SEA of the Longford Town Local Area Plan

SEA Environmental Report

Longford County Council

Final report

Prepared by LUC

May 2025

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Introduction

1.1 Longford County Council commissioned LUC to undertake the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Longford Town Local Area Plan (LAP).

1.2 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process is a requirement of the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC **[See reference 1]** which requires that an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes – in this case the Longford Town LAP – which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

1.3 The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- Inform the development of the Longford Town LAP;
- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects (both positive and negative) of implementing the Longford Town LAP and reasonable alternatives to the Longford Town LAP; and,
- Provide an opportunity for the statutory and non-statutory consultees, and the public to offer views on any aspect of the Environmental Report and accompanying Longford Town LAP, through consultation.

Description of the Longford Town Local Area Plan

Context for the Longford Town Local Area Plan

1.4 Longford Town is in the centre of County Longford and is the principal town of the county, with established employment areas and substantial administrative and retail functions. The plan area is shown in **Figure 1.1**.

1.5 Located on the banks of the Camlin River, the land within the town core is predominately flat, with a pronounced rise towards the south-east. A spur of the Royal Canal enters the town to the south-west. Agricultural and amenity land in close proximity to the town centre significantly contributes to the character of the settlement. On the western outskirts of the town are significant areas of land which are subject to substantive flooding.

1.6 Longford Town is strategically positioned as a portal to the Northern and Western Region, with the town well served by transport links in the form of the Dublin to Sligo rail line, and several strategic roads including the N4 (Dublin – Sligo) and N5 (Dublin – Castlebar/Westport), both of which are components of the Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) Comprehensive Network. This high degree of accessibility has helped retain and enhance a range of enterprises within the town, as well as attract new businesses and industries to the locality.

1.7 Longford Town has a distinct layout, built heritage and strong identity. The industrial, administrative, transportation and military history of the town is reflected in this identity through the Camlin River, Royal Canal, Connolly Barracks and St. Mel's College and Cathedral.

Background to the Longford Town Local Area Plan

1.8 The current Longford County Development Plan (CDP) **[See reference** 2**]** came into effect on 30th November 2021. The CDP sets out the statutory framework for land-use planning and sustainable development for the six-year period between 2021 and 2027. County Policy Objective (CPO) 4.9 of the CDP states that the Council will prepare and implement a Local Area Plan (LAP) for Longford Town within two years from the adoption of the Longford CDP 2021-2027. The CDP states that the LAP will be informed by a Local Transport Plan (LTP) to be prepared for Longford Town.

1.9 Other CPOs specific to Longford Town are as follows:

- Support the role and function of Longford Town as the principal economic driver and focus of investment for the county (i.e. a 'Key Town' as identified by the RSES) (CPO 4.7 – 4.9).
- Support and prioritise regeneration opportunities in Longford Town including enhanced accessibility and sustainable mobility; town centre improvements; developing the town as a tourism hub; regeneration at the River Camlin, the Camlin Quarter, the Ballyminion area; improved linkages; and wider regeneration (CPOs 6.62 – 6.80).
- Promote regional-scale employment in the Primary Economic Growth Centre of Longford Town and promote the town's role as a key hub for employment, enterprise, tourism and innovation (CPOs 8.26 – 8.33).
- Improve the retail and high-street environment of Longford Town (CPOs 8.76 – 8.79).
- Protect the character of the Architectural Conservation Area in Longford Town (CPOs 11.27 – 11.29).
- Encourage a residential density of 35-40 units/ha in Longford town centre (CPO 16.17).

Scope and content of the Longford Town Local Area Plan

1.10 The aim of the LAP for Longford Town is to guide the overall development of the town to 2031.

1.11 The Vision for the Longford LAP is “to set out a framework for the sustainable physical development of Longford Town, ensuring the conservation and protection of the built and natural environment, while providing in an equitable manner for all our people within the Town".

1.12 The Vision for Longford Town is underpinned by 12 strategic aims which are designed to provide a level of focus and direction to the objectives set out the in document. The principles of the Longford Town LAP are:

- **Core Strategy Compliance**: to support the sustainable long-term growth of Longford Town in accordance with the Core Strategy of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 (or any succeeding plan), the provisions of the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031.
- **Residential Sustainability and Placemaking**: to support and facilitate the development of integrated sustainable neighbourhoods that respond to the needs of changing demographics in terms of housing delivery.
- **Economic Development**: to encourage sustainable employment growth and economic activity and promote Longford Town as a local and regional centre of trade, business and tourism.
- **Tourism**: to encourage and provide for the continued expansion of the tourism sector by the continued sustainable development and enhancements of visitor attractions and activities capitalising on Longford Town’s natural and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.

- **Regeneration and Placemaking**: to tackle problems of population decline, lack of investment and physical dereliction in an integrated and cross cutting way, through several policy areas including integrated land use, heritage led regeneration and socio-economic measures to address the physical, economic, social and environmental problems associated with dereliction and decay.
- **Social Infrastructure**: to facilitate and secure the provision of social infrastructure to support existing and new communities in Longford Town in a manner which provides flexibility to respond to varied and changing community needs.
- **Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure**: to contribute towards the protection and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity within the Local Area Plan boundary and to provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits.
- **Built and Cultural Heritage**: to conserve and manage Longford Town's unique heritage assets for the benefit of present and future generations and to promote such assets as generators of economic development and regeneration while adhering to best practice conservation principles and the relevant statutory obligations.
- **Infrastructure**: to ensure that the delivery of infrastructural services is guided by the principles of sustainable development in facilitating more efficient land use and physical development, whilst providing for the continued social and economic growth of the County.
- **Sustainable Transport**: to promote the use of and increased delivery of sustainable modes of transport within Longford Town, in order to contribute towards the achievement Ireland's carbon emission reduction requirements.
- **Climate Change**: to ensure Longford Town becomes a climate resilient town by promoting the economic, social and environmental benefits of low-carbon development, creating an integrated green infrastructure network,

prioritising sustainable mobility and building at sustainable densities in appropriate locations.

- **Implementation and Monitoring**: to ensure development occurs in tandem with the delivery of supporting physical and social infrastructure, in an orderly and efficient manner and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

Stage of the Longford Town Local Area Plan

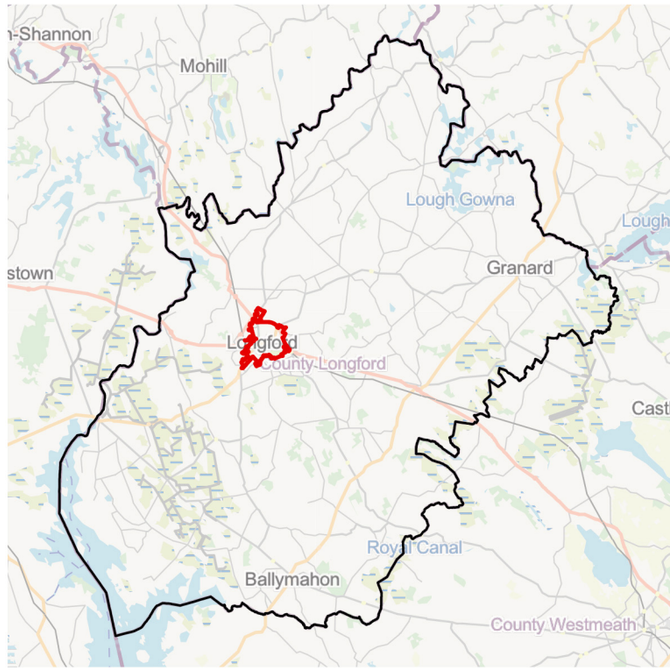
1.13 Longford County Council has prepared the final LAP. The Draft Longford Town LAP was published for public consultation by the Council in autumn 2024 for a six-week period. The submissions and observations received during the public consultation period were reviewed and considered by the Council during the finalisation of the Longford Town LAP. In light of Material Alterations to the Draft LAP, a revised version of the LAP was published for public consultation from 5th February to 5th March 2025. The Longford Town LAP was adopted on 22nd April 2025.

SEA of the Longford Town Local Area Plan
Longford County Council

LUC

Figure 1.1: Location

Longford Town LAP Study Area
Longford County



AN LONGFORT CONNECTED
Comhairle Chontae An Longfoirt
Longford County Council
People - Place - Opportunity

0 1 2 km

Map scale 1:20,000 @ A3

Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Facebook, Inc. and its affiliates, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri. © LCC 2024.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.14 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process is a requirement of the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC which requires than an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes (P/P), including land-use plans, which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. The purpose of SEA, as defined in Article 1 of the SEA Directive is '*to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans…with a view to promoting sustainable development'.*

1.15 In Ireland, the SEA Directive has been transposed into national legislation through:

- S.I. No. 435 of 2004 (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 **[See reference** 3**]**, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011) **[See reference** 4**]**; and,
- S.I. No. 436 of 2004 (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 **[See reference 5]**, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011) **[See reference 6]** (i.e. the SEA Regulations).

1.16 The objective of this SEA is to ensure that the environmental effects of the LAP are identified during its development, providing the opportunity for negative environmental effects to be avoided, mitigated or compensated and for positive environmental effects to be enhanced, where opportunities arise. In this way, environmental considerations can be integrated into the preparation of the Longford Town LAP.

Requirements of the SEA Regulations

1.17 The relevant sections of this report that are considered to meet the SEA Regulations requirements are signposted below.

Schedule 2B

1.18 The SEA Regulations require the responsible authority to prepare, or secure the preparation of, an 'Environmental Report'. The Environmental Report must identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan and reasonable alternatives, taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan (Article 14D). The information required by Schedule 2B of the SEA Regulations is set out below, indicating which part(s) of this report provide that information (as outlined above, this information will be updated in the Environmental Report):

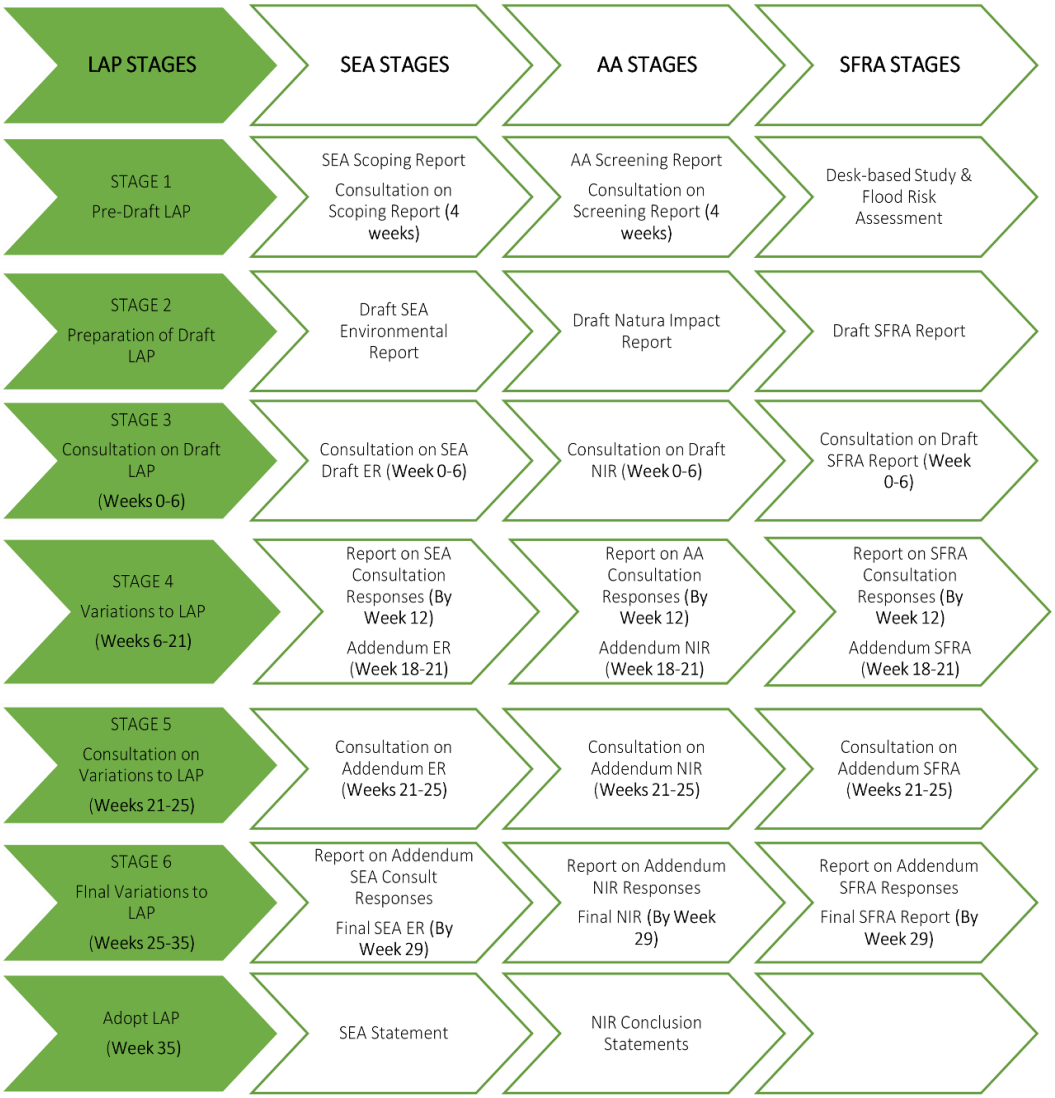
- a) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans.
  - Covered in Chapter 1, Chapter 3 and Appendix B.
- b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan.
  - Covered in Chapter 4.
- c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.
  - Covered in Chapters 4 and 5.
- d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.
  - Covered in Chapters 4 and 5.

- e) The environmental protection objectives, established at international, European Union or national level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.
  - Covered in Chapter 3 and Appendix B.
- f) The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.)
  - Covered in Chapter 5 and Appendix D.
- g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan.
  - Covered in Chapter 6.
- h) An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.
  - Covered in Chapter 2.
- i) A description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring of the significant environmental effects of implementation of the plan.
  - Covered in Chapter 7.
- j) A non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.
  - A standalone Non-Technical Summary accompanies this Environmental Report.

Links to other assessments of the Local Area Plan

1.19 Figure 1.2 illustrates the iterative processes between the SEA, Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and preparation of the Longford Town LAP.

Figure 1.2: SEA, AA and SFRA stages corresponding with the Longford Town Local Area Plan stages



Appropriate Assessment

1.20 SEA does not stand alone in environmental assessments of plans and programmes, including the Longford Town LAP. There is a high level of overlap between the SEA process and the Appropriate Assessment (AA) process, in particular relating to biodiversity, human health, water, etc (see **Figure 1.2**).

1.21 Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive **[See reference 7]** is transposed for certain plans in Ireland by S.I. No. 477/2011 (European Communities (Birds and Nature Habitats) Regulations, 2011 **[See reference 8]**, as amended by S.I. No. 293 of 2021) **[See reference 9]**, and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended **[See reference 10]**. All plans and projects that, either individually or in combination with other plans, are likely to have a significant effect on any site in the Natura 2000 network (i.e., those designated as Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas, collectively referred to as 'European sites'), require an AA to determine whether these effects will adversely affect the integrity of these sites. If the effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant, or uncertain then the plan or project must undergo Stage 2 AA.

