

SEA ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

APPENDIX II – NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

FOR THE

ROSCOMMON TOWN LOCAL AREA PLAN 2024-2030

for: Roscommon County Council

Áras an Chontae
Roscommon
County Roscommon



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Section 1 Introduction and Terms of Reference

This is the Non-Technical Summary of the Environmental Report for the Roscommon Local Area Plan 2024-2030 (hereafter referred to as 'the Plan'). The purpose of the Environmental Report is to provide a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the adoption and implementation of the Plan. The Environmental Report has been prepared as part of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process for the Plan.

What is SEA?

SEA is a systematic process of predicting and evaluating the likely environmental effects of implementing a proposed plan, or other strategic action, in order to ensure that these effects are appropriately addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision-making on a par with economic, social and other considerations.

Why is SEA needed? The Benefits

SEA is the planning authority's and the public's guide to what are generally the best areas for development in the town.

SEA enables the planning authority to direct development towards robust, well-serviced and connected areas in the town – thereby facilitating the general avoidance of incompatible development in the most sensitive, least well-serviced and least well-connected areas, in the town and beyond.

SEA provides greater certainty to the public and to developers. Plans are more likely to be adopted without delays or challenges and planning applications are more likely to be granted permission. Environmental mitigation is more likely to cost less.

The Plan directs incompatible development away from the most sensitive areas in the town and focuses on directing compact, sustainable development within the existing envelope of the Plan area. Development of these generally more robust, well-serviced and well-connected areas of the town will contribute towards environmental protection and sustainable development, including climate mitigation and adaptation.

Compact development can be accompanied by placemaking initiatives to enable the town to become a more desirable place to live – so that it maintains populations and services.

Compatible sustainable development in the town's sensitive areas is also provided for, subject to various requirements relating to environmental protection and management being met.

How does the SEA work?

All of the main environmental issues in the area were assembled and considered by the team who prepared the Plan. This helped them to devise a Plan that contributes towards the protection and management of environmental sensitivities. It also helped to identify wherever potential conflicts between the Plan and the environment exist and enabled these conflicts to be mitigated.

The SEA was scoped in consultation with designated environmental authorities.

What is included in the Environmental Report that accompanies the Plan?

- A description of the environment and the key environmental issues;
- A description and assessment of alternatives for the Plan;
- An assessment of the provisions of the Plan; and,
- Mitigation measures, which will avoid/reduce the environmental effects of implementing the Plan and will contribute towards compliance with important environmental protection legislation.

Difficulties Encountered during the SEA process

No significant difficulties have been encountered during the undertaking of the assessment.

What happens at the end of the process?

An SEA Statement is prepared which summarises, inter alia, how environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan.

Section 2 The Plan

2.1 Introduction

The Roscommon Town Local Area Plan (LAP) 2024-2030 is a statutory document providing a six-year framework for the planned, co-ordinated and sustainable development of Roscommon Town. The Plan sets out a strategic vision for the development of Roscommon Town to 2029 and beyond, providing a policy objective-based framework to support its implementation. Principally, the Plan sets out where new development should take place and what is needed in terms of investment and public infrastructure to deliver the plan in partnership with all relevant stakeholders and the local community.

The Plan comprises the 'Written Statement', which sets out the vision for the town and the specific policy objective base to guide its future development. It also includes map detail, including a land use zoning map and a flood risk map. Appendices to the Plan include a Planning and Infrastructural Assessment and a Record of Protected Structures, The Plan is also accompanied by the requisite statutory Environmental Reports prepared in accordance with EU Planning and Environment related Directives, including this SEA Environmental Report.

2.2 Strategic Vision and Objectives

The Roscommon Town Local Area Plan provides a framework to deliver on a vision for Roscommon town to: "Allow Roscommon to harness its unique heritage and logistically advantageous location in order to develop as a vibrant destination, capable of attracting new enterprise, new residents and new employment opportunities. Roscommon town will serve as an exemplar sustainable community, where civic pride and carbon reduction are promoted, to create a modern, accessible and liveable town centre which respects its heritage and embraces its future."

The strategic vision for the development of Roscommon town aligns with overarching policies at national and regional level, as well as with the recently adopted Roscommon County Development Plan 2022 – 2028. The County Development Plan includes the following strategic objectives for the future growth and development of Roscommon town:

- To ensure that the growth planned for the town up to 2030 and beyond occurs in a sustainable and sequential manner, while prioritising a low carbon, compact, consolidated and connected pattern of development.
- To develop Roscommon as a vibrant and culturally rich town supported by an inclusive sustainable residential community.
- To create a distinct sense of place and community in which people will continue to choose to live, work, do business and visit. Movement, connectivity and permeability to key destinations within the town and wider region will be prioritised and a greater emphasis on safe active transport routes and an enhanced public transport network.
- To deliver and facilitate the regeneration and redevelopment of Core Regeneration Areas in tandem with a radically improved public realm and rejuvenated town centre while having regard to and optimising the heritage assets of the town.
- Enhance and build on Roscommon's role as the primary location in the county for the service and administration sector.

In recognition of the vital role that Roscommon serves as the administrative capital of the County, the Plan aims to both strengthen and develop the town's economic, social and cultural infrastructure for the benefit of its resident population and wider catchment.

2.3 Strategic work undertaken by the Council to ensure contribution towards environmental protection and sustainable development

Far in advance of the placing of the Draft Plan on public display, Roscommon County Council undertook various works in order to inform the preparation of the Plan.

Strategic work undertaken by the Council includes background work in relation to Plan provisions, including those relating to:

- Development Strategy;
- Population, Housing and Compact Growth Climate Action;
- Town Centre and Regeneration;
- Economic Development;
- Infrastructure and Transport;
- Built and Natural Heritage;
- Climate Action and Flood Risk Assessment;
- Social and Community Infrastructure; and
- Land Use Zoning.

The undertaking of this SEA process was part of this strategic work and contributed towards the integration of environmental considerations into individual Plan provisions.

2.4 Relationship with other relevant Plans and Programmes

It is acknowledged that many of the major issues affecting Roscommon's development are contingent on national policy and government funding.

The Plan sits within a hierarchy of statutory documents setting out public policy for, among other things, land use planning, infrastructure, sustainable development, tourism, environmental protection and environmental management. The Plan must comply with relevant higher-level strategic actions and may, in turn, guide lower-level strategic actions. These documents include plans and programmes such as those referred to throughout this summary. These documents have been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant.

The National Planning Framework sets out Ireland's planning policy direction for the years 2018-2040. The National Planning Framework is to be implemented through Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and lower tier Development Plans and Local Area Plans. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region sets out objectives for land use planning, tourism, infrastructure, sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been subject to environmental assessment and must be implemented through the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028, which sets out the overarching development strategy for the County, and the Local Area Plan.

In order to be realised, projects included in the Local Area Plan (in a similar way to other projects from any other sector) will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework.

Section 3 The Environmental Baseline

3.1 Introduction

The summary of the environmental baseline of the Plan area is described in this section. This baseline together with the Strategic Environmental Objectives, which are identified in Section 3.11, is used in order to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan and in order to determine appropriate monitoring measures.

3.2 Likely Evolution of the Environment in the Absence of the Plan

In the absence of a new Local Area Plan, the framework for development across the Plan area would be provided by the County Development Plan and other related documents. There would be no Local Area Plan to provide additional detail beyond that provided already through the existing planning framework as how to achieve sustainable development and environmental protection and management in the town.

As a result, there would be both:

- A decreased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of the positive environmental effects identified by this assessment occurring; and;
- An increased likelihood in the extent, magnitude and frequency of the adverse environmental effects identified by this assessment occurring.

