the ecological, recreational, educational, amenity and flood alleviation potential of navigational and non-navigational waterways within the County, towpaths and adjacent wetlands.*
Protection of Wetlands	HER POL 48: *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.*
Protection of Coastal Zones	HER POL 49: *To protect the character, visual, recreational, ecological and amenity value of the coast and provisions for public access, in assessing proposals for development.*
Protection of Natural Coastal Defences	HER POL 50: *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.*
Protection of Landscape and Landscape Character	HER POL 52: *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.*

Theme	Protective Policies
Chapter 09: Rural Development Strategy	
Development Management Standards and Environmental Protection	RD POL 44: *To ensure that new development meets the highest standards in terms of environmental protection.*
Protection of Groundwater	RD POL 45: *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.*
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: *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.*

Table 9.1B 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: *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.*
Sustainable Water Conservation	INF OBJ 7: *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.*
Sustainable Ground and Surface Water Protection	INF OBJ 8: *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.*
Surface and Ground Water Protection	INF OBJ 11: *To ensure that all development shall connect to the public foul sewer network where available within the County.*
Surface and Ground Water Protection	INF OBJ 18: *To ensure that new developments provide for the separation of foul and surface water drainage networks within application site boundaries.*

Meath Development Plan 2021-2027 Theme	Protective Objectives
Surface and Ground Water Protection	INF OBJ 19 : *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.*
Flood Risk Management	INF OBJ 20: *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.*
Protection of Floodplains	INF OBJ 21: *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).*
Protection of Floodplains, Wetlands and Coastal Areas	INF OBJ 23: *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.*
Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems	INF OBJ 25: *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 appropriate, for new development or for extensions to existing developments, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks.*
Improve Water Quality	INF OBJ 29: *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.*
Protection of Natural Coastal Defences	INF OBJ 30: *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.*
Protection of Coastal Landscape and Visual Amenity	INF OBJ 34: *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.*
Protection of Groundwater	INF OBJ 37: *To implement the recommendations of the Meath Groundwater Protection Scheme(s).*
Protection of Riparian Corridors	INF OBJ 38: *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*

Meath Development Plan 2021-2027 Theme	Protective Objectives
	riparian buffer strip from top of bank to either side of all watercourses is required as a minimum outside of urban areas.
Renewable Energy Sources and Protection of the Environment	INF OBJ 39: *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.*
Waste management and Protection of Human Health	INF OBJ 59: *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.*
Enhance Waste Recovery / Recycling	INF OBJ 67: *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.*
Mitigation and Reduction of Adverse Noise Impacts	INF OBJ 73: *To support and facilitate the preparation of strategic noise maps and action plans, in conjunction with EMRA, that support proactive measures to avoid, mitigate and minimise noise, in all instances where it is likely to have adverse impacts.*
Mitigation and Reduce Light Pollution	INF OBJ 74: *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.*
Chapter 08 Cultural and Natural Heritage Strategy	
Protection of Recorded Monument or Zone of Archaeological Potential	HER OBJ 2: *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 detraction from the monument or its setting.*
Protection of Archaeological Landscape	HER OBJ 3: *To protect important archaeological landscapes from inappropriate development.*
Protection of Architectural Conservation Area	HER OBJ 17: *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.*
Protection of Architectural Conservation Area	HER OBJ 22: *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*

Meath Development Plan 2021-2027 Theme	Protective Objectives
	and photographic survey, condition report and architectural heritage assessment.
Protection of Industrial Heritage	HER OBJ 26: *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.*
Protection of Heritage Landscape	HER OBJ 28: *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.*
Protection of Heritage Landscape	HER OBJ 29: *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.*
Protection of European Sites	HER OBJ 33: *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 Natura 2000 site(s), either individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, in view of the site's conservation objectives.*
Protection of European and National Designated Sites	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.*
Protection of Protected Plants, Animals and Birds	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.*
Protection of Landscape and Landscape Character	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.*
Protection of Protected Views and Prospects	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.*

Meath Development Plan 2021-2027 Theme	Protective Objectives
Protection of Features Important to Coherence of the Natura 2000 Network	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.*
Chapter 09: Rural Development Strategy	
Protection of Aquifers and Water Sources	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.*
Protection of European Sites	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.*
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.
Chapter 11: Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives	
Protection of Trees and Hedgerows	DM OBJ 11: *Existing trees and hedgerows of biodiversity and/or amenity value shall be retained, where possible*

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