1.22 Screening for AA of the Longford Town LAP, using the precautionary principle (without the application of mitigation measures), was prepared in February 2024. The findings of the Screening for AA determined that the implementation of the Longford Town LAP could result in the following Likely Significant Effects:

- **Loss of functionally linked land** - in relation to the Lough Ree SPA and Lough Ree SAC.
- **Non-physical disturbance (off-site only)** – in relation to the Lough Ree SPA and Lough Ree SAC.
- **Air pollution** – in relation to the Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA, Lough Ree SPA, Lough Forbes Complex SAC and Lough Ree SAC.
- **Recreation pressure** – in relation to the Lough Ree SAC, Lough Forbes Complex SAC, Lough Ree SPA and Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA.

- **Changes to hydrology including water quality and quantity** – in relation to the Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA, Lough Ree SPA, Lough Ree SAC and Fortwilliam Turlough SAC.

1.23 Therefore, an Appropriate Assessment of the Longford Town LAP was undertaken in March/April 2024. The Appropriate Assessment identified that the above Likely Significant Effects will not, in light of mitigation and avoidance measures outlined in Chapter 4 of the Natura Impact Statement, result in Adverse Effects on Integrity (AEoI) of the European sites either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

1.24 The findings of the AA have been taken into account in this Environmental Report.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

1.25 The requirement for Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) of certain plans is provided under 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' **[See reference 11]** and 'Circular PL2/2014: Flood Guidelines' **[See reference 12]**.

1.26 A SFRA was undertaken alongside the Draft LAP in March 2024, which identified and assessed flood risk to inform the content of the LAP including policies, objectives and land use zoning. The findings of the SFRA have been taken into account in this Environmental Report.

Structure of the Environmental Report

1.27 This Environmental Report is structured to be compliant with the reporting requirements of the SEA Regulations. This chapter has introduced the SEA process for the Longford Town LAP. The remainder of this report is structured into the following sections:

- **Chapter 2 SEA methodology** – describes the method used in carrying out the SEA, the approach to assessing reasonable alternatives and describes any difficulties encountered and data limitations.
- **Chapter 3 Relationship with other plans** - describes the review of plans and environmental protection objectives of relevance to the SEA of the Longford Town LAP (this is supported by more detailed information in **Appendix B**).
- **Chapter 4 Environmental baseline information** - identifies key environmental issues / problems and describes the expected evolution of the environment without the Longford Town LAP (this is supported by more detailed information in **Appendix C**).
- **Chapters 5 SEA findings** – sets out the findings from the SEA of the Longford Town LAP and reasonable alternatives (this is supported by more detailed information in **Appendix D**).
- **Chapter 6 Mitigation and enhancement** – describes the mitigation measures that have been considered and incorporated to avoid or mitigate any potential (significant) adverse impacts.
- **Chapter 7 Monitoring** – sets out the measures envisaged to monitor the Longford Town LAP.
- **Chapter 8 Conclusion and next steps** – summarises the key findings from the SEA and the next stage in the SEA process.

1.28 The Environmental Report is supported by the following appendices:

- **Appendix A** details the consultation responses received on the Scoping Report.
- **Appendix B** details the review of relevant plans and environmental protection objectives.
- **Appendix C** details the environmental baseline.
- **Appendix D** presents the detailed SEA matrices.

1.29 A separate **Non-Technical Executive Summary** accompanies this Environmental Report and provides a non-technical summary of the information contained in this report.

Chapter 2

SEA methodology

2.1 This chapter describes the approach that has been undertaken during the SEA of the Longford Town LAP. In addition to complying with legal requirements, the approach is based on current best practice and guidance.

SEA guidance documents

2.2 The following principal sources of guidance have been used during the overall SEA process and during the preparation of this Environmental Report:

- Good Practice Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Landscape. 2023. Environmental Protection Agency **[See reference** 13**]**
- Guidance on SEA Statements and Monitoring. 2023. Environmental Protection Agency **[See reference** 14**]**
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Pack. 2024. Environmental Protection Agency **[See reference 15]**.
- SEA Spatial Information Sources Inventory. 2024. Environmental Protection Agency **[See reference 16]**.
- Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening. 2021. Environmental Protection Agency **[See reference 17]**.
- Good Practice Guidance on Cumulative Effect Assessment in SEA. 2020. Environmental Protection Agency **[See reference 18]**.
- Second Review of SEA Effectiveness in Ireland. 2020. Environmental Protection Agency **[See reference 19]**.

- Integrating Climate Change into Strategic Environmental Assessment in Ireland - A Guidance Note. 2019. Environmental Protection Agency **[See reference 20]**.
- GISEA Manual – Improving the Evidence Base in SEA. 2017. Environmental Protection Agency **[See reference 21]**.
- Developing and Assessing Alternatives in Strategic Environmental Assessment – Good Practice Guidance. 2015. Environmental Protection Agency **[See reference 22]**.
- Integrating Biodiversity Impact Assessment: Streamlining AA, SEA and EIA Processes – Practitioner's Manual. STRIVE Report Series No. 106. 2013. Environmental Protection Agency **[See reference 23]**.
- SEA Process Checklist - Consultation Draft. 2013. Environmental Protection Agency **[See reference 24]**.
- Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC). Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment. Guidelines for Regional Planning Authorities. November 2004. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government **[See reference 25]**.
- Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland. Synthesis Report. 2003. Environmental Protection Agency **[See reference 26]**.

2.3 The SEA has also had regard to the findings of the EPA's 2012 **[See reference 27]** and 2020 **[See reference 28]** reviews of SEA effectiveness in Ireland.

Stages in SEA process

2.4 The SEA of the Longford Town LAP comprises the following principal stages:

- **Stage 1: Scoping (completed):** Consultation with the Environmental Authorities on the scope and level of detail to be considered in the

assessment; and finalisation of the Scoping Report taking into account the submissions and observations received from the Environmental Authorities.

- **Stage 2: Draft Environmental Report (completed):** An assessment of the likely significant impacts on the environment as a result of the Longford Town LAP.
- **Stage 3: Consultation (completed)** on the Draft Environmental Repo.
- **Stage 4: Evaluation (completed)** of the submissions and observations made on the **Draft Environmental Report.**
- **Stage 5: Addendum Environmental Report (completed):** An assessment of the material alterations to the Longford Town LAP was undertaken.
- **Stage 6: Consultation (completed)** on the Addendum Environmental Report.
- **Stage 7: Evaluation (completed)** of the submissions and observations made on the **Addendum Environmental Report.**
- **Stage 8: Final Environmental Report (current stage):** Preparation of a Final Environmental Report that is consistent with the finalised plan.
- **Stage 9: SEA Statement (current stage):** Identifying how environmental considerations and consultation have been integrated into the final Longford Town LAP.

Stage 1: Scoping

- The Scoping Report, prepared in March 2023, provided information for consideration in respect of the requisite content of the SEA. The main stages in carrying out scoping are as follows:
  - Identifying plans, programmes, and environmental objectives of relevance to the LAP.
  - Scoping of SEA Topics **[See reference** 29**]** relevant to the LAP.

- Identifying geographic, temporal and transboundary scope of the LAP.
- Collecting baseline information.
- Identifying sustainability issues and problems.
- Developing the Environmental Protection Objectives (EPO) Framework comprising environmental objectives, indicators and targets to allow the evaluation of impacts on the environment.
- Consulting on the scope of the SEA.

2.5 In accordance with Article 14C of the SEA Regulations, the competent authority preparing the Longford Town LAP, in this case Longford County Council, is required to consult with consultation bodies on the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the Environmental Report. This Scoping Report was issued to the Environmental Authorities and adjoining local authorities for the four-week statutory consultation period from Tuesday 28th March to Thursday 27th April 2023. The consultation period was extended by two days to account for the two bank holidays which coincided with the consultation period. The Scoping Report was subsequently updated to take account of the submissions received from the Environmental Authorities and adjoining local authorities. Two submissions were received in response to the SEA Scoping Report. These were from Geological Survey Ireland and the Environmental Protection Agency. The issues raised in these submissions and how they have been taken into account in this Environmental Report are detailed in **Appendix A**.

Stage 2: Draft Environmental Report

2.6 The SEA Regulations require an Environmental Report to be prepared, in line with the completed Scoping Report. The Draft Environmental Report contains the findings of the assessment of the likely significant effects on the environment resulting from implementation of the Draft Longford Town LAP. It reflects the requirements of the SEA Directive and the transposed SEA Regulations by providing the following information:

- An outline of the contents of the Draft LAP and its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.
- The environmental characteristics of the study area, including any problems and issues identified and their likely evolution without the Draft LAP.
- Key environmental policy objectives set at the international, national and local levels that are relevant to the Draft LAP.
- The EPO Framework and the criteria used to make judgements about the effects of the Draft LAP.
- The likely significant effects of the Draft LAP and reasonable alternative options appraised against each of the Environmental Protection Objectives (EPOs) in the EPO Framework, taking into account mitigation (which may take the form of policy safeguards in national policy or other regulatory mechanisms).
- Any difficulties encountered during the assessment process, including data limitations.
- How consultation comments have been taken into account, including those received during Scoping.
- Proposed monitoring framework for significant effects identified (including uncertain effects where these could become significant).
- Appendices, including the consultation responses tables, and SEA matrices.

2.7 The Draft Environmental Report clearly sets out the SEA conclusions for the Draft Longford Town LAP, highlighting any likely significant effects, and makes recommendations for mitigating potential negative effects identified. The assessment of significant effects includes likely secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short-medium-long term, permanent, temporary, positive and negative effects, as well as the interrelationships between each SEA topic, as set out in Schedule 2B of the SEA Regulations. The Draft Environmental Report is accompanied by a Non-Technical Summary document.

Review of relevant plans and programmes

2.8 The SEA Regulations require the Environmental Report to describe the relationship of the Longford Town LAP with other relevant plans and programmes. The Longford Town LAP should also be consistent with environmental protection legislation and should support attainment of environmental objectives that have been established at the international and national levels.

2.9 A review was therefore undertaken of plans at the international, national, regional and local levels that were considered to be relevant to the scope of the Longford Town LAP. The full review is presented in **Appendix B.** A summary of the most relevant plans and programmes is outlined in **Chapter 3** of this Environmental Report.

Collecting baseline information and identifying key environmental issues

2.10 To fulfil the requirements of Schedule 2B of the SEA Regulations**,** **Appendix C** and **Chapter 4** of this Environmental Report present a description of the state of the environment at present; identify the key issues / problems currently being faced in the study area; and describe the expected evolution of the environment without the Longford Town LAP. The environmental baseline is presented by SEA topic area.

Developing an Environmental Protection Objective Framework

2.11 The relevant environmental objectives identified by the review of plans and programmes together with the key environmental issues identified by the collection and review of baseline information, helped to inform the development of a set of environmental objectives (the ‘Environmental Protection Objective

(EPO) Framework') against which the effects of the Longford Town LAP have been assessed.

2.12 Development of the EPO Framework is not a requirement of the SEA Regulations, but it is a recognised way in which the likely environmental effects of the Longford Town LAP can be transparently and consistently described, analysed and compared. The EPO Framework is set out below; each primary bullet point constitutes an EPO objective and the sub-bullet points set out further guidance to help guide the appraisal of each objective. The EPO Framework is structured to encompass each SEA topic, however, some topics are covered in more than one EPO.

2.13 Table 2.1 overleaf details each SEA topic and the corresponding EPOs. It is considered that the objectives selected adequately reflect the requirements of Schedule 2B of the SEA Regulations.

2.14 Prior to the assessment of the Draft LAP, EPO **2: Population and Human Health** was revised to include two additional objectives:

- Does the LAP promote economic growth to encourage sustainable development and the retention of the working age population?
- Does the LAP ensure that planned population growth is matched with the required public infrastructure and services?

Table 2.1: SEA topic and the corresponding EPOs

SEA topic	SEA objective
Biodiversity, flora and fauna	EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna
Population and human health	EPO 2: Population and human health EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation EPO 5: Air EPO 6: Soil EPO 7: Water
Climatic factors	EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation EPO 5: Air
Air	EPO 5: Air
Soil	EPO 6: Soil
Water	EPO 7: Water
Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage	EPO 8: Cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage
Landscape	EPO 9: Landscape
Material assets	EPO 10: Material assets EPO 2: Population and human health

EPO Framework

EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna

- Conserve and enhance Longford's biodiversity including designated sites, habitats and protected species.
  - Does the LAP conserve and enhance designated and undesignated ecological assets, including promoting habitat connectivity; avoiding fragmentation; and adverse impacts on habitats and species from development-related changes to air quality, water quality and quantity, noise levels and light levels?
  - Does the LAP maintain and enhance the nature network of ecological assets and green/blue spaces, taking into account the impacts of climate change?

EPO 2: Population and human health

- Create a healthy living environment, encourage healthy lifestyles, enable people to stay independent, reduce inequalities, provide a suitable mix of new and affordable housing to meet identified needs of the whole community, and ensure adequate access to services and facilities for all.
  - Does the LAP provide the amount and mix (size, tenures) of homes to meet local needs over the plan period?
  - Will the LAP increase the range and affordability of housing to support the growing population and for all social groups?
  - Will the LAP address the housing needs of older people, disabled people and vulnerable groups e.g., accessible and adaptable housing, extra care housing or sheltered housing?
  - Does the LAP reduce the quantity of vacant homes in the town?
  - Does the LAP reduce the need to travel by private car to access essential services, facilities and employment areas?

- Does the LAP promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging and facilitating active travel, such as walking and cycling?
- Does the LAP promote physical activity and outdoor recreation by maintaining, connecting and creating a range of accessible, new, high quality, multifunctional open spaces, green and blue infrastructure, recreation, play and sports facilities?
- Does the LAP protect physical and mental health and wellbeing by preventing, avoiding and mitigating adverse health effects associated with air pollution, noise, vibration, odour, and contamination of land and water?
- Does the LAP promote economic growth to encourage sustainable development and the retention of the working age population?
- Does the LAP ensure that planned population growth is matched with the required public infrastructure and services?

EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation

- Minimise greenhouse gas emissions and encourage energy efficiency and the transition to renewable / low carbon energy sources in new developments.
  - Does the LAP minimise energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions from transport, domestic, commercial and industrial sources?
  - Does the LAP promote energy efficiency by encouraging the use of energy efficient buildings and the use of renewable or low carbon energy sources in development?
  - Does the LAP encourage the provision of renewable energy infrastructure in appropriate locations?
  - Does the LAP encourage the use of sustainable construction methods and materials in development, with a focus on reducing the embodied carbon in new buildings and infrastructure?

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

- Reduce the risk and effects of flooding, both now and in the future.
  - Does the LAP seek to build resilience and adapt to the impacts of climate change such as flood, drought, overheating and extreme weather events particularly on groups more vulnerable to the effects of climate change?
  - Does the LAP direct development away from areas at highest risk of flooding and avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, taking into account the effects of climate change and mitigate residual risks without increasing flood risk elsewhere?
  - Does the LAP promote the use of SuDS, where appropriate?
  - Does the LAP encourage the creation, management and enhancement of a coherent green and blue infrastructure (GBI) network?
  - Does the LAP identify, allocate and safeguard open space for flood storage, where appropriate?
  - Does the LAP seek to manage current and future flood risks to the historic environment?

EPO 5: Air

- Improve air quality by reducing emissions and concentrations of harmful atmospheric pollutants and avoiding their emission.
  - Does the LAP improve air quality by minimising pollutant emissions from all sources?
  - Does the LAP reduce the need to travel by petrol or diesel vehicles?
  - Does the LAP encourage a modal shift to sustainable modes of transport by supporting maintenance and expansion of public and active transport networks?
  - Does the LAP support the provision of facilities for electric vehicle charging?