3.3 Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna

Key ecological sensitivities within and surrounding the Plan area include:

- **Lough Ree Special Area of Conservation, Special Protected Area and proposed Natural Heritage Area** located c.2 km to the east of the Plan area;
- **Aquatic and riverine ecology associated with the area's streams and rivers, their tributaries and riparian buffer zones**, including the **River Jiggy** (flowing north-west to south through the east of the Plan area) and **River Hind** (flowing west to east through the south of the Plan area) their tributaries and riparian buffer zones;
- **Locally important habitats within the Plan area**, including **Loughnaneane Turlough**, in the north-west of the Plan area and the town's network of hedgerows and tree lines, various woodlands, trees, parks, gardens, hedgerows, old buildings/stone walls, railway lines, pollinator sites and lands used for agriculture within and surrounding the Plan area, providing habitats for flora and fauna and facilitating linkages and corridors to the surrounding countryside for the wildlife; and
- **Other designated sites within 15 km of the Plan area**, including: the Ballinturly Turlough Special Area of Conservation and proposed Natural Heritage Area located c.4 km south-west of the Plan area; and River Suck Callows Special Protection Area and Natural Heritage Area, located c.6 km to the south-west of the Plan area.

Designated sites in the wider area include Special Areas of Conservation¹ (SACs) and Special Protection Areas² (SPAs). These are mapped on Figure 3.1. There are no SACs or SPAs designated within the Plan area, however, there are a total of 15 European sites (11 SACs and four SPAs) within 15 km of the Plan boundary.

CORINE³ land cover mapping is shown on Figure 3.2 and identifies the land cover within central parts of the Plan area as urban fabric with adjacent industrial or commercial units in the east of the Plan area and

¹ SACs have been selected for protection under the European Council Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (92/43/EEC) due to their conservation value for habitats and species of importance in the European Union. The Habitats Directive seeks to establish Natura 2000, a network of protected areas throughout the EU. It is the responsibility of each member state to designate SACs to protect habitats and species, which, together with the SPAs designated under the 1979 Birds Directive, form Natura 2000. The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 consolidate the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 to 2005 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Control of Recreational Activities) Regulations 2010. The Regulations have been prepared to address several judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) against Ireland, notably cases C-418/04 and C-183/05, in respect of failure to transpose elements of the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive into Irish law.

² SPAs have been selected for protection under the 1979 European Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) - referred to as the Birds Directive - due to their conservation value for birds of importance in the EU.

³ The CORINE (Coordinated Information on the Environment) land cover data series was devised as a means of compiling geo-spatial environmental information in a standardised and comparable manner. CORINE has become a key data source for informing environmental and planning policy on a national and European level. The main land cover type in Ireland is agricultural land including forestry, which accounts for two-thirds of the national landmass. Most of this is permanent grassland pastures. Peatlands and wetlands are the second most widespread land cover type, covering almost one-fifth of the country. While forested areas cover about one-tenth of the country. Despite rapid development in the past two decades, Ireland's landscape is predominantly rural and agricultural.

sport and leisure facilities sites in the south-east of the Plan area. The surrounding hinterland consists mainly of pastures. There is also an area of mixed forest to the south-east of the Plan area likely, considering the CORINE data, to contain Annex I Habitats.

Existing Problems

Ireland's Article 17 report on the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland (DCHG, 2019) identifies various Irish, EU-protected habitats and species to be of unfavourable status and many to be still declining, although it also identifies that a range of positive actions are underway. Ireland's Article 12 Birds Directive Reports and the 6th National Report under the Convention of Biological Diversity identify similar issues.

The Plan includes measures to contribute towards the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna and associated ecosystem services.

Previous changes in land uses arising from human development have resulted in a loss of biodiversity and flora and fauna; however, legislative objectives governing biodiversity and fauna were not identified as being conflicted with. The Plan includes measures to contribute towards the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna and associated ecosystem services.

3.4 Population and Human Health

As per preliminary Census 2022 data, a population of 6,555 persons was recorded within the Plan area. The Core Strategy in the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 provides for a population increase of 1,608 persons for Roscommon over the six-year Plan period.⁴

Roscommon Town is the county town of County Roscommon and is designated as a 'Key Town' in the Northern and Western RSES, supporting the regional driver role of Athlone, and acting as an important local driver providing a range of functions for its resident population and its surrounding catchment including housing, employment, services, retail and leisure opportunities.

The population provided for in the Plan will interact with various environmental components. Potential interactions include:

- Recreational and development pressure on habitats and landscapes;
- Contribution towards increase in demand for waste water treatment at the municipal level;
- Contribution towards increase in demand for water supply and associated potential impact of water abstraction;
- Potential interactions in flood-sensitive areas; and
- Potential effects on water quality.

Human health has the potential to be impacted upon by environmental vectors (i.e. 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). Hazards or nuisances to human health can arise as a result of exposure to these vectors arising from incompatible adjacent land uses for example. These factors have been considered with regard to the description of: the baseline of each environmental component; and the identification and evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan.

Existing Problems

The number of homes within the Plan area with radon levels above the reference level is within the normal range experienced in other locations across the country.

Parts of the Plan area are vulnerable to adverse effects from changes in the occurrence of severe rainfall events and associated flooding from surface water. Flooding in certain circumstances could pose a risk to human health. There is historic and predictive evidence of flooding within the Plan area.

3.5 Soil

Main soil types surrounding the built-up areas of Roscommon are luvisols (generally fertile soils, widely used for agriculture and associated with significant accumulation of clay) and peat soils (in the east and

⁴ Roscommon Town Local Area Plan 2024-2030

north-east of the Plan area). Peat soils are often indicative of areas that are the most sensitive to development due to ecological sensitivities and impeded drainage issues.

There is one designated County Geological Site occurring partially within the Plan area, namely Loughanane Turlough CGS (Site Code: RO019), located in the north-west of the Plan area.

The GSI have identified⁵ the Plan area as having mainly low levels of landslide susceptibility.

3.6 Water

Surface and Ground Water Status

Surface water at and around Roscommon Town is channelled by several rivers and streams, forming part of the Upper Shannon River Catchment. Several tributaries of the River Jiggy flow from west to east to the north, through the centre and to the south of the Plan area before joining the main channel to the east of the Plan area. The River Jiggy flows south-west before joining the River Hind to the south-east of the Plan area.

The current WFD (2016-2021) status⁶ of various sections of the rivers and streams draining the Plan area is *poor* (identified by the EPA as 'Jiggy (Hind)_010' and 'Hind_010') and *good* (identified by the EPA as 'Hind_020' and 'Cloonleigh_020'). Figure 3.3 illustrates the WFD surface water status within and surrounding the Plan area. The River Jiggy and River Hind are currently identified in the combined 2016-2021 data as being at risk of not meeting the WFD's objectives due to the damage being caused by significant pressures related to:

- Agricultural pressures
- Urban run-off pressures
- Anthropogenic and hydromorphological pressures
- Urban wastewater pressures
- River waste pressures⁷

The WFD status (2016-2021) of all groundwater underlying the Plan area is currently identified as being of *good status*, meeting the objectives of the Water Framework Directive.

Aquifer Vulnerability and Productivity

Aquifer vulnerability refers to the ease with which pollutants of various kinds can enter into groundwater. The aquifers underlying the Plan area are as a mix of vulnerabilities:

- *High and Moderate vulnerability* within central parts of the Plan area; and
- *Extreme vulnerability and Extreme (Rock at or near surface or karst) vulnerability*, in parts of the west and north-west and south-west of the Plan area.

Flooding

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) document accompanies this SEA Environmental Report and the Plan. Requirements in relation to SFRA are provided under 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Environment and Office of Public Works, 2009) and associated Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Circular PL2/2014.

Flood risk management and drainage provisions are already in force through the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 and related provisions have been integrated into the Plan. In addition, land use zoning within the Plan area has been informed by the SFRA process and associated delineation of flood risk zones.

