



Planning Department
Roscommon County Council
Aras on Chontae
Roscommon
F42 VR98

27 April 2020

Re: Review of the Roscommon County Development Plan (2021 – 2027)

Your Ref: N/A

Our Ref: 20/79

Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) is the national earth science agency and has datasets on Bedrock Geology, Quaternary Geology, Geological Heritage Sites, Mineral deposits, Groundwater Resources and the Irish Seabed. These comprise maps, reports and extensive databases that include mineral occurrences, bedrock/mineral exploration, groundwater/site investigation boreholes, karst features, wells and springs. Please see our [website](#) for data availability and we recommend using these various data sets, when undergoing the EIAR, planning and scoping processes. Geological Survey Ireland should be referenced to as such and should any data or geological maps be used, they should be attributed correctly to Geological Survey Ireland.

A chara,

With reference to your email received on 27 March 2020, concerning the review of the existing and preparation of the Roscommon County Development Plan (2021-2027), Geological Survey Ireland (a division of Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment) welcomes the opportunity to make the following comments:

Geoheritage

County Geological Sites (CGS), as adopted under the National Heritage Plan are now included in County Development Plans and in the GIS of planning departments, to ensure the recognition and appropriate protection of geological heritage within the planning system. CGSs can be viewed online under the Geological Heritage tab on the online [Map Viewer](#). The audit for County Roscommon was published in 2012 and full report details can be found [here](#).

We note that in the current County Development Plan (2014-2020), comprehensive details of the county geological sites are included. We trust therefore the next development plan would include the same but as our datasets are updated regularly, we recommend including the most recent data in the County Development Plan. Updated information can be obtained by accessing the GSI map viewer [here](#).

Please contact Dr. Clare Glanville, Senior Geologist and IGI Lead for the Geological Heritage Programme (at clare.glanville@dcae.gov.ie, 01-678 2837) for further information or advice on CGS mitigation measures, if applicable.

Culture and Tourism

Over the past number of years geology has become a large part of Irish tourism. Ireland currently has three UNESCO Global Geoparks, with one aspiring Geopark. These Geoparks, along with other tourism initiatives such as the Wild Atlantic Way, Irelands Ancient East, and Irelands Hidden Heartlands have bolstered tourism in various parts of Ireland and helped to increase its levels in areas that were previously not as popular with tourists. We would encourage Roscommon County Council to continue this trend, and to use the geological audit information making it easily available to the general public. We would encourage geology to be a significant part of any tourism initiative that may be introduced.



Natural Resources (Minerals/Aggregates)

GSI is of the view that the sustainable development of our natural resources should be an integral part of all development plans from a national to regional to local level to ensure that the materials required for our society are available when required. GSI highlights the consideration of mineral resources and potential resources as a material asset which should be explicitly recognised within the environmental assessment process. GSI provides data, maps, interpretations and advice on matters related to minerals, their use and their development in our Minerals section of the website. The Active Quarries, Mineral Localities and the Aggregate Potential maps are available on our [Map Viewer](#).

GSI notes the current policy in the Roscommon Development plan (2014-2020), 'The Council recognizes the importance to the economy of County Roscommon of mapping and identification of areas with aggregate potential, both in terms of cost effective aggregates and avoiding sterilization of resources'. We encourage the use of the GSI data in continuing to meet this objective and would encourage that it remains a consideration for this forthcoming county development plan (2021-2027). If you would like further information in this regard, please do not hesitate to contact us.

GSI encourages that the Roscommon development plan (2021-2027) will continue to adhere to current policy in the development of new quarries, that they will be strictly controlled in areas of high landscape value, on European sites, Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and welcomes the use of the 'Quarries and Ancillary Activities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DECLG, 2004). The GSI continues to promote a partnership between geological heritage and active quarrying and has produced guidelines with the Irish Concrete Federation on how to address geological heritage features when identified in pits and quarries. The guidelines can assess to achieve the balance between the conservation of heritage and development. These planning related guidance are available to be downloaded [here](#).

Geological Mapping

Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) geological mapping programme creates maps that depict the rocks (Bedrock Mapping) and subsoils (Quaternary & Physiographic Mapping) of the onshore area of Ireland. We collect new data by field surveying and borehole drilling, and combine them with existing mapping to produce map products at various scales and levels of complexity. GSI maintains online data sets of bedrock and subsoils geological mapping that is reliable, accessible and meets the requirements of all users. These data sets include depth to bedrock data and subsoil classifications. We would encourage you to use this data in any planned SEA reports and for informing your County Development Plan (2021-2027).

Groundwater

Groundwater is important as a source of drinking water, and it supports river flows, lake levels and ecosystems. It contains natural substances dissolved from the soils and rocks that it flows through, and can also be contaminated by human actions on the land surface. As a clean, but vulnerable, resource, groundwater needs to be understood, managed and protected. Through our [Groundwater Programme](#), GSI provides advice and maps to members of the public, consultancies and public bodies about groundwater quality, quantity and distribution. Geological Survey Ireland monitors groundwater nationwide by characterising aquifers, investigating karst landscapes and landforms and by helping to protect public and group scheme water supplies. With regard to Flood Risk Management, there is a need to identify areas for integrated constructed wetlands. We recommend using the GSI's National Aquifer and Recharge maps on our [Map viewer](#) to this end.

Geohazards

Geohazards can cause widespread damage to landscapes, wildlife, human property and human life. In Ireland, landslides are the most prevalent of these hazards. GSI has information available on past landslides for viewing as a layer on our [Map Viewer](#). We recommend that geohazards be taken into consideration, especially when developing areas where these risks are prevalent, and we encourage the use of our data when doing so.



Geothermal Energy

Geothermal energy harnesses the heat beneath the surface of the Earth for heating applications and electricity generation, and has proven to be secure, environmentally sustainable and cost effective over long time periods. Geothermal applications can range in depth from a few metres below the surface to several kilometres. Ireland has widespread shallow geothermal resources for small and medium-scale heating applications, which can be explored online through Geological Survey Ireland's Geothermal Suitability maps for both domestic and commercial use. We recommend use of our [Geothermal Suitability maps](#) to determine the most suitable type of ground source heat collector for use with heat pump technologies in your county. Ireland also has recognised potential for deep geothermal resources. GSI currently supports and funds research into this national energy resource.

Other Comments

We would also like to draw your attention to the Departments of Housing, Planning and Local Government and Communications, Climate Action and the Environment that recently published the revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines (WEDG) for public consultation (which closed on 19 February 2020). The IGH Programme also has downloadable guidelines ("Geology in local authority planning") on the inclusion of geology in local authority planning departments and in county development and heritage plans.

In the meantime if you have any questions in relation to our data sets or if we can be of further assistance to the project team please do not hesitate to contact me, Emily Murray-Farrugia, EmilyMurray.Farrugia@dccae.gov.ie or my colleague, IGH Programme Lead, Dr. Clare Glanville (clare.glanville@dccae.gov.ie)

Yours sincerely

Emily Murray Farrugia
Planning and Geoheritage Programmes