EPO 6: Soil

- Conserve and enhance Longford's soil resources and geological sites.
    - Does the LAP help to maintain Longford's soil resources by directing new development to brownfield / previously developed land in preference to greenfield land, where appropriate?
    - Does the LAP avoid the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land?
    - Does the LAP conserve designated and undesignated geological assets?

EPO 7: Water

- Preserve and enhance the quality and quantity of waterbodies and groundwater.
    - Does the LAP maintain or improve the quality of waterbodies and groundwater by avoiding adverse impacts from pollution / changes to drainage?
    - Does the LAP minimise and mitigate runoff from new development and infrastructure?
    - Does the LAP minimise inappropriate development in groundwater Source Protection Areas?
    - Does the LAP promote the efficient use of water, such as minimising water consumption and abstraction and by encouraging re-use of grey and rainwater?

EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

- Conserve and enhance the significant qualities, fabric, setting and accessibility of Longford's historic environment.

- Does the LAP conserve designated and undesignated heritage assets, including their setting and their contribution to wider local character and distinctiveness, avoiding adverse effects on their significance from direct loss, damage, or detraction from their setting?
- Does the LAP support heritage-led regeneration of Longford Town?
- Does the LAP improve access to, as well as enjoyment and understanding of, the local historic environment?

EPO 9: Landscape

- Conserve and enhance Longford's landscape and townscape, ensuring development does not detract from the quality of views and local distinctiveness.
  - Does the LAP adversely impact, protect or enhance the townscape and visual amenity of Longford Town?
  - Does the LAP reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land?
  - Is the scale/density of development in keeping with important and valued features of the local landscape?
  - Does the LAP encourage high-quality design principles to respect local character and visual amenity?
  - Does the LAP encourage the retention and planting of green infrastructure alongside development to protect landscape character and create a sense of place?
  - Does the LAP improve access to valued landscapes, townscapes and viewpoints, including by sustainable and active travel modes to reduce the impact of road traffic?

EPO 10: Material assets

- Use resources intelligently, optimising reuse and recovery to keep waste to a minimum, minimising impacts on existing infrastructure and the transport network.
    - Does the LAP optimise existing infrastructure and provide new infrastructure sufficient to meet demand?
    - Does the LAP maximise energy efficiency and minimise the consumption of non-renewable energy?
    - Does the LAP encourage the re-use/enhancement of existing buildings and promote the use of recycled and secondary materials in construction?
    - Does the LAP support the efficient use of natural resources, minimising waste and promoting appropriate waste management?

Identifying and appraising reasonable alternatives

2.15 One of the critical roles of the SEA is to facilitate an evaluation of the likely environmental consequences of a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposals in the Longford Town LAP. The reason for assessing alternatives is to determine if the significant adverse effects of the Longford Town LAP can be reduced or avoided. Therefore, the SEA must appraise not only the proposed 'objectives' for inclusion in the plan but also 'reasonable alternatives' to these. This implies that alternatives that are not reasonable do not need to be subject to appraisal.

2.16 In order to be considered reasonable, the alternatives appraised by the SEA should meet the following criteria:

- Take into account the geographical scope, hierarchy and objectives of the LAP – **be realistic;**
- Be based on socio-economic and environmental evidence – **be justified;**

- Be capable of being delivered within the LAP's timeframe and resources – **be implementable**; and
- Be technically and institutionally feasible – **be viable.**

2.17 One of the reasonable alternatives considered was the 'do nothing' scenario i.e. continued use of the existing Longford Town LAP 2016-2022. However, this was discounted as a reasonable alternative as the Longford County Development Plan (CDP) 2021-2027 **[See reference** 30**]** (see **Chapter 3**) requires the preparation of a Local Area Plan for the town within two years from the adoption of the Longford CDP. A scenario which promotes the even development of zoned land was also considered. However, this was discounted as a reasonable alternative as it is not feasible to develop Tier 2 sites (not currently serviced with infrastructure) as quickly as Tier 1 sites (serviced land).

2.18 Therefore, the following reasonable alternatives considered in the Environmental Report are:

- **Alternative 1: Town Centre First Approach** – Develop Longford Town in line with the Draft Town Centre First Approach Strategy and the key priorities for growth of a 'Key Town' in the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (i.e. more consolidated and compact growth).
- **Alternative 2 - Dispersed growth** (less consolidated and compact).

2.19 The SEA findings are not the only factors taken into account when determining a preferred approach to take forward in the LAP. Indeed, there will often be an equal number of positive or negative effects identified by the SEA for each option, such that it is not possible to rank them based on sustainability performance in order to select a preferred option. Factors such as public opinion, deliverability and conformity with national legislation will also be taken into account when selecting the preferred approach for the Longford Town LAP. Further information on the assessment of alternatives is detailed in **Chapter 5.**

Appraisal methodology

2.20 The Longford Town LAP and reasonable alternatives have been appraised against the objectives in the EPO Framework set out above. The findings from the SEA are presented in SEA matrices in **Appendix D**, which include colour coded symbols showing the score of each component of the LAP against each of the SEA objectives along with a concise justification for the score given. The use of colour coding in the matrices allows for likely significant effects (both positive and negative) to be easily identified, as shown in **Table 2.2**.

Table 2.2: SEA scoring of effects

SEA effect	Description of effect
++	Significant positive effect likely
++/-	Mixed significant positive and minor negative effects likely
+	Minor positive effect likely
+/-	Mixed minor effects likely
++/--	Mixed significant effects likely
-	Minor negative effect likely
--/+	Mixed significant negative and minor positive effects likely
--	Significant negative effect likely
0	No or negligible effect likely
?	Likely effect uncertain
N/A	Assessment criterion not applicable

2.21 The dividing line between environmental scores is often quite small. Where significant effects are distinguished from more minor effects this is because,

using the appraisal questions and criteria and applying professional judgement, the effect of the option in relation to the achievement of the EPO will be of such magnitude that it will have a noticeable and measurable effect compared with other factors that may influence the achievement of that objective.

2.22 Minor effects are still identified as these assist with the identification of cumulative and synergistic effects, can help identify opportunities for enhancements (e.g. enhancing a minor positive to make it significant) and also better enable the Council to make a more informed decision over the sustainability performance of options.

2.23 Where a potential positive or negative effect is uncertain, a question mark has been added to the relevant effect (e.g., +? or -?) and the effect is colour coded as per the potential positive, negligible or negative effect (e.g., green, white, pink, etc.). Schedule 2B of SEA Regulations identifies criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment (see below) which has guided the approach to scoring in the assessment.

2.24 The prediction and evaluation of effects of options in the Longford Town LAP relies heavily on the EPO Framework – every option will be appraised for their likely impacts in relation to achievement of the EPO objectives. In line with the SEA Regulations, the following characteristics of effects will be predicted and evaluated.

Probability

2.25 There is an inherent degree of uncertainty in carrying out SEA work. Should it be adopted, the Longford Town LAP would likely be in force for several years. Over this time period, currently unforeseen changes are likely to occur. These circumstances are impossible to predict. Uncertainties are dealt with in SEA by adopting a precautionary approach, where the worst-case scenario is assumed unless reliable evidence suggests otherwise. This is to ensure that any potentially negative effects are identified, and appropriate consideration is given to how the Longford Town LAP could help avoid or

mitigate the worst effects if such scenarios were to arise. However, it is accepted that the likelihood of many such worst-case scenarios occurring is low, particularly aspects of the Longford Town LAP would help to avoid or mitigate negative impacts.

2.26 The assessment of the Longford Town LAP indicates where particular uncertainties exist in relation to the effects identified:

- Low probability – not likely to have an effect.
- Medium probability.
- High probability – highly likely to have an effect.

Duration

2.27 The temporal scope of the SEA covers the Longford Town LAP period from 2024 to 2030. For the purpose of the SEA:

- Short term covers the period up to 2025;
- Medium term covers the period up to 2027; and
- Long term covers the period up to 2030 and beyond.

2.28 Effects can occur over multiple terms, such as arising in the short-term and residing in the long-term.

Frequency

2.29 All effects of the Longford Town LAP are considered to occur once, unless indicated otherwise. Where effects are continual, defined by a number of occurrences or intermittent, this will be specified.

Reversibility

2.30 The assessment considers whether effects are reversible or irreversible (i.e. the receptor can return to the baseline condition) without significant intervention.

The cumulative nature of effects

2.31 The SEA provides an appraisal of all options in the Longford Town LAP. Each element of the Longford Town LAP will not be adopted in isolation and therefore an evaluation of cumulative and synergistic effects will be undertaken. Cumulative and synergistic effects are defined as follows:

- Cumulative effects arise, for instance, where several developments each have insignificant effects but together have a significant effect, or where several individual effects have a combined effect; and
- Synergistic effects interact to produce a total effect greater than the sum of individual effects, so that the nature of the final impact is different to the nature of the individual impacts.

The transboundary nature of effects

2.32 The geographical extent of effects will be experienced predominantly within Longford Town and its environs (**Figure 1.1** illustrates the geographical extent of the Longford Town LAP). However, where effects would be likely beyond the plan area boundary, this will be specified. For example, in the wider County Longford area or in adjacent counties.

The risks to human health or the environment

2.33 The assessment identifies whether the impact of the effect would present a risk for people and the environment.

The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects

2.34 The SEA assesses the geographical area and the size of the population likely to be affected by an effect:

- Magnitude
  - High – high proportion of the receptor affected.
  - Medium.
  - Low – low proportion of the receptor affected.
- Spatial extent
  - Local – effects in Longford Town and its environs.
  - County – effects in County Longford.
  - Transboundary – effects in adjacent counties.

The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected

2.35 Effects may impact the value or condition of an existing area due to:

- special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
- exceeded environmental quality standards or limit value; or
- intensive land-use.

Effects on areas or landscapes with recognised national, European Union or international protection status

2.36 The SEA evaluates whether effects are likely to impact on areas with national, European Union or International protection status.

2.37 Appendix D presents summaries of the findings for each component of the Longford Town LAP. Drawing on the findings from the assessment, narrative text is provided in **Chapter 5** which sets out the potential cumulative, synergistic and in-combination effects likely to arise from the Longford Town LAP.

Monitoring

2.38 An Environmental Monitoring Programme is required to monitor the likely significant effects of implementing the Longford Town LAP. The Environmental Monitoring Programme focusses on the significant effects identified during the assessment phase. The Environmental Monitoring Programme is presented in **Chapter 7** and has been developed in line with the EPA's Guidance on SEA Statements and Monitoring.

Stage 3: Consultation

Public consultation was carried out on the Draft Longford Town Local Area Plan and the accompanying Draft Environmental Report and Non-Technical Summary for a six-week period in between 6th September 2024 to 18th October 2024.

2.39 The Draft Environmental Report and associated Non-Technical Summary was published on Longford County Council’s website for consultation during this period.

2.40 In total, 34 submissions regarding the Draft Longford Town LAP were received. Of these, five submissions included comments relating to the Draft Environmental Report.

Stage 4: Evaluation

2.41 The submissions and observations received during the public consultation period were reviewed and responded to in the Chief Executive's Report. The Draft LAP was subsequently updated to take account of the submissions.

Stage 5: Addendum Environmental Report

2.42 A screening assessment of the alterations to the LAP, where proposed, was undertaken to determine their likely significant effects. Where likely significant effects were identified, an Addendum Environmental Report was prepared to accompany the Proposed Material Alterations to the LAP.

Stage 6: Consultation on the Addendum Environmental Report

2.43 Public consultation was carried out on the Addendum Environmental Report and Proposed Material Alterations to the LAP for a four-week period from 5th February to 5th March 2025. Nine consultation responses were received by Longford County Council on the Material Alterations to the Draft Longford Town LAP.

Stage 7: Final Environmental Report

2.44 Submissions from the previous round of public consultation were responded to in the Chief Executive's Report. This Final Environmental Report and the accompanying Non-Technical Summary that is consistent with the finalised LAP and will be made available on the Council's website.

Stage 8: SEA Statement

2.45 An SEA Statement will be prepared identifying how each of the requirements in Article 14L of the SEA Regulations have been met during the SEA process. The finalised SEA Statement will be published after the Council adopts the Longford Town LAP.

Difficulties encountered and data limitations

2.46 Schedule 2B of the SEA Regulations states that the Environmental Report should identify any difficulties encountered during the assessment process. No significant difficulties were encountered during the assessment of the LAP. The main difficulties and data gaps encountered were as follows:

- The Longford Town LAP is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), which specifies various types of objectives that must be provided for by the plan and in accordance with higher-level national, regional and statutory planning provisions. Therefore, alternatives available for the LAP are significantly limited by the requirements of plans such as the National Planning Framework (NPF), Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region, the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, and Statutory Planning Guidelines.
- JBA's Flood Maps for the Local Area Plan area were not available.

2.47 No other specific data limitations or difficulties were encountered during the SEA process.

Chapter 3

Relationship with other plans and programmes

Introduction

3.1 The Longford Town LAP is greatly influenced by other plans and by broader environmental objectives. The LAP must conform to environmental protection legislation and the environmental objectives established at international, European and national levels, as well as contributing to the goals of a wide range of other plans and programmes.

Schedule 2B of the SEA Regulations requires, among other things:

- “an outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans”; and
- the environmental protection objectives, established at international, European Union or national level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation".

3.2 A review of the key international, European and national legislation and plans of relevance to the Longford Town LAP is detailed in **Appendix B**. It should be noted that this Environmental Report has been prepared to be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed changes that may result from the implementation of the plan. It is not intended to be a register of all legislation / plans, but rather an examination of the key environmental protection objectives relevant to the Longford Town LAP. A summary of the most relevant plans is provided in the subsequent paragraphs.

3.3 Figure 3.1 illustrates the links and inter-relationships between the Longford Town LAP and other key relevant international, national, regional and local plans.

Figure 3.1: Hierarchy of plans

Key international plans and environmental protection objectives

3.4 At the international level, **Directive 2001/42/EC** **[See reference** 31**]** on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the 'SEA Directive') and **Directive 92/43/EEC** **[See reference** 32**]** on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the 'Habitats Directive') are particularly significant as they require SEA and AA to be undertaken in relation to the Longford Town LAP. These processes should be undertaken iteratively and integrated into the development of the plan in order to ensure that any potential negative environmental effects (including on European-level nature conservation designations) are identified and can be mitigated.

3.5 A number of international policies set out high-level strategic objectives for developing safe, resilient and sustainable communities. The Longford Town LAP aims to address several UN Sustainable Development Goals set out in the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** (2015) **[See reference 33]**, including:

- SDG 1: No Poverty
- SDG 2: Zero Hunger
- SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 5: Gender Equality
- SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
- SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
- SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
- SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
- SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

- SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- SDG 13: Climate Action
- SDG 15: Life on Land
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

3.6 At the European Union (EU) level there are several important directives that focus on protecting and conserving the natural environment which are relevant to the Longford Town LAP. These include the **Air Quality Directive** **[See reference** 34**]**, the **Water Framework Directive** **[See reference** 35**]**, and the **Birds Directive** **[See reference** 36**]**.