Historical flooding is documented by the Office of Public Works. The most significant source of flood risk within the Plan area is from fluvial (from rivers and streams), however there are other sources of flooding present including pluvial (from rainwater) and risk from surface drainage systems.

Predictive flood risk mapping is also available from the Office of Public Works and is included in the SFRA document that accompanies the Plan.

⁵ <https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/programmes-and-projects/geohazards/projects/Pages/Landslide-Susceptibility-Mapping.aspx>

⁶ As per EPA's WFD Status 2016-2021 classification (<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>).

⁷ <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/Water>

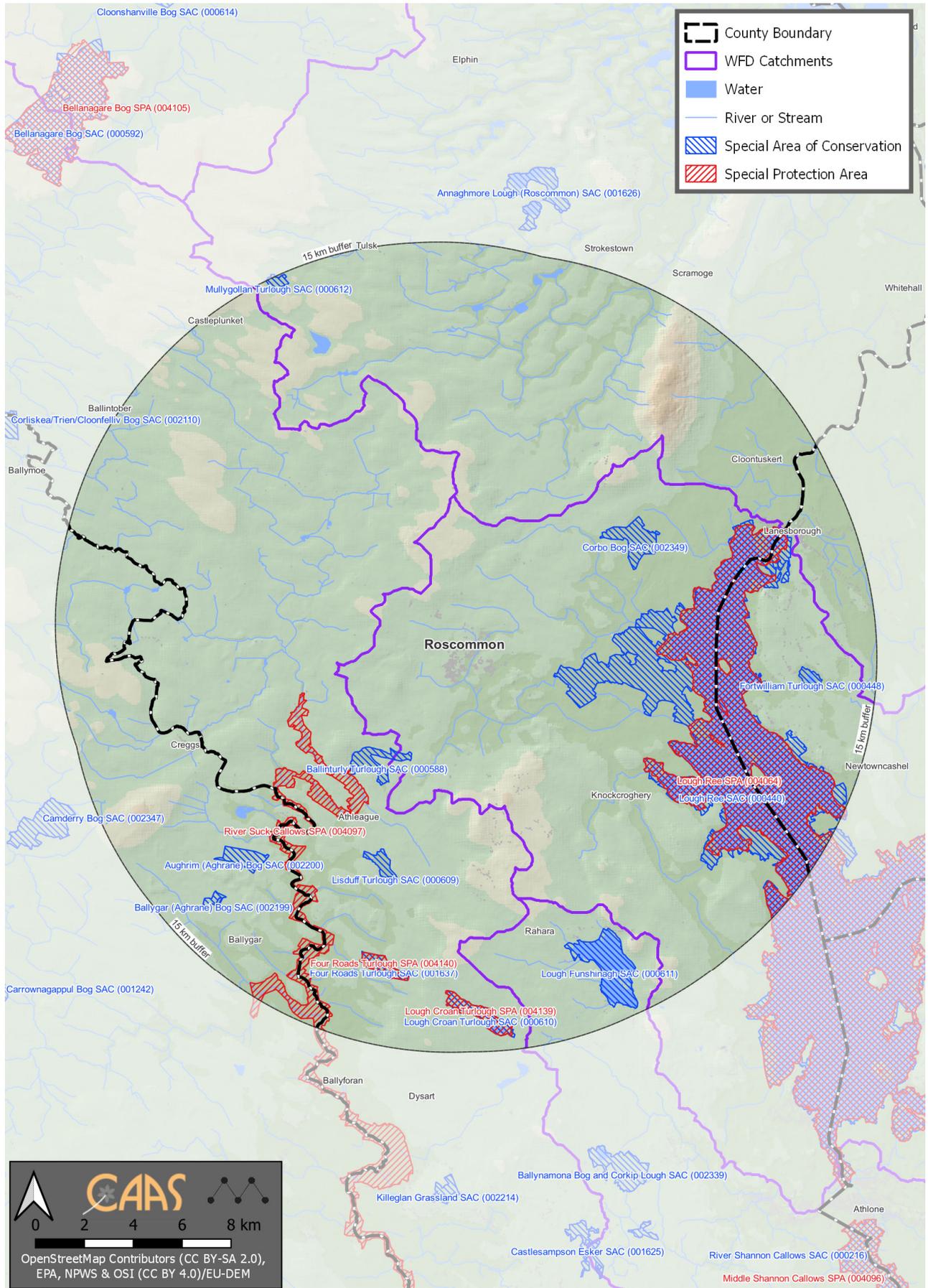


Figure 3.1 European Sites within and within 15 km buffer of Roscommon Town Plan area

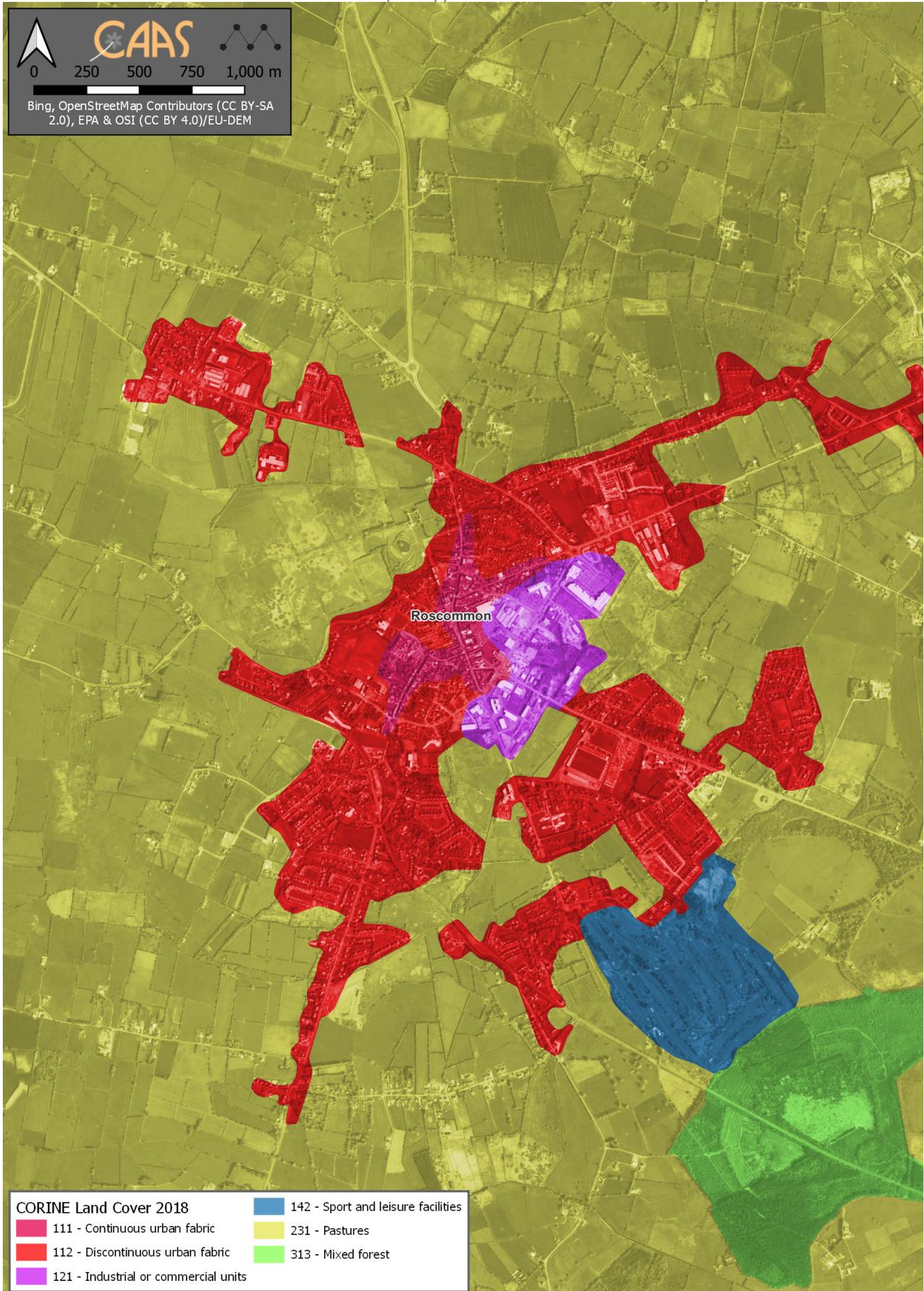


Figure 3.2 CORINE Land Cover Mapping 2018



Figure 3.3 Surface Water Status (2016-2021)

3.7 Air and Climatic Factors

Climate mitigation describes the action to reduce the likelihood of climate change occurring or reduce the impact if it does occur. This can include reducing the causes of climate change (e.g. emissions of greenhouse gases) as well as reducing future risks associated with climate change.

The National Climate Action Plan 2024 provides a detailed plan for taking decisive action to achieve a 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and setting Ireland on a path to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050, as committed to in the Programme for Government and set out in the Climate Act 2021. The Plan lists the actions needed to deliver on climate targets and sets indicative ranges of emissions reductions for each sector of the economy. It will be updated periodically, to ensure alignment with legally binding economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral ceilings.

Climate adaptation is a change in natural or human systems in response to the impacts of climate change. These changes moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities and can be in response to actual or expected impacts.

The National Adaptation Framework Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, 2024), sets out the national strategy to reduce the vulnerability of the country to the negative effects of climate change and to avail of positive impacts. The National Adaptation Framework outlines a whole of government and society approach to climate adaptation. Under the Framework, a number of Government Departments will be required to prepare sectoral adaptation plans in relation to a priority area that they are responsible for.

The Roscommon County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 features a range of actions across sectors including: seafood, agriculture, forestry, biodiversity, built and archaeological heritage, transport infrastructure, electricity and gas networks, communication networks, flood risk management, water quality, water services infrastructure and health. The Strategy seeks to:

- Ensure a proper comprehension of the key risks and vulnerabilities of climate change;
- Bring forward the implementation of climate resilient actions in a planned and proactive manner; and
- Ensure that climate adaptation considerations are mainstreamed into all plans and policies and integrated into all operations and functions of Roscommon County Council.

The Roscommon County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 will contribute towards addressing the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, climate change adaptation, and strengthening the alignment between national climate policy and the delivery of local climate action. The Roscommon County Council Climate Action Plan covers the following areas:

- An emphasis on a place-based approach to climate action, delivering a better understanding of greenhouse gas emissions and climate-related risks at a local level;
- Context-specific conditions and locally-tailored policy making;
- Evidence-based and integrated climate action through adaptation and mitigation measures, centred around an understanding of the role of the Council in climate action; and
- Strategic direction at local and community levels on the delivery of the national climate objective.

The EPA's (2022) *Air Quality in Ireland 2021* identifies that:

- Air quality in Ireland is generally good, however, there are localised issues.
- Ireland met all of its EU legal requirements in 2021 but it failed to meet the new WHO-based guideline levels for Health in 2021.
- Air quality monitoring results in 2021 showed that fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) mainly from burning solid fuel, and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) mainly from road transport, remain the main threats to good air quality.
- It is estimated that there are approximately 1,300 premature deaths annually in Ireland due to poor air quality from fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}).

With regards to solutions, the report identifies that:

- Ireland and Europe should move towards achieving the health-based WHO air quality guidelines.
- The planned National Clean Air Strategy for Ireland needs to be published and fully implemented.
- Local Authorities must provide more resources to increase air enforcement activities.
- National investment in clean public transport is needed across the country.

3.8 Material Assets

Other material assets, in addition to those referred to below, covered by the SEA include archaeological and architectural heritage (see Section 3.9) natural resources of economic value, such as water and air (see Sections 3.6 and 3.7).

Public Assets and Infrastructure

Public assets and infrastructure that have the potential to be impacted upon by the Plan, if unmitigated, include: the town of Roscommon; resources such as public open spaces, parks and recreational areas; public buildings and services; transport and utility infrastructure (electricity, telecommunications, water supply, waste water infrastructure etc.); and natural resources that are covered under other topics such as water and soil.

Waste Water

In July 2022, the Roscommon Town Main Drainage Scheme was upgraded with the construction of approximately 7.2 km of new sewer infrastructure and rising mains, new pumping stations and an upgrade to six of the existing storm water overflows. This project serves to safeguard the environment and provide for future growth and development in the town. It will reduce the risk of sewer flooding in the town and improve the water quality of the River Jiggy and River Hind. This strategic investment into the town's infrastructure will significantly increase the capacity of the sewer network, allowing for future population and economic growth to occur.⁸

The Plan area is served by the Roscommon Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) (Registration No. D0116-01), which has a design capacity of 9,550 Population Equivalent (PE). This WWTP is currently listed as a priority area, due to inadequate sewage collecting system failing the EU requirements (such areas are those where improvements are required to resolve urgent environmental issues).⁹ However, an Action Plan to address the issue is in place.

The Roscommon WWTP is currently fully compliant with the Emission Limit Values (ELVs) set in the Wastewater Discharge Licence as identified in the most recent available Annual Environmental Report 2022 (published in April 2023).¹⁰

As indicated by Uisce Éireann there is currently potential spare capacity available at present, however, applications to be considered on an individual basis considering their specific load requirements.¹¹

Water Supply

Uisce Éireann is responsible for providing and maintaining adequate public water supply infrastructure throughout the county.

Roscommon Town is located within the Roscommon Central Water Supply Scheme Water Resource Zone (WRZ)¹². The water is treated at Ballinagard Water Treatment Plant and produces approximately 2,553 m³/day.¹³ As identified by Uisce Éireann, there is capacity available to meet projected population growth up to 2032, although an improvement to the level of service is required.¹⁴

Under Section 58 of the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992, the EPA is required to collect and verify monitoring results for all water supplies in Ireland covered by the European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations, 2000. The EPA publishes their results in annual reports that are supported by Remedial Action Lists (RALs). The RAL identifies water supplies that are not in compliance with the

⁸ Roscommon Town Local Area Plan 2024-2030

⁹ <https://www.epa.ie/publications/compliance--enforcement/waste-water/priority-areas-list-current.php>

¹⁰ https://www.water.ie/docs/aers/2022/D0116-01_2022_AER.pdf

¹¹ <https://www.water.ie/connections/developer-services/capacity-registers/wastewater-treatment-capacity-register/roscommon/> (Published in June 2023)

¹² A Water Resource Zone (WRZ) is an independent water supply system serving a region, city, town or village and is governed by topography or the extent of the water distribution network in an area. A WRZ may include multiple Water Treatment Plants and/or sources.

¹³ Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028

¹⁴ Capacity Available to meet 2032 population targets - Level of service (LoS) improvement required. Leakage reduction and/or capital investment will be required to maintain/improve levels of service as demand increases. These proposals will be developed and prioritised through the National Water Resources Plan and investment planning process. Available:

<https://www.water.ie/connections/developer-services/capacity-registers/water-supply-capacity-register/roscommon/> (published in June 2023).

Regulations mentioned above. The Roscommon Central Regional Water Supply, serving the Plan area, is not listed on the EPA Remedial Action List (Q2 of 2023, published in September 2023).¹⁵

Waste Management

Waste management within the Plan area is guided by the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy.

Transport

Roscommon Town is strategically located near several well served transport links, including main roads N60, N61 and N63 that transverse the Plan area, providing important access and links to Galway, Athlone and throughout the County and adjoining counties. Roscommon is served by Irish Rail, with routes to Athlone, Dublin, Ballina and Westport. National, regional and local roads provide vital links between the town and retail, service and employment centres throughout the County and to adjoining counties. Bus services are provided in the town by Bus Éireann, with links to Galway, Athlone and Westport, and Local Link, with routes to surrounding towns and villages.