Key national plans and environmental protection objectives

Project Ireland 2040

3.7 The **Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework** (NPF) **[See reference** 37**]** is the national planning framework to guide development and investment in Ireland up to 2040. It is accompanied by the **Project Ireland 2040 – National Development Plan** (NDP) 2021-2030 **[See reference** 38**]** which sets out investment priorities. The two documents combine to form Project Ireland 2040. The National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) of relevance to the Longford Town LAP are:

- NSO1: Compact growth.
- NSO 2: Enhanced regional accessibility.
- NSO 3: Strengthened rural economies and communities.
- NSO 4: Sustainable mobility.
- NSO 5: A strong economy supported by enterprise, innovation and skills.

- NSO 7: Enhanced amenities and heritage.
- NSO 8: Transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.
- NSO 9: Sustainable management of water, waste and other environmental resources.
- NSO 10: Access to quality childcare, education and health services.

3.8 Growth of the Eastern and Midland Region is a clear priority in both the NPF and NDP, with growth in population (to around 2.85 million) and employment (to 1.34 million) targeted. The NPF recognises the strategic importance of the Midlands stating that:

3.9 *"its central location in Ireland can be leveraged to enable significant strategic investment to a greater extent than at present, supported by a sustainable pattern of population growth, with a focus on strategic national employment and infrastructure development, quality of life and strengthening the urban cores of the county towns and other principal settlements"* (p.33).

3.10 There are numerous National Policy Objectives relevant to the Longford Town LAP, including those which focus on future growth and development of Ireland's rural areas; town regeneration and placemaking; addressing connectivity gaps; sustainable housing development and job creation; improvements in quality of life and place; and delivering inclusive places for diverse needs, including for ageing populations and for young people.

Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities

3.11 The **Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities** **[See reference** 39**]** set national planning policy and guidance in relation to the planning and development of urban and

rural settlements, with a focus on sustainable residential development and the creation of compact settlements. There is a renewed focus in the Guidelines on the renewal of existing settlements and on the interaction between residential density, housing standards and quality urban design and placemaking to support sustainable and compact growth. These Guidelines replace the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued as Ministerial guidelines under Section 28 of the Act in 2009.

3.12 The Guidelines identify priorities for growth and development in different settlement types i.e. Cities, Metropolitan Areas, Regional Growth Centres, Key Towns and Large Towns (5,000+ population), Small and Medium Sized Towns (1,500-5,000 population), and Rural Towns and Villages. Longford Town is a 'Key Town', as identified in the **Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region (RSES) 2019-2031** **[See reference** 40**]**. The key priorities for the growth of Key Towns are to:

- plan for an integrated and connected settlement overall, avoiding the displacement of development generated by economic drivers in the Key Town or Large Town to smaller towns and villages and rural areas in the hinterland;
- strengthen town centres;
- protect, restore and enhance historic fabric, character, amenity, natural heritage, biodiversity and environmental quality;
- realise opportunities for adaptation and reuse of existing buildings and for incremental backland, brownfield and infill development; and
- deliver sequential and sustainable urban extension at locations that are closest to the urban core and are integrated into, or can be integrated into, the existing built-up footprint of the settlement.

3.13 The Guidelines support the following density ranges in the different areas in Key Towns:

- Centre and Urban Neighbourhood - The centre comprises the town centre and the surrounding streets, while urban neighbourhoods consist of the early phases of residential development around the centre that have

evolved over time to include a greater range of land uses. Residential densities in the range 40 dwellings per hectare (dph)-100 dph (net) shall generally be applied in the centres and urban neighbourhoods.

- Suburban/Urban Extension - Suburban areas are the low-density car-orientated residential areas constructed at the edge of the town, while urban extension refers to greenfield lands at the edge of the existing built-up footprint area that are zoned for residential or mixed-use (including residential) development. Residential densities in the range 30 dph to 50 dph (net) shall generally be applied at suburban and urban extension locations of Key Towns and Large Towns, and that densities of up to 80 dph (net) shall be open for consideration at 'accessible' suburban / urban extension locations.

Town Centre First Policy

3.14 The **Town Centre First Policy [See reference** 41**]** seeks to target resources towards towns. It sets out a range of actions which collectively will create the framework required to help build sustainable vibrant town centres. The Town Centre First Policy supports providing *"a mix of housing typologies and tenures to cater for diverse communities in terms of age, income and mobility".* Investment programmes, including the Croí Cónaithe Fund and Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, support a proactive approach to rejuvenating towns and villages in Ireland.

Housing for All – a New Housing Plan for Ireland

3.15 The **Housing for All – a New Housing Plan for Ireland [See reference** 42**]** is the Government's housing plan to 2030. The Government's vision for the housing system over the longer term is to achieve a steady supply of housing in the right locations with economic, social and environmental sustainability built into the system. It is estimated that Ireland will need an average of 33,000 new

homes to be provided each year from 2021 to 2030. It outlines the following initiatives to support housing in towns and villages:

- New guidance on the preparation of County Development Plans to ensure appropriate zoning and density levels.
- A new Croí Cónaithe Fund to service sites and refurbish vacant properties in regional towns and villages.
- A new Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) Programme to tackle vacancy levels in towns and villages.

Climate Action Plan 2025

3.16 The **Climate Action Plan 2025** **[See reference** 43**]** charts a course to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to meet our commitments to a 51% reduction in emissions by 2030 and to reach net zero no later than 2050. There are numerous actions in the Climate Action Plan, classified into several topic areas: governance, a just transition, citizen engagement, the public sector, carbon prices, electricity, industry, the built environment, transport, agriculture, land use / land use change / forestry, the marine environment, local government, the circular economy, international climate action, Sustainable Development Goals and adaptation. Seven actions are identified to achieve a just transition in the Midlands region which includes County Longford, however, those of most relevance to Longford Town include:

- Supporting regeneration, repurposing and sustainable development of walking and cycling tracks and trails, and waterways.
- Support decarbonisation of public local bus routes.

3.17 Support decarbonisation of fleet for private bus operators.
Other national plans and strategies of relevance to the Longford Town LAP include:

- the **Draft River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027** (RBMP) which sets out a programme of measures, to protect and where necessary

restore bodies of water in Ireland, building on progress under the previous plan.

- the **National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025 [See reference 44]** which reinforces the importance of all landscapes, not just exceptional or scenic landscapes, and the need to positively manage landscape change.
- **Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 [See reference 45]** sets out objectives and actions for the conservation and restoration of biodiversity in Ireland. The Action Plan sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030 and aims to deliver the transformative changes required to the ways in which we value and protect nature.
- **Heritage Ireland 2030 [See reference 46]** sets out the values, principles, strategic priorities to guide and inform the heritage sector over the next decade.
- **Cleaning Our Air: Public consultation to inform the development of a National Clean Air Strategy [See reference 47]** aims to inform the development of a National Clean Air Strategy in order to address the challenges and impacts of air pollution. It provides a background to the national, EU and international approaches to improving air quality and seeks to set out the main sectoral issues in relation to air quality which are of relevance, and for which further actions could be considered in the strategy.
- **National Sustainable Mobility Policy [See reference 48]** sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport journeys to help Ireland meet its climate obligations. It is accompanied by an action plan to 2025 which contains actions to improve and expand sustainable mobility options across the country by providing safe, green, accessible and efficient alternatives to car journeys. It also includes demand management and behavioural change measures to manage daily travel demand more efficiently and to reduce the journeys taken by private car.
- **Healthy Ireland Framework [See reference 49]** was launched in 2013 as a strategic framework to improve the health and well-being of the nation.

The Framework and associated **Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025** **[See reference** 50**]** supports reduction of health inequalities, improved access to services and the development of healthy living environments.

- The eighth **State of the Environment Report** **[See reference** 51**]**, published in 2024, provides an assessment of Ireland's environmental status. The report focuses on key trends in and challenges and actions for air, climate change, noise, water, marine, nature, land use and soil. It provides detailed integrated assessments of key economic sectors: transport, energy, agriculture, industry and the circular economy and the interactions between human health and the environment. The report also provides an in-depth assessment of how Ireland is performing in environmental policy implementation.

Key regional / local plans and environmental protection objectives

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region

3.18 The **Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region (RSES) 2019-2031** **[See reference** 52**]** sets out the framework to direct future growth in the Eastern and Midlands Region over a decade. It provides a spatial strategy, an economic strategy, a metropolitan plan for the Dublin area, an investment framework and a climate action strategy for the region. County Longford falls under the jurisdiction of the Eastern and Midlands Region RSES. Longford is identified as a 'Key Town' in the RSES, which should provide for *"sustainable, compact, sequential growth and urban regeneration in the town core … by consolidating the built footprint through a focus on regeneration and development of identified Key Town centre infill / brownfield sites"* (p.45).

3.19 The RSES identifies the following Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) specifically for Longford Town:

- RPO 4.59: To enhance accessibility and sustainable mobility within the town centre by improving links between the core and surrounding areas through the further integration of public transport, walking and cycling facilities.
- RPO 4.60: Support the development of Longford as a tourism hub having regard to its accessibility to key tourist destinations in the Region including Centre Parcs, and proximity to natural amenities, recreational opportunities and the town's location on the Rebel Longford Trail.
- RPO 4.61: Support social inclusion measures including the revitalisation of areas by physical regeneration, planning, investment and community development and measures to improve educational attainment levels, up skilling in key competencies and skills acquisition.
- RPO 4.62: Support the plan-led development and regeneration of publicly owned land banks in the town for residential, employment, education, community, cultural and recreational opportunities and the consolidation of the town centre and the enhancement and linking of brownfield and outlying sites to the town centre, with a focus on the regeneration of underused buildings and strategic sites.
- RPO 4.63: Support Longford Town as a strategic portal to the northwest and south in recognition of its location at the junction of the N55; M4/N4 Dublin/Sligo and N5; due to its proximity to the regional growth centre of Athlone; and support its role as a strategic employment centre.
- RPO 6.19: Support the local strategies that are already in place to link the River Shannon Blueway, The Royal and Grand Canal Greenways and the proposed Barrow Blueway right across the Midlands, incorporating the towns of Longford, Athlone, Mullingar, Tullamore and Portarlington.

Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027

3.20 The **Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 [See reference 53]** sets out the planning policies and objective for the sustainable development of the county.

County Policy Objective 4.9 states that the Council will prepare and implement a Local Area Plan (LAP) for Longford Town to align with the policy objectives of the NPF, Eastern and Midlands RSES and Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, within two years from the adoption of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027. Any such LAP will be informed by a LTP to be prepared for Longford Town. Accordingly, a LAP and separate LTP is to be prepared for Longford Town.

3.21 The County Development Plan sets out a number of County Policy Objectives (CPOs) relating to climate change, settlement strategies, transport, infrastructure, energy and communications, regeneration, placemaking, economic development, the rural economy, tourism, cultural heritage, the natural environment, green infrastructure, landscape character and development management standards. Many CPOs are relevant to Longford Town however CPOs which are specific to Longford Town are set out below:

- Support the role and function of Longford Town as the principal economic driver and focus of investment for the county (i.e. a 'Key Town' as identified by the RSES) (CPO 4.7 – 4.9).
- Support and prioritise regeneration opportunities in Longford Town including enhanced accessibility and sustainable mobility, town centre improvements, developing the town as a tourism hub, regeneration at the River Camlin, the Camlin Quarter, the Ballyminion area, improved linkages and wider regeneration (CPOs 6.62 – 6.80).

- Promote regional-scale employment in the Primary Economic Growth Centre of Longford Town and promote the town's role as a key hub for employment, enterprise, tourism and innovation (CPOs 8.26 – 8.33).
- Improve the retail and high-street environment of Longford Town (CPOs 8.76 – 8.79).
- Protect the character of the Architectural Conservation Area in Longford Town (CPOs 11.27 – 11.29).
- Encourage a residential density of 35-40 units/ha in Longford town centre (CPO 16.17).

Longford Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

3.22 The **Climate Action Plan 2024-2029** **[See reference** 54**]** aims to create a low carbon and climate resilient Longford. The Plan sets a pathway for Longford County Council to translate national climate policy to local circumstances including through the identification of a Decarbonisation Zone within Longford Town.

Longford Town Local Transport Plan

3.23 A **Local Transport Plan for Longford Town** **[See reference** 55**]** was prepared in October 2023 which establishes a strategic framework for the future development of transport infrastructure within Longford Town and its environs. The function of the LTP is to enhance accessibility and sustainable mobility within Longford Town centre, by improving links between the core and surrounding areas through the further integration of public transport, walking and cycling facilities. The Local Transport Plan will be fully reflected in the LAP.

Camlin Quarter Urban Design and Economic Framework

3.24 A prime opportunity exists for the regeneration of Longford Town, with a particular focus on the Camlin Quarter. In 2019, the **Camlin Quarter Urban Design and Economic Framework [See reference** 56**]** was published which outlines a framework to guide the enhancement and development of Camlin Quarter as a connected, competitive, and creative environment in the historical heartland of Longford Town.

A detailed review of the key international, European, national, regional and local plans of relevance to the Longford Town LAP is detailed in **Appendix B.**

Implications of the policy review for the Longford Town LAP

3.25 The following paragraphs detail the implications of the policy review for the Longford Town LAP for each SEA topic.

Biodiversity, flora and fauna

3.26 In order to align with international, national, regional and local policies, the Longford Town LAP should seek to protect and enhance ecological features and biodiversity and encourage habitat restoration or creation. The Longford Town LAP should seek to ensure that environmental pollution from future development is minimised in order to protect land, water and air quality. The LAP should seek to take the following themes into account: conservation;

creation; connection; and celebration. The LAP should embed the principle of environmental net gain and tackling invasive species.

The SEA has responded to this through the inclusion of Environmental Protection Objectives relating to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, air quality, water and soil resources.

Population and human health

3.27 In order to align with international, national, regional and local policies, the Longford Town LAP should seek to provide open spaces and green infrastructure of sufficient quality to meet the needs of the people of Longford Town; to encourage healthy and active lifestyles; to promote economic growth and the generation of employment opportunities; create fair, safe and inclusive communities; to reduce inequality in health and wellbeing; and to improve the sustainable transport network within Longford Town. The LAP should seek to create and maintain safe and attractive public spaces that encourage people to walk and cycle, promote a sense of place and reduce the need to travel. The LAP should seek to provide opportunities for education, skills and employment that will help all to succeed in life and advance equality of opportunity.

The SEA has responded to this through the inclusion of Environmental Protection Objectives relating to health and wellbeing, economy and education, social inclusion and sustainable transport.

Climatic factors

3.28 In order to align with international, national, regional and local policies, the Longford Town LAP should seek to ensure that new development reduces

carbon emissions, is energy efficiency, and promotes the use of renewable energy sources and sustainable construction methods and materials. The Longford Town LAP should also ensure that new development is designed to be resilient to climate change impacts such as the increased likelihood of extreme weather events and flooding. The Longford Town LAP should also encourage a modal shift towards public transport, walking and cycling and reduce the need to travel by car.

The SEA has responded to this through the inclusion of Environmental Protection Objectives relating to the mitigation and adaptation to climate change including minimising greenhouse gas emissions; promoting energy efficient developments and sustainable construction; promoting the use of renewable energy in development; reducing the risk of flooding; and supporting increased use of sustainable transport.

Air

3.29 In order to align with international, national, regional and local policies, the Longford Town LAP should seek to reduce air pollutant emissions.

The SEA has responded to this through the inclusion of Environmental Protection Objectives relating to protecting and improving air quality.

Soil

3.30 In order to align with international, national, regional and local policies, the Longford Town LAP should seek to minimise adverse impacts on the soil environment.

The SEA has responded to this through the inclusion of Environmental Protection Objectives relating to the protection and enhancement of soil resources and geological assets.