In February 2023, Roscommon County Council published the Roscommon Town Approaches and Movement Study, which identified measures aimed at improving the mobility network for all modes of transport, with a primary focus on sustainable modes of travel. The recommendations set out serve to guide the Council's infrastructural policy and decision making as part of future transport planning for Roscommon Town.¹⁶

Existing Problems

The provisions of the Plan will contribute towards protection of the environment with regard to impacts arising from material assets.

The provisions of infrastructure and supporting services for development, particularly water and wastewater services, is critical. Current challenges include those identified above.

3.9 Cultural Heritage

Archaeological Heritage

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) is an inventory, put on a statutory basis by amendment to the National Monuments Act 1994, of sites and areas of archaeological significance, numbered and mapped. It is available from the National Monuments Service and at archaeology.ie.

There are 25 entries to the RMP within and surrounding the Plan area, including: enclosures; ringforts; graveyards; architectural fragments and holy wells. Roscommon Castle is also identified as a National Monument in State Care (Guardianship).

Architectural Heritage

Similar to the general spatial spread of archaeological heritage, clusters of architectural heritage are indicated within the town's centre. There are currently 95 structures within the Plan area listed on the Record of Protected Structures¹⁷, including: Roscommon Castle; Roscommon Abbey; Library Buildings; Church of the Sacred Heart; and the former jailhouse overlooking Market Square.

An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or contributes to the appreciation of a Protected Structure. An ACA may or may not include Protected Structures. In an ACA, protection is placed on the external appearance of such areas or structures. The historic core of Roscommon Town (including Main Street and Market Square) is designated as an Architectural Conservation Area.

¹⁵ <https://www.epa.ie/publications/compliance--enforcement/drinking-water/annual-drinking-water-reports/epa-drinking-water-remedial-action-list-q2-of-2023.php>

¹⁶ Roscommon Town Local Area Plan 2024-2030

¹⁷ Roscommon Town Local Area Plan 2024-2030

Existing Problems

The context of archaeological and architectural heritage has changed over time however no existing conflicts with legislative objectives governing archaeological and architectural heritage have been identified.

3.10 Landscape

Roscommon Town is located within the centre of County Roscommon. Much of the area surrounding the town comprise low-lying dry grassland. Areas of raised bog and forest occur to the south of the Plan area. The River Jiggy and the tributaries of the River Hind meet within the centre of the town and flow south-east towards Lough Ree. Roscommon Town has a distinctive cultural heritage, with the remains of the Roscommon Castle to the north-western side of the town and the ruined Friary to the south-eastern side both providing an early medieval setting for the town. The Castle dates back to the 13th century and remains a key visual landmark within the town.¹⁸

Roscommon Town is located within the 'Dry Farmland' Landscape Character Type and 'Roscommon Town and Hinterland' Landscape Character Area (LCA 32), which is classified as of 'high value'.

There are two Scenic Views located within the Plan area, V17 (a view of Roscommon Castle from a point close to Loughnaneane Park/Lough Road) and V18 (a view up Main Street from a point along Golf Links Road).

3.11 Strategic Environmental Objectives

Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs) are methodological measures developed from policies that generally govern environmental protection objectives established at international, Community or Member State level e.g. the environmental protection objectives of various European Directives that have been transposed into Irish law and which are required to be implemented.

The SEOs are set out under a range of topics (see Table 3.1) and are used as standards against which the provisions of the Plan and the alternatives are 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.

Table 3.1 Strategic Environmental Objectives

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	BFF	No net contribution to biodiversity losses or deterioration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To preserve, protect, maintain and, where appropriate, enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, particularly EU designated sites and protected species Ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function Safeguard national, regional and local designated sites and supporting features which function as stepping stones for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species Enhance biodiversity in line with the National Biodiversity Strategy and its targets To protect, maintain and conserve the County's natural capital
Population and Human Health	PHH	Improve quality of life for all ages and abilities based on high-quality, serviced, well connected and sustainable residential, working, educational and recreational environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote economic growth to encourage retention of working age population and funding of sustainable development and environmental protection and management Ensure that existing population and planned growth is matched with the required public infrastructure and the required services Safeguard the County's citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and well-being

¹⁸ Roscommon CDP 2022-2028: Landscape Character Assessment
CAAS for Roscommon County Council

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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Guiding Principle	Strategic Environmental Objectives
Soil (and Land)	S	Ensure the long-term sustainable management of land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect soils against pollution, and prevent degradation of the soil resource • Promote the sustainable use of infill and brownfield sites over the use of greenfield within the County • Safeguard areas of prime agricultural land and designated geological sites
Water	W	Protection, improvement and sustainable management of the water resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the status of water bodies is protected, maintained and improved in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive • Ensure water resources are sustainably managed to deliver proposed regional and County growth targets in the context of existing and projected water supply and wastewater capacity constraints ensuring the protection of receiving environments • Avoid inappropriate zoning and development in areas at risk of flooding and areas that are vulnerable to current and future erosion, particularly coastal areas • Integrate sustainable water management solutions (such as SuDS, porous surfacing and green roofs) into development proposals
Material Assets	MA	Sustainable and efficient use of natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimise existing infrastructure and provide new infrastructure to match population distribution proposals in the County - this includes transport infrastructure • Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all which encourages a broad energy generation mix to ensure security of supply – wind, solar, hydro, biomass, energy from waste and traditional fossil fuels • Promote the circular economy, reduce waste, and increase energy efficiencies • Ensure there is adequate sewerage and drainage infrastructure in place to support new development • Reduce the energy demand from the transport sector and support moves to electrification of road and rail transport modes • Encourage the transition to a zero-carbon economy by facilitating the development of a grid infrastructure to support renewables and international connectivity. Reduce the average energy consumption per capita including promoting energy efficient buildings, retrofitting, smart- buildings, cities and grids
Air	A	Support clean air policies that reduce the impact of air pollution on the environment and public health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To avoid, prevent or reduce harmful effects on human health and the environment as a whole resulting from emissions to air from all sectors with particular reference to emissions from transport, residential heating, industry and agriculture • Maintain and promote continuing improvement in air quality through the reduction of emissions and promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency • Promote continuing improvement in air quality • Reduction of emissions of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, ammonia and fine particulate matter which are responsible for acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone pollution • Meet Air Quality Directive standards for the protection of human health — Air Quality Directive • Significantly decrease noise pollution and move closer to WHO recommended levels
Climatic Factors	C	Achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient economy that is cognisant of environmental impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To minimise emissions of greenhouse gasses • Integrate sustainable design solutions into the County's infrastructure (e.g. energy efficient buildings; green infrastructure) • Contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with national targets • Promote development resilient to the effects of climate change • Promote the use of renewable energy, energy efficient development and increased use of public transport
Cultural Heritage	CH	Safeguard cultural heritage features and their settings through responsible design and positioning of development	Protect places, features, buildings and landscapes of cultural, archaeological or architectural heritage
Landscape	L	Protect and enhance the landscape character	To implement the Plan's framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes having regard to the European Landscape Convention

Section 4 Alternatives

4.1 Introduction

The SEA Directive requires that reasonable alternatives (taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme) are identified, described and evaluated for their likely significant effects on the environment. Summaries of the alternatives for the Plan and their assessment are provided below.

4.2 Limitations in Available Alternatives

The Plan is required to be prepared by the existing, already in force, Roscommon County Development Plan and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), which specify various types of objectives that must be provided for by the Plan. The alternatives available are significantly limited by the provisions of higher-level planning objectives, including those of the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region and the County Plan. These documents set out various requirements for the content of the Plan including on topics such as land use zoning and the sustainable development of settlements, including Roscommon Town.

4.3 Summary of Description and Assessment

The preparation of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 and associated SEA process already considered various different types of alternatives, including those relating to population allocations, densities and approach to land use zoning. The selected alternatives for the County Development Plan set requirements for lower tier planning in the County and have been integrated into the Local Area Plan as appropriate. Two Development Strategy alternatives were identified and assessed for the Local Area Plan as summarised below.

Alternative Type 2 (i): "More Consolidated, More Compact"

Under this alternative Development Strategy, the Town would reach its population allocation under core strategy as contained in Chapter 2 "Chapter 2: Core Policy and Settlement Policy" of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028.

The approach under this alternative would allow for water supply, waste water, compact growth, public transport and co-ordinated development considerations to be integrated into the Plan to the highest degree. The infrastructure required to be in place to achieve the growth targets is already in place or planned under this alternative.

The development of the town centre would be more compact and sustainable under this scenario and would better support the longer-term viability of the settlement. 30% of residential units would be expected to take place in the core areas of the town. Giving a strong preference to lands that have both greater capacity to satisfy the principles of active travel and a more realistic opportunity of being developed over the lifetime of the Plan and giving a focus would be given to Opportunity sites (with clear design and uses identified– making successful applications for the sustainable, compact development of the town more likely) would allow for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town as envisaged by the wider planning framework to the greatest degree.

This alternative Development Strategy would make the greatest contribution towards the protection and management of the environment by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the Town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. The Development Strategy under this Alternative would be considered the most effective out of both

Development Strategies considered in the delivery of a sustainable, low carbon and climate resilient future for the town.

The approach under Alternative (i) 'More Consolidated, More Compact Development' would benefit the protection of various environmental components. Although potentially adverse effects associated with land use development would exist, they would be mitigated to a significant degree. Less residual environmental effects would result.

Alternative Type 2 (ii): "Less Consolidated, Less Compact"

Under this alternative Development Strategy, the Town would reach its population allocation under core strategy as contained in Chapter 2 "Chapter 2: Core Policy and Settlement Policy" of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028.

The approach under this alternative would not allow for water supply, waste water, compact growth, public transport and co-ordinated development considerations to be integrated into the Plan to the highest degree. Additional infrastructure would be required to accommodate sporadic development, more than would be required for Alternative (i) 'More Consolidated, More Compact Development' and some development may have to be serviced by private waste water treatment systems which would have to be properly maintained.

The development of the Town Centre would be less compact and less sustainable under this scenario and would not optimally support the longer-term viability of the settlement. 30% of residential development would be less likely to be achieved in core areas in comparison with Alternative (i) 'More Consolidated, More Compact Development'. Giving less of a preference to lands that have both greater capacity to satisfy the principles of active travel and a more realistic opportunity of being developed over the lifetime of the Plan and giving a less focus would to Opportunity sites (there would be no clear guidance on the design parameters or uses identified – making successful applications for the sustainable, compact development of the town less likely) would allow for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town as envisaged by the wider planning framework to a lesser degree.

This alternative Development Strategy would make less of a contribution towards the protection and management of the environment by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the Town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services. Demand to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area would be provided for. The Development Strategy under this Alternative would be considered the least effective out of both Development Strategies considered in the delivery of a sustainable, low carbon and climate resilient future for the town.

The approach under Alternative (ii) 'Less Consolidated, Less Compact' would benefit the protection of various environmental components to a lesser degree. Although potentially adverse effects associated with land use development would exist, they would be mitigated to in many cases; however, more residual environmental effects would result.

4.4 Reasons for Choosing the Selected Alternative in light of Other Reasonable Alternatives Considered

The Alternative Development Strategy selected for the Plan is Alternative (i) "More Consolidated, More Compact". This alternative was selected having regard to both:

1. The environmental effects which are identified by the SEA and are detailed above; and
2. Planning - including social and economic - effects that also were considered.

However, certain Material Alterations (Proposed Amendments No. MA43, MA45, MA46, MA48 and MA50) introduce elements of Type 2 (ii): "Less Consolidated, Less Compact" (refer also to Section 5 – instances whereby Environmental Considerations were not integrated into the Plan).

Section 5 Summary of Effects arising from Plan

Table 5.1 summarises the overall environmental effects arising from Plan provisions. The effects encompass all in-combination/cumulative effects arising from implementation of the Plan. The potentially significant adverse environmental effects (if unmitigated) arising from implementation of the Plan are detailed as are residual effects, taking into account mitigation integrated into both the Plan and the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 – see Section 6.

Environmental impacts which occur will be determined by the nature and extent of multiple or individual projects and site-specific environmental factors. Environmental impacts which occur will be determined by the nature and extent of multiple or individual projects and site-specific environmental factors. Strategic Environmental Objective (SEO) codes are taken from Table 3.1.

Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening and Stage 2 AA are being undertaken alongside the Plan. The requirement for AA is provided under the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 1992/43/EEC). The conclusion of the AA is that the Plan will not affect the integrity of the European Sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.¹⁹ The preparation of the Plan, SEA and AA has taken place concurrently and the findings of the AA have informed the SEA.

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) document accompanies this SEA Environmental Report and the Plan. Requirements in relation to SFRA are provided under 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Environment and Office of Public Works, 2009) and associated Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Circular PL2/2014. Flood risk management and drainage provisions are already in force through the County Development Plan and related provisions have been integrated into the LAP. In addition, land use zoning contained within the Plan has been informed by the SFRA process and associated delineation of flood risk zones.

Instances whereby Environmental Considerations were not integrated into the Plan – Decisions of the Members

Against the advice of the Executive, the Members decided to adopt certain Material Alterations as part of the Plan.

Material Alterations No. MA 14, 15, 35 and 36 resulted in the removal of Henry Street and Castle Lane as Opportunity Sites from the Plan. The SEA advice provided during the Plan preparation process on MA35 was that:

“They would have the potential to undermine sustainable development and proper planning, including compact growth. However, the underlying zoning of the subject lands would not change and as a result any potential effects would be mitigated.”

Material Alterations No. MA43, MA45, MA46, MA48 and MA50 relate to changes in Map 1 Land Use Zoning. The SEA advice provided during the Plan preparation process on these Material Alterations included the following:

“These Proposed Amendments would not provide the most evidence-based framework for development and have the potential to undermine sustainable development and proper planning - with potential for associated unnecessary adverse environmental effects on various environmental components, including:

- Conflict with efforts to maximise sustainable compact growth, sustainable mobility and a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society (residual effects would occur)
- Adverse impacts upon carbon emission reduction targets in line with local, national and European environmental objectives (residual effects would occur)

¹⁹ Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:

(a) no alternative solution available,
 (b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and
 (c) adequate compensatory measures in place.

- Adverse impacts upon the economic viability of providing for public assets and infrastructure (residual effects would occur)
- Effects on ecology, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats and species (residual effects would occur)
- Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces (residual effects would occur)
- Occurrence of visual impacts (residual effects would occur)
- Increased loadings on water bodies.”