Water

3.31 In order to align with international, national, regional and local policies, the Longford Town LAP should seek to minimise adverse impacts on the water environment.

The SEA has responded to this through the inclusion of Environmental Protection Objectives relating to the protection and enhancement of water quality and quantity.

Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

3.32 In order to align with international, national, regional and local policies, the Longford Town LAP should seek to protect heritage and cultural assets (both designated and undesignated), and local character and distinctiveness; and to improve access to heritage assets.

The SEA has responded to this through the inclusion of Environmental Protection Objectives relating to the conservation of the historic environment and the character of landscapes and townscapes, and the improvement of access to heritage assets.

Landscape

3.33 In order to align with international, national, regional and local policies, the Longford LAP should seek to protect and enhance valued landscapes; protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the townscape; and to ensure that new development is designed to be sympathetic to local character and history including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

The SEA has responded to this through the inclusion of Environmental Protection Objectives relating to the protection of the character and visual amenity of landscapes / townscapes.

Material assets

3.34 In order to align with international, national, regional and local policies, the Longford Town LAP should seek to develop sustainable compact development with integrated infrastructure; to prevent loss or sterilisation of minerals from new development; and to ensure the effective management of waste and the efficient use of minerals during the construction of new development.

The SEA has responded to this through the inclusion of Environmental Protection Objectives relating to avoiding the sterilisation of mineral resources; waste management; and the efficient use of land and natural resources.

Chapter 4

Environmental baseline information

4.1 'Baseline information' refers to the existing environmental, social and economic characteristics of the area likely to be affected by the plan, and their likely evolution without implementation of new policies. Baseline information provides the context for assessing the sustainability of the proposals in the Longford Town LAP. It also provides the basis for identifying trends, predicting the likely effects of the document and monitoring its outcomes. The requirements for baseline data vary widely, but it must be relevant to environmental issues, be sensitive to change and should ideally relate to records which are sufficient to identify trends.

Schedule 2B of the SEA Regulations requires information to be provided on:

"The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan.

The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.

Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to the Birds Directive or the Habitats Directive."

4.2 To fulfil the requirements of Schedule 2B, this chapter, supported by **Appendix C**, sets out a description of the state of the environment at present; a discussion of the key issues / problems currently being faced in the study area;

a description of the expected evolution of the environment without the LAP; and the corresponding Environmental Protection Objectives in the EPO Framework.

4.3 It is key that the current state of the environment is described using the most up-to-date environmental data, information and reports. Where updates of significant environmental data and associated reports become available, this new information has been incorporated into the baseline of the Environmental Report.

Key environmental issues and likely evolution without the Longford Town LAP

Biodiversity, flora and fauna

4.4 County Longford contains many areas of high ecological value including the Royal Canal pNHA in Longford Town. Development proposed in the Longford Town LAP has the potential to put pressure on biodiversity sites including through disturbance and damage from recreational use, air pollution, and loss of functionally linked habitat. Although designated sites represent the most valued habitats, the overall ecological network is important for biodiversity as a whole. Fragmentation and erosion of habitats and the ecological network in the town is an ongoing threat to biodiversity.

4.5 If the Longford Town LAP was not implemented, it is considered that adequate protection would be afforded to Longford's habitats and species through policies in the Longford County Development Plan (most notably through the policies in Chapter 12: Natural Heritage and the Environment, and in particular policies CPO 12.1- CPO 12.85) as well as through the statutory protection of certain habitats and species. However, without the Longford Town LAP it is possible that future development could be sited inappropriately and

adversely impact biodiversity sites, even if indirectly. The LAP presents an opportunity to manage the sensitivities of the sites and biodiversity networks, for example by locating development away from the most sensitive locations, provide for new green infrastructure, and ensure that growth does not adversely affect their current condition but where possible contributes to their improvement.

4.6 The corresponding Environmental Protection Objective is:

- **1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna** - Conserve and enhance Longford's biodiversity including designated sites, habitats and protected species.
  - Does the LAP conserve and enhance designated and undesignated ecological assets, including promoting habitat connectivity; avoiding fragmentation; and adverse impacts on habitats and species from development-related changes to air quality, water quality and quantity, noise levels and light levels?
  - Does the LAP maintain and enhance the nature network of ecological assets and green/blue spaces, taking into account the impacts of climate change?

Population and human health

4.7 Longford has a young and growing population which will place additional demand on local services and facilities including housing, education, healthcare and childcare services. In line with national trends, the older population in Longford is projected to grow significantly, placing additional pressures on housing and social care services, as well as public transport services. Without the LAP, it is likely that services and facilities will still be delivered. However, it is less likely that these will be in appropriate locations, or of sufficient quality and quantity to keep pace with demand arising from new residential development. The LAP offers an opportunity to deliver these in a coherent, sustainable manner alongside development.

4.8 Longford Town will accommodate a substantial number of additional new homes over the County Development Plan period to 2027. Although Longford has a projected social and affordable housing need of less than 5%, anecdotally there appears to be a strong demand for affordable housing, based on the number of applications refused for social housing support indicating that there is a cohort of people needing housing support in the county. Longford's growing young population will create additional demand for larger family homes (the current demand is highest for two-bed homes and three-bed homes), while relatively low levels of income will need to be taken into account through the provision of affordable accommodation. There is a need to provide for housing to meet the needs of the aging population, such as Age Friendly Homes, adaptable dwellings and supported living. There is also a need for new accommodation to be developed that meets the needs of the whole community including members of the Travelling Community, and people with disabilities. Substantial spatial variation exists in housing deprivation across Longford Town. Longford Town currently has a high proportion of housing stock that is vacant (13.73%), significantly higher than the national average of 2%. The LAP offers the opportunity to facilitate and expedite the delivery of a variety of housing (size, tenures, design), including affordable housing and housing to meet the needs of an ageing population. The LAP also offers the opportunity to target residential development in areas where the barriers to housing are greatest.

4.9 In the 2022 Census, Longford Town recorded the lowest number of people in 'very good' health (4,626 people; 42.24%) and the highest number of people in Ireland who stated that their health was 'bad' (262 people; 2.4%) or 'very bad' (67 people; 0.61%) **[See reference 57]**. There is a strong correlation between people reporting poor health and less affluent areas **[See reference 58]**. The LAP has an important role to play in encouraging active lifestyles through the provision of sufficient quality open spaces/recreational resources and active travel routes. Without the LAP, the current negative trends may continue.

4.10 Commuting and HGV traffic travelling through the town contribute towards traffic congestion and a decline in air quality. There is potential for the Longford Town LAP to reduce air and/or noise pollution by creating a safe and accessible

active travel network, thereby improving the health and wellbeing of the population of Longford.

4.11 The most densely populated areas in Longford Town are generally in the centre, south and eastern parts of the town. These areas tend to coincide with higher levels of relative deprivation and unemployment, along with lower levels of educational attainment. The Longford Town LAP provides an opportunity to help close the gap through spatial planning, particularly with a view to encouraging new development that will provide jobs, raise income levels, support education/skills/training, reduce crime, and remove barriers to housing and services.

4.12 In the absence of the Longford Town LAP, the policies in the Longford County Development Plan would apply, however, without the LAP, these sustainability issues would be less well addressed, and the opportunities identified above may not be fully realised.

4.13 The corresponding Environmental Protection Objective is:

- **2: Population and human health** - Create a healthy living environment, encourage healthy lifestyles, enable people to stay independent, reduce inequalities, provide a suitable mix of new and affordable housing to meet identified needs of the whole community, and ensure adequate access to services and facilities for all.
    - Does the LAP provide the amount and mix (size, tenures) of homes to meet local needs over the plan period?
    - Will it increase the range and affordability of housing to support the growing population and for all social groups?
    - Will the LAP address the housing needs of older people, disabled people and vulnerable groups e.g., accessible and adaptable housing, extra care housing or sheltered housing?
    - Does the LAP reduce the quantity of vacant homes in the town?
    - Does the LAP reduce the need to travel by private car to access essential services, facilities and employment areas?

- Does the LAP promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging and facilitating active travel, such as walking and cycling?
- Does the LAP promote physical activity and outdoor recreation by maintaining, connecting and creating a range of accessible, new, high quality, multifunctional open spaces, green and blue infrastructure, recreation, play and sports facilities?
- Does the LAP protect physical and mental health and wellbeing by preventing, avoiding and mitigating adverse health effects associated with air pollution, noise, vibration, odour, and contamination of land and water?

Climatic factors

4.14 There is a need to significantly reduce Longford's greenhouse gas emissions to help meet international and national greenhouse gas reduction targets. The effects of climate change in Longford are likely to result in extreme weather events (e.g., intense rainfall and flooding, prolonged high temperatures and drought) becoming more common and more intense. Climate change is therefore likely to affect habitats and species and how people live, work and play. In the absence of the Longford Town LAP, the actions outlined in the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and the policies of the Longford County Development Plan will apply which seek to respond to the Climate Emergency by reducing energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions; improving energy efficiency of buildings; maintaining and enhancing green infrastructure; and supporting low carbon and renewable energy generation (Climate Change policies CPO3.1 -CPO3.19).

4.15 The Longford Town LAP provides an opportunity to adapt and mitigate climatic factors by promoting sustainable development, for example by locating development in sustainable locations that would not be significantly impacted by flooding (or likely to increase flooding elsewhere) and ensuring it is designed to be flood resilient; reducing the need to travel by private car; creating and enhancing green and blue infrastructure networks; incorporating Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) as part of new developments; identifying

suitable locations for new public EV charging infrastructure; promoting low carbon design and energy efficiency of new developments; and promoting the use of renewable or low carbon energy sources in new developments.

4.16 The corresponding Environmental Protection Objectives are:

- **3: Energy and climate change mitigation** - Minimise greenhouse gas emissions and encourage energy efficiency and the transition to renewable / low carbon energy sources in new developments.
  - Does the LAP minimise energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions from transport, domestic, commercial and industrial sources?
  - Does the LAP promote energy efficiency by encouraging the use of energy efficient buildings and the use of renewable or low carbon energy sources in development?
  - Does the LAP encourage the provision of renewable energy infrastructure in appropriate locations?
  - Does the LAP encourage the use of sustainable construction methods and materials in development, with a focus on reducing the embodied carbon in new buildings and infrastructure?
- **4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation** - Reduce the risk and effects of flooding, both now and in the future.
  - Does the LAP seek to build resilience and adapt to the impacts of climate change such as flood, drought, overheating and extreme weather events particularly on groups more vulnerable to the effects of climate change?
  - Does the LAP direct development away from areas at highest risk of flooding and avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, taking into account the effects of climate change and mitigate residual risks without increasing flood risk elsewhere?
  - Does the LAP promote the use of SuDS, where appropriate?

- Does the LAP encourage the creation, management and enhancement of a coherent green and blue infrastructure (GBI) network?
- Does the LAP identify, allocate and safeguard open space for flood storage, where appropriate?
- Does the LAP seek to manage current and future flood risks to the historic environment?

Air

4.17 In the absence of the Longford Town LAP, the legally binding ceilings for emissions of air pollutants would continue to apply set by the EU Air Quality Directive **[See reference 59]**, as well as the policies in the Longford County Development Plan. These plans support the preservation of 'best ambient air quality' in the county, the promotion of alternative and sustainable transport methods to maintain good air quality, and the retention and planting of green infrastructure as a means of air purification and filtering (Air Quality policies CPO12.104 -CPO12.108). Additionally, Longford Town's status as a smokeless fuel town and decarbonisation area would continue to apply.

4.18 However, the Longford Town LAP provides an opportunity to improve air quality in the town by:

- locating development sustainably i.e. with good access to services and sustainable transport modes which will reduce the need to travel by private vehicles;
- developing an accessible and inclusive transport network in the town that supports a modal shift from private car use to public transport and active travel;
- supporting the uptake of electric vehicles and e-bikes in preference to private vehicles through the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure; and
- developing and enhancing green infrastructure, particularly along major roads.

4.19 The corresponding Environmental Protection Objective is:

- **5: Air** - Improve air quality by reducing emissions and concentrations of harmful atmospheric pollutants and avoiding their emission.
    - Does the LAP improve air quality by minimising pollutant emissions from all sources?
    - Does the LAP reduce the need to travel by petrol or diesel vehicles?
    - Does the LAP encourage a modal shift to sustainable modes of transport by supporting maintenance and expansion of public and active transport networks?
    - Does the LAP support the provision of facilities for electric vehicle charging?

Soil

4.20 There are several vacant sites in Longford, however, the extent of infill / brownfield land and vacant and derelict buildings is likely to be reduced in the future as the regeneration of Longford Town progresses. The town contains one proposed Geological Site, St. Mel's Cathedral, which should not be lost or compromised as new development occurs. There are several notable construction projects that are either planned, programmed or underway in Longford, which will require significant amounts of mineral resources in the future, including the N4/M4 Mullingar to Longford (Roosky) Upgrade which will pass Longford Town and the Royal Canal Way.

4.21 In the absence of the Longford Town LAP, the policies in the Longford County Development Plan would apply. These support the protection of Geological Sites, the reuse of brownfield land, the remediation of contaminated land, and the protection of high-quality agricultural soils (Soil Protection policies CP012.115-CPO12.124). However, the Longford Town LAP provides an opportunity to ensure that development is located and designed to take into account the sensitivities of the soil environment and geological sites of value. Furthermore, the Longford Town LAP has the opportunity to support the

regeneration of Longford Town's infill/brownfield land through regeneration of particular sites.

4.22 The corresponding Environmental Protection Objective is:

- **6: Soil** - Conserve and enhance Longford's soil resources and geological sites.
    - Does the LAP help to maintain Longford's soil resources by directing new development to brownfield / previously developed land in preference to greenfield land, where appropriate?
    - Does the LAP avoid the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land?
    - Does the LAP conserve designated and undesignated geological assets?

Water

4.23 The River Camlin is failing to meet the WFD objective of 'good' ecological and chemical status. Without the Longford Town LAP, it is possible that new developments could be located in areas that could lead to further water quality issues and risks to the natural environment. The water environment has the potential to be both directly and indirectly affected by the Longford Town LAP, with development potentially contributing to the pollution of nearby watercourses and groundwater and adversely affecting drainage of surface water. However, existing safeguards, such as the Water Framework Regulations, would help to reduce the potential for this to occur. Policies in the County Development Plan also seek to protect and enhance water quality (Water Quality and Groundwater Protection Policies CPO12.92 – CPO12.103). The LAP provides an opportunity to ensure that development is located and designed to take into account the sensitivity of the water environment; to plan for adequate wastewater infrastructure; to incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS); and to promote water efficiency and grey water recycling.

4.24 The corresponding Environmental Protection Objective is:

- **7: Water** - Preserve and enhance the quality and quantity of waterbodies and groundwater.
    - Does the LAP maintain or improve the quality of waterbodies and groundwater by avoiding adverse impacts from pollution / changes to drainage?
    - Does the LAP minimise and mitigate runoff from new development and infrastructure?
    - Does the LAP minimise inappropriate development in groundwater Source Protection Areas?
    - Does the LAP promote the efficient use of water, such as minimising water consumption and abstraction and by encouraging re-use of grey and rainwater?

4.25 This EPO is closely linked to EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation.

Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

4.26 There are many heritage assets and areas of historical and cultural interest in Longford that could be adversely affected by poorly located or designed development. The increasing occurrence of extreme weather events means that all cultural asset structures, particularly those in a ruinous or dilapidated condition, are susceptible to the effects of climate change. Air pollution can also contribute to the degradation of heritage assets. Increasing transport levels from the projected population increase can have a range of direct and indirect effects on heritage assets including effects from noise and air pollution from busy traffic in close proximity to culturally significant areas which may make them less appealing to visit or decrease their visual amenity.

4.27 In the absence of the Longford Town LAP, the statutory protection of important heritage assets, such as the protection of RPS and ACA designations through the Planning and Development Act and the National Monuments Acts would continue to apply, as well as the policies in the Longford County Development Plan (Built and Cultural Heritage Policies CPO 11.1 - 11.57) which support the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings and the promotion of access to and understanding of heritage assets in Longford.

4.28 However, the Longford Town LAP provides opportunities to protect these assets (including their settings) from inappropriate development at a local level. It is likely that the maintenance and management of existing buildings and infrastructure, and the delivery of any new development, would be required to consider the potential effects on any nearby heritage assets and historic areas, and to incorporate elements that help to enhance their setting.

4.29 The Longford Town LAP also supports heritage-led urban regeneration of the historic town including at Connolly Barracks and the Camlin Quarter area of the town. The regeneration of the town will protect and enhance heritage assets and their settings, as well as improve accessibility and interpretation of distinctive features of local heritage.

4.30 The corresponding Environmental Protection Objective is:

- **8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage** - Conserve and enhance the significant qualities, fabric, setting and accessibility of Longford's historic environment.
    - Does the LAP conserve designated and undesignated heritage assets, including their setting and their contribution to wider local character and distinctiveness, avoiding adverse effects on their significance from direct loss, damage, or detraction from their setting?
    - Does the LAP support heritage-led regeneration of Longford Town?
    - Does the LAP improve access to, as well as enjoyment and understanding of, the local historic environment?

Landscape

4.31 Major new development projects, including those relating to regeneration and public realm enhancements, transport infrastructure, and renewable and non-renewable energy development have the potential to influence both positive and negative landscape / townscape change. In the absence of the Longford Town LAP, the policies in the Longford County Development Plan will apply which seek to conserve and enhance the uniqueness of each Landscape Character Type (LCT); preserve important views; support public realm improvements; encourage the redevelopment of infill / brownfield land in preference to greenfield sites; support the regeneration of key strategic sites in Longford Town; and develop the green and blue infrastructure network (Landscape Character policies CPO14.1 – CPO14.37; Regeneration policies CPO6.62 – 6.85; and Green Infrastructure policies CPO13.1 – CPO13.35).

4.32 The Longford Town LAP offers an opportunity to ensure that the variation in landscape character is taken into account in the design and siting of new development, and that opportunities for the protection and enhancement of the landscape are maximised. The LAP provides an opportunity to ensure that local level landscape sensitivities are protected from inappropriate development; Longford Town's landscape and townscapes are enhanced, particularly areas that currently detract from the overall landscape quality of the town; and urban and rural connectivity is enhanced which will deliver improved access to valued landscapes, townscapes and viewpoints. Without the LAP, these sustainability issues would be less well addressed, and the opportunities may not be fully realised.

4.33 The corresponding Environmental Protection Objective is:

- **9: Landscape** - Conserve and enhance Longford's landscape and townscape, ensuring development does not detract from the quality of views and local distinctiveness.
    - Does the LAP adversely impact, protect or enhance the townscape and visual amenity of Longford Town?

- Does the LAP reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land?
- Does the LAP encourage a scale/density of development in keeping with important and valued features of the local landscape?
- Does the LAP encourage high-quality design principles to respect local character and visual amenity?
- Does the LAP encourage the retention and planting of green infrastructure alongside development to protect landscape character and create a sense of place?
- Does the LAP improve access to valued landscapes, townscapes and viewpoints, including by sustainable and active travel modes to reduce the impact of road traffic?

Material assets

4.34 Commuting by private car is the most dominant mode of transport in Longford Town at 57.6%, although this is slightly below the national average of 63%. Longford Town experiences low levels of public transport usage (2.8% compared to 5% nationally), poor train frequencies, limited bus services and connectivity, fragmented and poor cycling facilities, and traffic/parking issues along Main Street.

4.35 In the absence of the Longford Town LAP, the policies in the Longford County Development Plan would apply (Transport policies CPO5.1 – CPO5.80). These support measures to reduce dependency on cars; improve traffic and travel management; develop active travel networks; support a modal shift from private car use to walking, cycling and public transport; and to direct new development to sustainable locations which limits the need to travel and offer a choice of transport modes. However, without targeted action at the local level, it is anticipated that car dependency will continue to increase with the rising population. The Longford Town LAP provides an opportunity to develop an accessible and inclusive transport network that supports the needs of the population of Longford Town by:

- Reducing dependency on cars in favour of increased walking, cycling and public transport use.
- Supporting a modal shift from private car use to public transport and active travel.
- Reducing road accidents and creating a sense of safety for all transport network users.

4.36 New development and population growth will generate additional waste which should be managed according to the waste hierarchy. In the absence of the LAP, the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy 2020-2025**[See reference 60]** would apply which supports driving waste management up the waste hierarchy. However, the LAP provides the opportunity to guide the sustainable use of resources and minimise waste impacts by:

- promoting the use of locally sourced, reclaimed, recycled or low environmental impact materials in construction; and,
- encouraging the re-use/enhancement (to high standards of sustainable resource-efficient design) of existing buildings and infrastructure.

4.37 Currently, there are surface water drainage deficiencies in some areas within Longford Town, including Springlawn and the Teffia Park/Dublin Road Junction. These areas are associated with combined sewer systems. Furthermore, the Longford Wastewater Treatment Plant may need to be upgraded, however, any upgrade works would not commence within the lifetime of the LAP. In the interim period, there may be increased need for new developments to install onsite treatment plants to treat wastewater. These would be subject to meeting agreed parameters and securing appropriate planning permission, licences etc.

4.38 In the absence of the LAP, the policies of the Longford County Development Plan would apply (Water Supply and Distribution CPO5.83 – CPO5.90 and Wastewater CPO5.91 – CPO5.99) which seek to maximise water infrastructure capacity, conserve water use, and protect and enhance water quality. However, the LAP provides opportunities to ensure adequate drinking water provision and wastewater treatment services by:

- Seeking to ensure the adequate supply and quality of water, recognising future demands from population growth;
- Extending wastewater services where resources permit, utilising developer contributions;
- Separating any remaining combined sewers within the town;
- Restricting large-scale development on unserviced land; and,
- Requiring new development to incorporate surface water drainage facilities, including SUDS.

4.39 The corresponding Environmental Protection Objective is:

- **10: Material assets** - Use resources intelligently, optimising reuse and recovery of materials, minimising impacts on existing infrastructure and the transport network.
  - Does the LAP optimise existing infrastructure and provide new infrastructure sufficient to meet demand?
  - Does the LAP maximise energy efficiency and minimise the consumption of non-renewable energy?
  - Does the LAP encourage the re-use/enhancement of existing buildings and promote the use of recycled and secondary materials in construction?
  - Does the LAP support the efficient use of natural resources, minimising waste and promoting appropriate waste management?

Chapter 5

SEA findings of the Longford Town Local Area Plan

Introduction

5.1 This chapter presents a summary of the SEA findings for the appraisal of the LAP's Vision, 12 strategic aims and associated objectives relating to core strategy compliance, residential development, economic development, tourism, regeneration and placemaking, social infrastructure, natural heritage and green infrastructure, built and cultural heritage, energy and communications, sustainable transport, climate change, and implementation and monitoring. The objectives have been grouped where possible to maximise efficiencies. The chapter also summarises the findings of the assessment of four reasonable alternatives (as described in **Chapter 2**). All of these were assessed against the EPO Framework presented in **Chapter 2**.

5.2 This chapter also outlines the potential secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short-medium-long term, direct and indirect effects which are likely from the implementation of the Longford Town LAP.

5.3 The detailed SEA matrices for the proposed LAP and reasonable alternatives are presented in **Appendix D**.

SEA findings of the reasonable alternatives

5.4 One of the critical roles of the SEA is to facilitate an evaluation of the likely environmental consequences of a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposals in the Longford Town LAP. The reason for assessing alternatives is to determine if the significant adverse effects of the Longford Town LAP can be reduced or avoided. Therefore, the SEA must appraise not only the proposed 'objectives' for inclusion in the plan but also 'reasonable alternatives' to these. This implies that alternatives that are not reasonable do not need to be subject to appraisal.

5.5 One of the reasonable alternatives considered was the 'do nothing' scenario i.e. continued use of the existing Longford Town LAP 2016-2022. However, this was discounted as a reasonable alternative as the Longford County Development Plan (CDP) 2021-2027 **[See reference** 61**]** (see **Chapter 3**) requires the preparation of a Local Area Plan for the town within two years from the adoption of the Longford CDP. A scenario which promotes the even development of zoned land was also considered. However, this was discounted as a reasonable alternative as it is not feasible to develop Tier 2 sites (not currently serviced with infrastructure) as quickly as Tier 1 sites (serviced land).

5.6 Therefore, the following reasonable alternatives considered in the Environmental Report are:

- **Alternative 1: Town Centre First Approach** – Develop Longford Town in line with the Draft Town Centre First Approach Strategy and the key priorities for growth of a 'Key Town' in the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (i.e. more consolidated and compact growth).
- **Alternative 2 - Dispersed growth** (less consolidated and compact).

5.7 The results of the appraisal findings for the reasonable alternatives in the Longford Town LAP are described in this section with a summary of the SEA effects detailed in **Table 5.1.**

Table 5.1: Summary of the likely sustainability effects of the reasonable alternatives of the Longford Town LAP

	Reasonable Alternative 1 – Town Centre First Approach	Reasonable Alternative 2 – Dispersed Growth
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	+/-	--
Population and Human Health	++/-	+/-
Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	++/-	--
Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	++/-	--
Air	++/-	--
Soil	++/-	--
Water	++/-	--
Cultural Heritage	++/-	-
Landscape	++/-	--
Material Assets	++/-	--

Reasonable alternatives

Reasonable Alternative 1 – Town Centre First Approach

5.8 Reasonable Alternative 1 seeks to develop Longford Town in line with the Draft Longford Town Centre First Approach Strategy and the priorities for growth of a 'Key Town' in the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities. The main aim of this approach therefore is to promote more consolidated and compact growth. However, it will still be necessary to develop edge of settlement greenfield sites to meet the demand for housing and employment, although the extent of this would be more limited than a dispersed growth scenario.

5.9 A mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is identified for Reasonable Alternative 1 for **EPO 10: Material Assets** as a town centre first approach would regenerate brownfield land; reuse existing buildings; and be more efficient in terms of infrastructure provision and resource use. However, this may also result in more pressure on services and facilities, including infrastructure such as public transport, sewers and water supply. There will also be a need to develop some greenfield sites closest to the town which would be an inefficient use of resources.

5.10 A mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is identified for Reasonable Alternative 1 for **EPO 2: Population and human health** as it would promote higher density development in the town which would result in people living closer to services and facilities and boost the vitality of the area. Higher density living also promotes more active travel and greater levels of social inclusion as well as providing natural surveillance, which all enhance health, wellbeing and safety of Longford's residents. In addition, the town centre first approach supports the development of a socially connected town with inclusive spaces and places which are accessible, age friendly, safe and welcoming, as well as the development of walkways and river access. However,

more development in urban areas may increase pressure on existing services and also result in reduced living conditions due to the density and less outdoor space.

5.11 Reasonable Alternative 1 would focus development in more urban areas, meaning greater reuse of buildings and less development of greenfield land. Although brownfield land has some biodiversity value, encouraging development on these sites over greenfield sites which often contain more habitats will have a positive effect on biodiversity. However denser development could also result in fewer green spaces in urban areas for biodiversity. As identified above, there will still be a need to develop sequential greenfield land. As such, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna.**

5.12 Reasonable Alternative 1 would reduce the need to travel by private vehicle to access services and facilities and would increases access to sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling. Positive effects are identified for **EPO 3: Energy / Climate Change Mitigation** and **5: Air** as this would result in decreased transport-related emissions and subsequently improve air quality. However, negative effects are also expected as the scale of development proposed in the town centre could attract more people to the area resulting in increased traffic and congestion, resulting in worsening of air quality. Residents and employees of the edge of settlement sites may also be more car dependent due to the distance from the town centre.

5.13 Mixed effects (significant positive / minor negative) are expected for **EPO 8: Cultural Heritage** and **EPO 9: Landscape** as the reuse of existing buildings and/or brownfield land will tackle physical dereliction which will enhance townscape character, visual amenity and the setting of heritage assets. However existing urban areas tend to contain the highest concentrations of heritage assets and these assets could be adversely affected by concentrated new development. The Town Centre First Strategy promotes Longford as a town of cultural and heritage significance which may increase the appreciation of and accessibility to heritage assets, however, if access is not properly managed, this could have an adverse effect on heritage assets. Development of

some areas of greenfield land at the edge of the settlement may adversely affect landscape character and visual amenity.

5.14 Positive effects are identified for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation, 6: Soil** and **7: Water** as Reasonable Alternative 1 promotes the reuse of existing buildings and brownfield land which would prevent soil sealing of greenfield land. This would aid in minimising and mitigating runoff from new developments and would reduce flood risk. Directing new development to the town centre will enable connections to the public water and waste water infrastructure, avoiding the need for individual septic tanks to be installed which can increase the risk of pollution. In addition, the Town Centre First Strategy promotes prioritising climate change adaptation. An adverse effect is also identified as there would still be some greenfield development at the settlement edge.

Reasonable Alternative 2 – Dispersed Growth

5.15 Reasonable Alternative 2 supports dispersed growth in Longford. This approach supports development which is less consolidated and compact.

5.16 A significant negative effect is identified for Reasonable Alternative 2 for **EPO 10: Material Assets** as dispersed growth will likely result in the development of significant areas of greenfield land. This could sterilise mineral resources as well as resulting in the inefficient use of land by focusing development on undeveloped areas. Dispersed development will not optimise the use of existing infrastructure and will likely require the development of new infrastructure. A minor positive effect is identified as it is likely that some new development would occur in the town centre on brownfield land which is a more efficient use of resources.

5.17 Reasonable Alternative 2 would have significant negative effects for **EPOs 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna, 4: Flood risk / climate change adaptation, 6: Soil,** and **7: Water** as it would likely result in the development and loss of significant areas of greenfield land, which would harm the natural environment

through habitat loss and subsequent fragmentation of the ecological network. The loss of greenfield land would adversely affect soil quality resulting in soil sealing which reduces the extent of permeable surfaces, increasing surface water runoff into nearby watercourses, and flood risk. Unlike compact growth of the town which has existing infrastructure, the dispersal of growth will require new developments to install individual waste water infrastructure which increases the risk of water pollution. A minor positive effect is identified as it is likely that some new development would occur in the town centre on brownfield land.

5.18 Significant negative effects are expected for **EPOs 3: Energy / Climate Change Mitigation** and **5: Air** as access to services and facilities would be more difficult, especially via active travel and public transport due to distance and a relative lack of provision of public transport outside the town centre. This would likely result in a higher dependence on and use of cars and less active travel, resulting in an increase in transport emissions. A minor positive effect is identified as it is likely that some new development would occur in the town centre which would avail of the sustainable and active transport infrastructure.