Table 5.1 Overall Findings – Environmental Effects arising from Plan Provisions

Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the wider planning framework Effects include in-combination effects that are planned for through the wider planning framework including the NPF and associated NDP, the Northern and Western RSES, the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 and adjacent Development Plans and lower-tier land use plans.			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated	Likely Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects	
Biodiversity and Flora and Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards protection of ecology (including designated sites, ecological connectivity, habitats) by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the Town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. Contribution towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and associated ecosystem services, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats. Contribution towards protection and/or maintenance of biodiversity and flora and fauna by contributing towards the protection of natural capital including the environmental vectors of air, water and soil. Biodiversity and flora and fauna includes biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species (including birds and bats), listed/protected species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats (including terrestrial and aquatic habitats), and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna – including terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity and flora and fauna. Sustains existing sustainable rural management practices – and the communities who support them – to ensure the continuation of long-established managed landscapes and the flora and fauna that they contain. 	<p>Arising from both construction and operation of development and associated infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of/damage to biodiversity in designated sites (including European Sites and Wildlife Sites) and Annexed habitats and species, listed species, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats; and disturbance to biodiversity and flora and fauna; Habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, including patch size and edge effects; and Disturbance (e.g. due to noise and lighting along transport corridors) and displacement of protected species such as birds (e.g. wetland birds, swifts) and bats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of an extent of non-protected habitats and species arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces. Losses or damage to ecology (these would be in compliance with relevant legislation). 	BFF

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Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the wider planning framework Effects include in-combination effects that are planned for through the wider planning framework including the NPF and associated NDP, the Northern and Western RSES, the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 and adjacent Development Plans and lower-tier land use plans.			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated	Likely Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects	
Population and Human Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of economic growth to encourage retention of working age population and funding of sustainable development and environmental protection and management. • Contribution towards appropriate provision of infrastructure and services to existing population and planned growth by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the Town's core areas) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-serviced lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond • Contribution towards the protection of human health by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the Town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-serviced lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. • Contributes towards protection of human health as a result of contributing towards the protection of natural capital including environmental vectors, including air and water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential adverse effects arising from flood events. • Potential interactions if effects arising from environmental vectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential interactions with residual effects on environmental vectors – please refer to residual adverse effects under "Soil", "Water" and "Air and Climatic Factors" below. 	PHH
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution towards the protection of soils (including those used for agriculture) and designated sites of geological heritage by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the Town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-serviced lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. • Contribution towards the protection of the environment from contamination the highest standards of remediation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential adverse effects on the hydrogeological and ecological function of the soil resource, including as a result of development on contaminated lands. • Potential for riverbank erosion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces. • Riverbank erosion will continue to occur naturally over time and is likely to be enhanced by climate change. 	S

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Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the wider planning framework Effects include in-combination effects that are planned for through the wider planning framework including the NPF and associated NDP, the Northern and Western RSES, the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 and adjacent Development Plans and lower-tier land use plans.			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated	Likely Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects	
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards the protection of water by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the Town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-serviced lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. Contributions towards the protection of water resources including the status of surface and groundwaters and water-based designations. Contribution towards flood risk management and appropriate drainage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential adverse effects upon the status of water bodies and entries to the WFD Register of Protected Areas (ecological and human value), arising from changes in quality, flow and/or morphology. Increase in flood risk and associated effects associated with flood events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any increased loadings as a result of development to comply with the River Basin Management Plan. Flood related risks remain due to uncertainty with regard to extreme weather events – however such risks will be mitigated by measures that have been integrated into the Plan. 	W
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution towards appropriate provision of infrastructure and services to existing population and planned growth by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the Town's core areas) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-serviced lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. Contribution towards compliance with national and regional water services and waste management policies. Contribution towards increase in renewable energy use by facilitating renewable energy and electricity transmission infrastructure developments. Contribution towards limits in increases in energy demand from the transport sector by facilitating sustainable compact growth. Contribution towards reductions in average energy consumption per capita including promoting sustainable compact growth, sustainable mobility, sustainable design and energy efficiency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to provide adequate and appropriate waste water treatment (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). Failure to adequately treat surface water run-off that is discharged to water bodies (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). Failure to comply with drinking water regulations and serve new development with adequate drinking water (water services infrastructure and capacity ensures the mitigation of potential conflicts). Increases in waste levels. Potential impacts upon public assets and infrastructure. Interactions between agricultural waste and soil, water, biodiversity and human health – including as a result of emissions of ammonia from agricultural activities (e.g. manure handling, storage and spreading) and the production of secondary inorganic particulate matter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exceedance of capacity in critical infrastructure risks remain, including due to uncertainty with regard to climate – however, such risks will be mitigated by: measures, including those requiring the timely provision of critical infrastructure, and compliance with the Water Framework Directive and associated River Basin Management Plan. Residual wastes to be disposed of in line with higher-level waste management policies. Any impacts upon public assets and infrastructure to comply with statutory planning/consent-granting framework. 	MA

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Environmental Component	Environmental Effects, in combination with the wider planning framework Effects include in-combination effects that are planned for through the wider planning framework including the NPF and associated NDP, the Northern and Western RSES, the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 and adjacent Development Plans and lower-tier land use plans.			SEO Codes
	Significant Positive Effect, likely to occur	Potentially Significant Adverse Environmental Effects, if unmitigated	Likely Residual Adverse Non-Significant Effects	
Air and Climatic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution towards climate mitigation and adaptation by facilitating compact development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the Town's core areas) that are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. • In combination with other plans, programmes etc., contribution towards the objectives of the wide policy framework relating to climate mitigation and adaptation, and associated contribution towards maintaining and improving air quality and managing noise levels, including through measures relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sustainable compact growth; ○ Sustainable mobility, including walking, cycling and public transport; ○ Drainage, flood risk management and resilience; ○ Sectors including agriculture, residential heating and infrastructure; ○ Sustainable design, energy efficiency and green infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential conflict between development under the Plan and aiming to reduce carbon emissions in line with local, national and European environmental objectives. • Potential conflicts between transport emissions, including those from cars, and air quality. • Potential conflicts between increased frequency of noise emissions and protection of sensitive receptors. • Potential conflicts with climate adaptation measures including those relating to flood risk management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An extent of travel related greenhouse gas and other emissions to air. This has been mitigated by provisions which have been integrated into the Plan, including those relating to sustainable compact growth and sustainable mobility. • Interactions between noise emissions and sensitive receptors. Various provisions have been integrated into the Plan to ensure that noise levels at sensitive receptors will be minimised. 	AC
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards protection of cultural heritage elsewhere by facilitating development within the Plan area. • Contributes towards protection of cultural heritage within the Plan area by facilitating brownfield development and regeneration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential effects on protected and unknown archaeology and protected architecture arising from construction and operation activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential effects on known architectural and archaeological heritage and unknown archaeology however, these will occur in compliance with legislation. 	CH
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards protection of wider landscape and landscape designations by facilitating development within the Plan area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurrence of adverse visual impacts and conflicts with the appropriate protection of designations relating to the landscape. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscapes will change overtime as a result of natural changes in vegetation cover combined with new developments that will occur in compliance with the Plan's landscape protection measures. 	L

Section 6 Mitigation and Monitoring Measures

6.1 Mitigation

Mitigation measures are measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment of implementing the Plan. Various environmental sensitivities and issues have been communicated to the Council through the SEA, Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) processes. By integrating related recommendations into the Plan, the Council have ensured that both the beneficial environmental effects of implementing the Plan have been and will be maximised and that potential adverse effects have been and will be avoided, reduced or offset.

Mitigation was achieved through:

- Strategic work undertaken by the Council to ensure contribution towards environmental protection and sustainable development²⁰;
- Considering alternatives for the Plan²¹;
- The integration of environmental considerations into zoning provisions of the Plan²²;
- The integration of individual SEA, AA and SFRA provisions into the text of the Plan; and
- The integration of individual provisions into the text of the County Development Plan.

6.2 Monitoring

The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored. Monitoring is based around indicators that allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives identified at Table 3.1 and used in the evaluation. Monitoring indicators, targets, sources and remedial action is provided at Table 6.1 overleaf.

²⁰ Far in advance of the placing of the Draft Plan on public display, Roscommon County Council undertook various works in order to inform the preparation of the Plan.

Strategic work undertaken by the Council includes background work in relation to Plan provisions, including those relating to:

- Development Strategy;
- Population, Housing and Compact Growth Climate Action;
- Town Centre and Regeneration;
- Economic Development;
- Infrastructure and Transport;
- Built and Natural Heritage;
- Climate Action and Flood Risk Assessment;
- Social and Community Infrastructure; and
- Land Use Zoning.

The undertaking of the SEA process was part of this strategic work and contributed towards the integration of environmental considerations into individual Plan provisions.

²¹ Although strategic alternatives in relation to the content of the Plan were significantly limited for the Plan (see Section 4), as part of the Plan preparation/SEA process, the Council considered alternative Development Strategies for the Plan. These alternatives were assessed by the SEA process and the findings of this assessment informed the selection of a preferred Development Strategy, facilitating an informed choice with respect to the type of Plan that was prepared and placed on public display.

²² Environmental considerations, including those relating to ecology, cultural heritage, landscape and water, were integrated into the Plan's zoning through an interdisciplinary approach that was informed by the environmental considerations identified by the SEA, AA and SFRA processes.

Zoning has been applied in a way that primarily seeks to achieve sustainable and compact growth, taking into account the various requirements set out in the higher-level NPF, Western and Northern RSES and Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028 (for exceptions to this approach please refer to Section 5 – instances whereby Environmental Considerations were not integrated into the Plan).

Flood risk management and drainage provisions are already in force through the County Development Plan and related provisions have been integrated into the LAP. In addition, land use zoning contained within the Plan has been informed by the SFRA process and associated delineation of flood risk zones. The detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department combined with specialist input from the SFRA process facilitated zoning that helps to avoid inappropriate uses being provided for in areas of elevated flood risk.

Table 6.1 Indicators, Targets, Sources and Remedial Action

Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	BFF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition of European sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions in their land use plans and as a minimum, to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species Implement and review, as relevant, County Roscommon Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2017-2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DHLGH report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive - as required by Article 17 of the Directive (every 6 years). DHLGH National Birds Directive Monitoring Report for the under Article 12 (every 6 years) Consultations with the NPWS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where condition of European sites is found to be deteriorating this will be investigated with the Regional Assembly and the DHLGH to establish if the pressures are related to Plan actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that have included ecosystem services content, mapping and policy to protect ecosystem services when their relevant plans are either revised or drafted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include ecosystem services and green/blue infrastructure provisions in their land use plans and as a minimum, to have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species Implement and review, as relevant, County Roscommon Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2017-2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of local land use plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEAs and AAs as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen for and undertake SEA and AA as relevant for new Council policies, plans, programmes etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of preparation of local land use plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of water quality in the County's water bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included under Water below
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance of planning permissions with Plan measures providing for the protection of Biodiversity and flora and fauna – see County Development Plan Chapter 10 "Natural Heritage" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that they comply with all Plan measures providing for the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna – see County Development Plan Chapter 10 "Natural Heritage" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
Population and Human Health	PHH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by County Development Plan Chapter 6 "Economic Development" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by County Development Plan Chapter 6 "Economic Development" All citizens will have access to speeds of 30Mbps, and that 50% of citizens will be subscribing to speeds of 100Mbps (Also relevant to Material Assets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of progress on implementing Plan objectives Consultations with DECC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems Consultations with DECC
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors resulting from development permitted under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with the Health Service Executive and EPA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with the Health Service Executive and EPA

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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Monitoring of Roscommon County Council's Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of spatial plans that include specific green infrastructure mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all local level land use plans to include specific green infrastructure mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of local land use plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
Soil (and Land)	S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of population growth occurring on infill and brownfield lands compared to greenfield (also relevant to Material Assets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4% as per the NPF In accordance with National Policy Objectives 3c of the National Planning Framework, a minimum of 30% of the housing growth targeted in any settlement is to be delivered within the existing built-up footprint of the settlement To map brownfield and infill land parcels across the County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA Geoportal Compilation of greenfield and brownfield development for the DHLGH AA/Screening for AA for each application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where the proportion of growth on infill and brownfield sites is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the RSES, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly to establish reasons and coordinate actions to address constraints to doing so.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instances where contaminated material generated from brownfield and infill must be disposed of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dispose of contaminated material in compliance with EPA guidance and waste management requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review of grants of permission where contaminated material must be disposed of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with the EPA and Development Management
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental assessments and AAs as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screen for and undertake environmental assessments and AA as relevant for applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
Water	W	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of water bodies as reported by the EPA Water Monitoring Programme for the WFD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not to cause deterioration in the status of any surface water or affect the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status' Implementation of the objectives of the River Basin Management Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPA Monitoring Programme for WFD compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where water bodies are failing to meet at least good status this will be investigated with the DHLGH Water Section, the EPA Catchment Unit, the Regional Assembly and, as relevant, Uisce Éireann to establish if the pressures are related to Plan actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance. Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the WWTP or failure of the WWTP to meet Emission Limit Values, the Council will consider whether it is necessary to coordinate a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Uisce Éireann to achieve the necessary capacity.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of incompatible developments permitted within flood risk areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where planning applications are being permitted on flood zones, the Council will ensure that such grants are in compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and include appropriate flood risk mitigation and management measures.
Material Assets	MA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmed delivery of Uisce Éireann infrastructure for all key growth towns in line with Uisce Éireann Investment Plan and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission Consultations with the Uisce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in the WWTP or failure of the WWTP to meet Emission Limit Values, the Council will consider whether it is necessary to coordinate

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Environmental Component	SEO Code	Indicators	Targets	Sources	Remedial Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> prioritisation programme to ensure sustainable growth can be accommodated Number of new developments granted permission which can be adequately and appropriately served with waste water treatment over the lifetime of the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where septic tanks are proposed, for planning permission to be only granted when applications demonstrate that the outfall from the septic tank will not – in combination with other septic tanks – contribute towards any surface or ground water body not meeting the objective of good status under the Water Framework Directive Facilitate, as appropriate, Uisce Éireann in developing water and wastewater infrastructure See also targets relating to greenfield and brownfield development of land under Soil and broadband under Population and Human Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Éireann DHLGH in conjunction with Local Authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a response with the Regional Assembly, EPA and Uisce Éireann to achieve the necessary capacity.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Monitoring of Roscommon County Council's Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response.
Air	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous National Travel Survey levels NO_x, SO_x, PM10 and PM2.5 as part of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous National Travel Survey levels Improvement in Air Quality trends, particularly in relation to transport related emissions of NO_x and particulate matter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Data from the National Travel Survey EPA Air Quality Monitoring Consultations with Department of Transport and Department of Environment, Climate and Communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response. See also entry under Population and human health above
Climatic Factors	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Plan measures relating to climate reduction targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For review of progress on implementing Plan objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to climate reduction targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal systems
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of Roscommon County Council's Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 EPA Annual National Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory reporting Climate Action Regional Office Consultations with DECC (at monitoring evaluation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where targets are not achieved, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of renewable energy in transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute towards the target of the Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC), for all Member States to reach a 10% share of renewable energy in transport by facilitating the development of electricity charging and transmission infrastructure, in compliance with the provisions of the Plan 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy consumption, the uptake of renewable options and solid fuels for residential heating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote reduced energy consumption and support the uptake of renewable options and a move away from solid fuels for residential heating 		

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in the proportion of journeys made by residents of the County using private fossil fuel-based car compared to previous levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Monitoring of Roscommon County Council's Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where trends toward carbon reduction are not recorded, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above previous CSO figures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO data Monitoring of Roscommon County Council's Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above previous CSO figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response.
Cultural Heritage	CH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and the context of these entries within the surrounding landscape where relevant, from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where monitoring reveals visitor or development pressure is causing negative effects on designated archaeological or architectural heritage, the Council will work with Regional Assembly, Fáilte Ireland and the National Monuments Service and other stakeholders, as relevant, to address pressures through additional mitigation.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context protected from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their context from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with DHLGH. 	
Landscape	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of developments permitted that result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, especially with regard to landscape and amenity designations included in Land Use Plans, resulting from development which is granted permission under the Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where monitoring reveals developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, the Council will re-examine Plan provisions and the effectiveness of their implementation