5.19 A mixed (minor positive and significant negative) effect is identified for **EPO 2: Population and human health** as development would be more dispersed and take place away from urban centres where there are already employment and education facilities. This would have negative impacts on social inclusion and access to these facilities would therefore be more difficult, especially via active travel and public transport due to distance and a relative lack of provision of public transport outside of the town centre. This would reduce active travel and increase vehicle-derived air pollution which will impact the physical and mental health of Longford's population. However, Reasonable Alternative 2 may decrease pressure on more urban services and facilities, though new ones would be required to be built elsewhere. More dispersed development may also result in better living conditions; access to more space, including open space for recreation; and be less polluted than urban centres. Although it is noted that access to community, health and sports facilities, including GPs is relatively limited.

5.20 Mixed effects (significant negative / minor positive) are identified for EPOs **8: Cultural heritage** and **9: Landscape** as dispersed development could adversely impact landscape character, visual amenity, and tranquillity and lead to settlement coalescence. Development of greenfield land could disturb buried archaeology and impact the setting of heritage assets. Minor positive effects are expected as it is likely that some new development would take place in the town centre which would reduce the extent of brownfield land and vacant / derelict properties which would enhance townscape character.

Conclusion on why the preferred approach was chosen in light of other reasonable alternatives

5.21 The 'Dispersed Growth' scenario is likely to result in the most adverse effects across all SEA topic areas. The most positive effects are likely to be experienced by the scenario which proposes a more consolidated and compact growth, although adverse effects are also likely to occur for this option as it will be necessary to develop greenfield land closest to the town centre to meet the demand for housing and employment.

5.22 The proposed approach for the LAP is to develop the town in line with the Town Centre First Strategy and the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities. This approach minimises urban sprawl; reduces the need to travel by private vehicle; improves access to services and facilities, including sustainable and active travel infrastructure; enhances the townscape character, visual amenity and setting of heritage assets; and is the most efficient use of resources.

SEA findings of the Vision and Strategic Aims of the Longford Town LAP

5.23 The results of the appraisal findings for the 'Vision and Strategic Aims' of the Longford Town LAP are described in this section with a summary of the SEA effects detailed in **Table 5.2**.

Table 5.2: Summary of the likely sustainability effects of the 'Vision and Strategic Aims' of the Longford Town LAP

EPO	Vision	Strategic Aims
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	+	+
Population and Human Health	+	++
Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	0	+
Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	+	+
Air	+	+
Soil	+	+
Water	+	+
Cultural Heritage	+	+
Landscape	+	+
Material Assets	+	+

EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora

5.24 Minor positive effects are identified for the Vision and Strategic Aims for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna**. The Vision and Strategic Aim 7 seek to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the natural heritage and biodiversity of Longford Town.

Overall, a minor positive effect is identified for the Vision and Strategic Aims for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna.**

EPO 2: Population and human health

A minor positive effect is identified for **EPO 2: Population and human health** as the Vision aims to deliver development in an equitable manner for all people within Longford Town. A significant positive effect is identified for the Strategic Aims as the majority support the enhanced wellbeing of Longford Town's population through the development of integrated and sustainable neighbourhoods (Strategic Aims 2 and 3); the development of new social and healthcare infrastructure (Strategic Aim 6); the development of sustainable and active travel networks (Strategic Aim 10); and the protection and creation of new areas of open space and green infrastructure (Strategic Aim 7). Each of these will likely contribute to promoting active and healthy lifestyles by improving the town's environment and encouraging access to the outdoors.

Overall, a minor positive effect is identified for the Vision and Strategic Aims for **EPO 2: Population and human health.**

EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation

5.25 Minor positive effects are identified for **EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation** as the Vision and Strategic Aims 10 and 11 support sustainable modes of transport and low-carbon development, which will decrease emissions and improve air quality.

Overall, a minor positive effect is identified for the Vision and Strategic Aims for **EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation.**

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

5.26 Minor positive effects are identified for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation** as the Vision and Strategic Aim 11 seek to conserve and protect the natural environment and ensure Longford Town becomes a climate resilient town.

Overall, a minor positive effect is identified for the Vision and Strategic Aims for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation.**

EPO 5: Air

5.27 Minor positive effects are identified for the Vision and Strategic Aims for **EPO 5: Air** for the same reasons as outlined for EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation.

Overall, a minor positive effect is identified for the Vision and Strategic Aims for **EPO 5: Air.**

EPO 6: Soil

5.28 Minor positive effects are identified for the Vision and Strategic Aims for **EPO 6: Soil**. The Vision seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment. Similarly, Strategic Aim 7 seeks to protect and enhance the natural heritage and biodiversity of Longford Town which will indirectly safeguard soil.

Overall, a minor positive effect is identified for the Vision and Strategic Aims for **EPO 6: Soil.**

EPO 7: Water

5.29 Minor positive effects are identified for the Vision and Strategic Aims for **EPO 7: Water**. The Vision seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment. Strategic Aim 7 seeks to protect and enhance the natural heritage and biodiversity of Longford Town which will protect water quantity and quality.

Overall, a minor positive effect is identified for the Vision and Strategic Aims for **EPO 7: Water.**

EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

5.30 Minor positive effects are expected for the Vision and Strategic Aims for **EPO 8: Cultural heritage** as they seek to conserve and manage Longford's unique heritage assets, as well as promote sustainable tourism which will increase access to and understanding of Longford Town's historic environment. In addition, the Strategic Aims seek to tackle problems of lack of investment and physical dereliction and decay.

Overall, a minor positive effect is identified for the Vision and Strategic Aims for **EPO 8: Cultural heritage.**

EPO 9: Landscape

5.31 The conservation and protection of Longford's natural and cultural heritage will result in minor positive effects for **EPO 9: Landscape**. The Strategic Aims promote sustainable tourism which will increase access to and understanding of Longford Town's landscape. In addition, the Strategic Aims outline actions to tackle problems of lack of investment and physical dereliction and decay (including via including integrated land use).

Overall, a minor positive effect is identified for the Vision and Strategic Aims for **EPO 9: Landscape.**

EPO 10: Material assets

5.32 Minor positive effects are identified for the Vision and Strategic Aims for **EPO 10: Material assets** as they seek to ensure that the delivery of new infrastructure makes efficient use of land; and that vacant and derelict buildings are reused to optimise existing infrastructure.

Overall, a minor positive effect is identified for the Vision and Strategic Aims for **EPO 10: Material assets.**

SEA findings of the objectives of the Longford Town LAP

5.33 The results of the appraisal findings for the 299 objectives in the Longford Town LAP are described in this section. The SEA findings are separated into sections that correspond with the chapters of the LAP. Where possible, similar objectives have been grouped into the same assessment to reduce repetition.

Core Strategy Compliance

5.34 The results of the appraisal findings for the 'Core Strategy Compliance' objectives in the Longford Town LAP are described in this section with a summary of the SEA effects presented in **Table 5.3**.

Table 5.3: Summary of the likely sustainability effects of the 'Core Strategy Compliance' objectives of the Longford Town LAP

EPO	CS 01 and CS 02	CS 03 – CS 13	CS 14	CS 15
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	+/-?	+/-?	++	0
Population and Human Health	++/-	++/-	0	+
Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	++/-	++/-	0	0
Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	+/-	+/-	0	0
Air	++/-	++/-	0	0
Soil	++/-	++/-	+	0
Water	+/-	+/-	+	0
Cultural Heritage	+/-	+/-?	0	++
Landscape	++/-	++/-?	0	++
Material Assets	++	++	0	+

EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora

5.35 Mixed effects are expected for the Core Strategy Compliance objectives for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna**. A significant positive effect is expected for CS 14 as it directly supports the protection of the qualifying interests of the European sites, ensuring that significant adverse effects do not occur as a result of the implementation of the LAP.

5.36 Uncertain mixed effects (minor positive / minor negative) are expected for objectives CS 01-13. A higher density of development in the town could result in fewer green spaces in urban areas. In addition, brownfield sites can still harbour valuable biodiversity which may be adversely impacted by development. However, focusing new development in the town centre core will preserve greenfield land on the periphery of Longford Town from development, protecting habitats and species.

Overall, an uncertain mixed (minor positive / minor negative) effect is expected for the Core Strategy Compliance objectives for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora**.

EPO 2: Population and human health

5.37 Mixed effects are expected for the Core Strategy Compliance objectives for **EPO 2: Population and human health**. A significant positive effect is expected for objectives CS 01 - 13 as they support the provision of housing to meet the needs of Longford Town's population. The creation of sustainable compact settlements will ensure residents have good access to employment opportunities, and educational, health and community services / facilities. Compact growth will also promote active travel and thus improve the health of residents. However, a minor negative effect is also identified for objectives CS 01-13 as focussing more people and new developments to a limited number of locations may place pressure on services and facilities. A minor positive effect is identified for CS 15 as preserving the character of the ACA may promote increased enjoyment of the area and may encourage more investment in the area, with greater opportunities for skills development and employment.

Overall, a mixed (significant positive / minor negative) effect is expected for the Core Strategy Compliance objectives for **EPO 2: Population and human health.**

EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation

5.38 The prioritisation of sequential development of settlements and compact growth may encourage the use of sustainable transport modes, including active travel, due to proximity to services and facilities. This may result in decreased greenhouse gas emissions. However, development on greenfield land further from the town centre may still occur in the future, which could increase reliance on private vehicles for transport. The increase in population in the town centre could also result in increased traffic and congestion as private car travel remains the most popular form of travel. Furthermore, the CDP supports the maintenance of national road network capacity which may encourage travel by fossil fuel powered vehicles. Therefore, a mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is identified for CS 01 - 13.

Overall, a mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is expected for the Core Strategy Compliance objectives for **EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation**.

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

5.39 A mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for this EPO for objectives CS 01 - 13. Directing new development to brownfield land in preference to greenfield land, protects valuable areas of land for flood attenuation. However, the higher density of development in the town and development of greenfield sites could result in fewer areas of open space, increasing flood risk.

Overall, a mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the Core Strategy Compliance objectives for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation**.

EPO 5: Air

5.40 The effects identified for **EPO 5: Air** for the Core Strategy Compliance objectives are the same as those identified for EPO 3: Energy / climate change mitigation.

Overall, a mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is expected for the Core Strategy Compliance objectives for **EPO 5: Air**.

EPO 6: Soil

5.41 A minor positive effect is expected for **EPO 6: Soil** for CS 14 as it will help avoid negative impacts on the soil environment by requiring that projects do not have adverse effect on the integrity of European sites.

5.42 Mixed effects (significant positive / minor negative) are identified for CS 01 - 13. These objectives promote the development of land in a manner that supports existing services and prioritises sequential development of settlements, including the development of infill and brownfield lands, which is an efficient use of land and resources. Additionally, the town centre first approach will regenerate brownfield land and Strategic Reserve sites will result in more efficient and sustainable use of land in Longford by controlling piecemeal development and promoting coordinated development in the long-term. However, several zoned sites comprise greenfield land which, if developed, would result in the loss of valuable soil resources.

Overall, a mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is expected for the Core Strategy Compliance objectives for **EPO 6: Soil**.

EPO 7: Water

1.1 CS 14 protects the qualifying interests of the European sites which will have secondary beneficial effects for **EPO 7: Water**. A mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for this EPO for objectives CS 01 - 13. Directing new development to brownfield land in preference to greenfield land will reduce soil sealing and surface water run-off. However, several zoned sites comprise greenfield land which would result in the loss of soil resources, increasing the area of impermeable surfaces in Longford Town.

Overall, a mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the Core Strategy Compliance objectives for **EPO 7: Water**.

EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

5.43 Mixed effects are expected for the Core Strategy Compliance objectives for **EPO 8: Cultural heritage**. A significant positive effect is expected for objective CS 15 as the designation of, and adherence to the planning requirements of, the ACA will aid in conserving and enhancing the significant qualities, fabric and setting of Longford's historic environment. In particular, by avoiding adverse effects on its significance from direct loss, damage, or detraction from their setting. Increased development may negatively impact Longford's landscape/townscape and historic environment assets if inappropriately designed. However, the regeneration of the town through the redevelopment of brownfield land and the reuse of existing buildings will help tackle physical dereliction and will enhance the setting of heritage assets, townscape character and visual amenity.

Overall, an uncertain mixed (significant positive / minor negative) is expected for the Core Strategy Compliance objectives for **EPO 8: Cultural heritage.**

EPO 9: Landscape

5.44 A significant positive effect is expected for CS 15 for **EPO 9: Landscape**. Best practice guidance as outlined in Appendix 2 of the LAP requires new developments to contribute to the visual enhancement and vibrancy of the area whilst respecting its existing physical character urban grain and plot size. This will help preserve and enhance landscape / townscape character and viewpoints.

1.2 Increased development may negatively impact Longford's landscape/townscape and historic environment assets if inappropriately designed. However, the regeneration of the town through the redevelopment of brownfield land and the reuse of existing buildings will help tackle physical dereliction and will enhance the setting of heritage assets, townscape character and visual amenity.

Overall, an uncertain mixed (significant positive / minor negative) is expected for the Core Strategy Compliance objectives for **EPO 9: Landscape**.

EPO 10: Material assets

5.45 The majority of the objectives are expected to have significant positive effects for **EPO 10: Material assets**. These objectives promote the development of land in a manner that supports public transport and existing services; and prioritises town centre first and sequential development of

settlements, including the development of infill and brownfield lands, which is an efficient use of land and resources. These objectives also support the optimisation of existing infrastructure and provision of new infrastructure sufficient to meet demand.

Overall, a significant positive effect is expected for the Core Strategy Compliance objectives for **EPO 10: Material assets**.

Residential Sustainability and Placemaking

5.46 The results of the appraisal findings for the 'Residential Sustainability and Placemaking' objectives in the Longford Town LAP are described in this section with a summary of the SEA effects detailed in **Table 5.4**.

Table 5.4: Summary of the likely sustainability effects of the 'Residential Sustainability and Placemaking' objectives of the Longford Town LAP

EPO	RES 01 - RES 05, RES 08 – RES 11	RES 06 and RES 07	RES 12 – RES 16	RES 17 - RES 19
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	-?	0	0	-
Population and Human Health	++	++	++	++
Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	+/-?	0	0	0
Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	0	0	0	0

EPO	RES 01 - RES 05, RES 08 – RES 11	RES 06 and RES 07	RES 12 – RES 16	RES 17 - RES 19
Air	+/-?	0	0	0
Soil	+	0	0	+
Water	-?	0	0	0
Cultural Heritage	+/-?	0	0	+
Landscape	+/-?	0	0	+
Material Assets	+	0	0	++

EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora

5.47 An uncertain minor negative effect is expected for the objectives RES 01 - RES 05 and RES 08 – RES 11. Meeting the housing needs of the residents of Longford will require the development of a combination of greenfield and brownfield land which may result in habitat loss, fragmentation and species disturbance, depending on the scale, location and design of the residential development. Development of greenfield land is likely to have more adverse effects on biodiversity, although it is recognised that brownfield sites and existing vacant and derelict buildings often provide niche habitats and places of shelter for protected species. Therefore, a minor negative effect is also identified for objectives RES 17 - 19.

Overall, an uncertain minor negative effect is identified for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna.**

EPO 2: Population and human health

5.48 Significant positive effects are expected for all the objectives for **EPO 2: Population and human health**. Objectives RES 01 - RES 05 and RES 08 – RES 11 support a sustainable mix of housing types, including provisions for the Travelling community, older people and individuals with disabilities, alongside supporting healthy place-making and providing necessary social infrastructure. Objectives RES 06 and RES 07 support the delivery of age-friendly development, and enhancing the wellbeing of elderly residents. Objectives RES 12 – RES 16 support the provision of social and affordable housing and noise mitigation measures to improve residents' wellbeing. Finally, objectives RES 17 - RES 19 support the conversion of existing buildings for residential use and the creation of new residential developments to meet local housing needs, thereby positively impacting population health and wellbeing in Longford.

Overall, a significant positive effect is identified for **EPO 2: Population and human health.**

EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation

5.49 An uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the objectives RES 01 - RES 05 and RES 08 – RES 11 as they aim to ensure residential units are designed and constructed based on the principles of energy efficiency, thereby aiding in mitigating emissions and using resources effectively. Depending on residents' travel behaviours, the increase of housing in the town may result in more traffic generation, congestion and emissions if the majority of people choose to travel by private car. However, the development of compact settlements may encourage people to travel by more sustainable and active travel modes of transport, reducing traffic and emissions in the town centre.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for **EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation.**

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

5.50 Negligible effects are expected for all the Residential Sustainability and Placemaking objectives for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation**.

Overall, a negligible effect is identified for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation.**

EPO 5: Air

5.51 An uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected regarding RES 01 – 05 and 08 – 11 for the same reasons as outlined above for EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for **EPO 5: Air.**

EPO 6: Soil

5.52 Minor positive effects are expected for the objectives RES 01 - RES 05, RES 08 – RES 11 and RES 17 – 19 as they support development in appropriate brownfield/infill areas in preference to development of greenfield land; and encourage the reuse of existing buildings and upper floors above commercial

premises in the town centre for residential accommodation which will protect soil resources.

Overall, a minor positive effect is identified for **EPO 6: Soil.**

EPO 7: Water

5.53 An uncertain minor negative effect is expected for the objectives RES 01 - RES 05 and RES 08 – RES 11 as, until the Longford Wastewater Treatment Plant is upgraded, there may be a need for new residential developments to install onsite treatment plants to treat wastewater (i.e. individual septic tanks) which increases the risk of water pollution.

Overall, an uncertain minor negative effect is identified for **EPO 7: Water.**

EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

5.54 Well-designed residential developments that integrate and are considerate of the receiving local environment are likely to positively contribute to the built / historic environment and landscape / townscape. Similarly, new developments or the reuse of existing buildings in areas of need of regeneration will positively contribute towards the setting of heritage assets and townscape character. However, poorly designed or sited residential developments may have an adverse effect on the setting of heritage assets / landmarks and landscape character or protected views. Therefore, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for **EPO 8: Cultural heritage** for objectives RES 01 - RES 05 and RES 08 – RES 11 as the effect on the historic environment and landscape/townscape will depend on the detailed location and design of new development.

5.55 A minor positive effect is expected for RES 17 – 19 as these objectives support the redevelopment of existing buildings for residential development will help to regenerate the town and enhance the built/historic environment.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for **EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage.**

EPO 9: Landscape

5.56 An uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for RES 01 – 05 and 08 – 11, and a minor positive effect is identified for objectives RES 17 – 19 for the same reasons as outlined in EPO 8: Cultural heritage.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for **EPO 9: Landscape.**

EPO 10: Material assets

5.57 A significant positive effect is expected for objectives RES 17 – RES 19 as they support the efficient use of land and the reuse of existing buildings for residential development.

5.58 A minor positive effect is identified for RES 01 - RES 05 and RES 08 – RES 11 as these objectives aim to ensure residential units are designed and constructed based on the principles of energy efficiency, thereby aiding in using resources effectively. In addition, the objectives support development in appropriate brownfield/infill areas in preference to greenfield land; encourage the reuse of upper floors above commercial premises in the Town Centre for residential accommodation (the most efficient use of land); and ensure

residential units are designed and constructed on the principles of universal design and life-long adaptability.

Overall, a minor positive effect is identified for **EPO 10: Material assets.**

Economic Development

5.59 The results of the appraisal findings for the 'Economic Development' objectives in the Longford Town LAP are described in this section with a summary of the SEA effects identified outlined in **Table 5.5.**

Table 5.5: Summary of the likely sustainability effects of the 'Economic Development' and 'Retail' objectives of the Longford Town LAP

EPO	ECON 01 – 04 and 06 – 09	ECON 05 and 10-13	RET 01 - 09
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	-?	-?	0
Population and Human Health	++	++	++
Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	+/-?	++	+
Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	0	0	0
Air	+/-?	+	+
Soil	0	+	0
Water	0	0	0

EPO	ECON 01 – 04 and 06 – 09	ECON 05 and 10-13	RET 01 - 09
Cultural Heritage	+/-?	0	+
Landscape	+/-?	+	+
Material Assets	+	+	+

EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora

5.60 New employment development and the reuse of vacant and derelict buildings for employment may result in habitat loss, fragmentation and species disturbance (particularly in vacant and derelict buildings as these often provide niche habitats and places of shelter for protected species). The extent of the effects are dependent on the scale, location and design of the employment developments. The enhancement of the recreation and amenity potential of the Royal Canal and River Camlin may also result in habitat loss and species disturbance from recreational use of the waterways. Uncertain minor negative effects are expected for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna** for objectives ECON 01 – 13.

Overall, an uncertain minor negative effect is expected for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna**.

EPO 2: Population and human health

5.61 The economic objectives support the economic development and regeneration of Longford Town; the delivery of high-end retail, community services and tourism facilities; the improvement of the town centre's public realm; facilitating sustainable travel; and the enhancement of the Green and Blue Infrastructure Network. These actions will increase employment opportunities, support local businesses, improve skills development and access

to employment services, enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre, improve the sense of community in Longford Town, and encourage people to take part in recreational activities helping them to lead healthier and more active lifestyles.

Overall, a significant positive effect is expected for **EPO 2: Population and human health.**

EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation

5.62 An uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for ECON 01 – 04 and 06 - 09 for **EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation** as enhancing the employment provisions in the town will help to reduce out-commuting for employment. People may be able to access employment opportunities in the town via more sustainable and active travel modes of transport, reducing traffic congestion and GHG emissions. However, it may also encourage more people to commute to Longford from other areas and as the majority of commuters travel by private car, this could have an adverse effect on air quality.

5.63 Positive effects are identified for ECON 05 and 10 - 13 and RET 01 – 09 objectives as the enhancement of the Green and Blue Infrastructure Network, facilitating sustainable travel and the improvement of the public realm would increase active and public travel, reducing private car use and road traffic, with associated benefits in terms of reduced GHG emissions and air pollution within the town. ECON 12 also supports economic development that contributes to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable town.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for **EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation**.

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

5.64 Negligible effects are expected for the economic development and retail objectives for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation**.

Overall, a negligible effect is expected for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation**.

EPO 5: Air

5.65 An uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for objectives ECON 01 – 04 and 06 - 09 and minor positive effects for objectives ECON 05, 10- 13 and RET 01 – 08 for the same reasons as outlined above for EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for **EPO 5: Air.**

EPO 6: Soil

5.66 A minor positive effect is expected for the ECON 05 and 10 – 13 objectives for **EPO 6: Soil** as the regeneration of banks of land for employment and education opportunities in preference to development of greenfield land will safeguard soil resources.

Overall, a minor positive effect is expected for **EPO 6: Soil**

EPO 7: Water

5.67 Negligible effects are expected for the economic development and retail objectives for **EPO 7: Water**.

Overall, a negligible effect is expected for **EPO 7: Water**.

EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

5.68 Well-designed employment developments that integrate and are considerate of the receiving local environment are likely to positively contribute to the built / historic environment and landscape / townscape. Similarly, new developments or the reuse of existing buildings in areas of need of regeneration will positively contribute towards the setting of heritage assets and townscape character. However, poorly designed or sited employment developments may have an adverse effect on the setting of heritage assets / landmarks, landscape character or protected views. An uncertain mixed effect is therefore identified for **EPO 8: Cultural Heritage** for ECON 01 – 04 and 06 – 09 depending on the scale, location and design of developments.

5.69 The economic objectives include improvements to the public realm and town centre regeneration which will help reduce the extent of vacant and derelict buildings that might otherwise detract from the townscape character and setting of heritage assets. A minor positive effect is therefore expected for RET 01 – 09.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect is identified for **EPO 8: Cultural Heritage**.

EPO 9: Landscape

5.70 An uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for ECON 01 – 04 and 06 – 09, and a minor positive effect is identified for objectives RET 01 – 09 for the same reasons as outlined in EPO 9: Landscape.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for **EPO 9: Landscape.**

EPO 10: Material assets

5.71 The economic objectives aim to enhance the town centre through the reuse / enhancement of existing buildings for employment and retail which optimises existing infrastructure. This is expected to have minor positive effects for all objectives for **EPO 10: Material Assets**.

Overall, a minor positive effect is identified for **EPO 10: Material Assets**.

Tourism

5.72 The results of the appraisal findings for the 'Tourism' objectives in the Longford Town LAP are described in this section with a summary of the SEA effects detailed in **Table 5.6**.

Table 5.6: Summary of the likely sustainability effects of the 'Tourism' objectives of the Longford Town LAP

EPO	TOU 01 – 05, 15, 16, 18, 25 and 26	TOU 06 – 10, 17 and 24	TOU 11 – 14 and 19 - 23
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	0	+/-?	+/-
Population and Human Health	++	++	++
Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	+/-?	+/-?	+
Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	0	0	+
Air	+/-?	+/-?	+
Soil	0	0	0
Water	0	0	0
Cultural Heritage	+/-?	++/-	+
Landscape	+	+	+
Material Assets	+	+	+

EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora

5.73 An uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for TOU objectives 06 – 14, 17 and 19 – 24. These objectives support the development of the recreational and amenity value of the River Camlin and the Royal Canal, as well as the overall development of a more integrated network of cycling and walking routes, which could result in adverse effects on biodiversity from increased recreational pressure (e.g. habitat loss, species disturbance, etc). However, improving the network of green and blue infrastructure may also enhance connectivity for species.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the Tourism objectives for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora**.

EPO 2: Population and human health

5.74 Improving the visitor experience and increasing tourism to Longford Town will have a positive effect on economic development through job provision and supporting local businesses. The objectives also support the development of new recreational trails; the linking of these trails to important assets such as the Mid-Shannon Wilderness Park; the enhancement of the waterways for recreation and amenity uses; and the development of public open spaces that are accessible for all. These objectives are likely to contribute positively to people's health and wellbeing and therefore significant positive effects are identified for all objectives for **EPO 2: Population and human health**.

Overall, a significant positive effect is expected for the Tourism objectives for **EPO 2: Population and human health**.

EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation

5.75 A minor positive effect is expected for **EPO 3: Energy/ Climate Change Mitigation** for objectives TOU 11 – 14 and TOU 19 - 23 as encouraging active travel will help reduce travel by private vehicles, with subsequent reductions in road traffic and vehicle-derived air pollution.

5.76 Objectives TOU 01 – 05, 15, 16, 18, 25 and 26 promote tourism which is likely to result in increased visitor numbers to the town. If these visitors travel to Longford Town by private vehicle, there is likely to be an increase in traffic, congestion and emissions in the town centre. However, the objectives also

support initiatives that encourage potential alternatives to the use of private cars to access visitor attractions. Emissions may also be mitigated as the objectives promote the use of best-practice guidelines on energy efficiency. Additionally, objectives TOU 06 – 10, 17 and 24 support the delivery and promotion of tourist recreational trails which is likely to encourage more active travel. Therefore, uncertain mixed effects (minor positive / minor negative) are expected for these objectives regarding **EPO 3: Energy/ Climate Change Mitigation**.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the Tourism objectives for **EPO 3: Energy/ climate change mitigation.**

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

5.77 A minor positive effect is expected for TOU objectives 11 – 14 and 19 - 23 for **EPO 4: Flood Risk/ Climate Change Adaptation** as developing public open spaces in Longford will increase the area of permeable surfaces which will help to reduce flood risk.

Overall, a minor positive is expected for the Tourism objectives for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation**.

EPO 5: Air

5.78 An uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected regarding TOU 1-10, 15-18, 24-26 for the same reasons as outlined above for EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the Tourism objectives for **EPO 5: Air**.

EPO 6: Soil

5.79 Negligible effects are expected for the tourism objectives with regard to **EPO 6: Soil.**

Overall, a negligible effect is identified for the Tourism objectives for **EPO 6: Soil**.

EPO 7: Water

5.80 Negligible effects are expected for the tourism objectives with regard to **EPO 7: Water**.

Overall, a negligible effect is identified for the Tourism objectives for **EPO 7: Water**.

EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

5.81 Positive effects are expected for **EPO 8: Cultural Heritage** as the settings of heritage assets could be enhanced through the regeneration of the town; and the installation of better signage will increase accessibility to heritage assets. The effect is expected to be significant for TOU 06 – 10, 17 and 24 as

promoting and developing historical, cultural and artistic heritage / visitor attractions, and the redevelopment of the Camlin Quarter as an area where cultural heritage and visitor attractions can be clustered, will enhance the appreciation and preservation of the historic environment in Longford. However, the increase in visitor numbers may have adverse effects on heritage assets if not properly manged. Therefore, the positive effects identified for TOU 01 – 10, 15 – 18 and 24 – 26 are mixed with uncertain minor negative effects.

Overall, a mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for the Tourism objectives for **EPO 8: Cultural heritage.**

EPO 9: Landscape

5.82 Minor positive effects are expected for **EPO 9: Landscape**. Developing historical / cultural attractions and a strong evening and night-time tourism economy could result in derelict or unused buildings being repurposed which could enhance the townscape and visual amenity of Longford Town. Additionally, supporting the delivery of public realm schemes to provide tourists with a strong sense of place will have benefits for the landscape. The development of public open spaces and improvements along waterways may also positively contribute to the landscape/ townscape character of the town.

Overall, a minor positive effect is expected for **EPO 9: Landscape**.

EPO 10: Material assets

5.83 Minor positive effects are expected for the tourism objectives for **EPO 10: Material assets**. These objectives are expected to contribute towards increased vitality and viability of the town centre by improving infrastructure through developing public spaces; maximising opportunities for tourism and

recreational amenities; implementing waste management initiatives and recycling; improving accessibility to tourism sites and facilities; and enhancing connectivity of walking and cycle routes.

Overall, a minor positive effect is expected for the Tourism objectives for **EPO 10: Material assets.**

Regeneration and Placemaking

5.84 The results of the appraisal findings for the tourism objectives in the Longford Town LAP are described in this section with a summary of the SEA effects identified outlined in **Table 5.7**.

Table 5.7: Summary of the likely sustainability effects of the 'Regeneration and Placemaking' objectives of the Longford Town LAP

EPO	Regeneration and Placemaking REG 01 – 06	Regeneration and Placemaking REG 07 - 11 and 20 - 22	Regeneration and Placemaking REG 12 – 15	Regeneration and Placemaking REG 16 - 19	Master Planning MP 01 – 06	Public Realm, Universal Design and Age Friendliness PUA 01 - 08
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	-?	+	+/-?	0	+/-?	+?
Population and Human Health	++	++	++	++	++	++
Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	+/-?	+	+/-?	+	+	0
Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	0	+	0	+	+/-	0
Air	+/-?	+	+/-?	+	+	0
Soil	0	++	0	0	+/-	0

EPO	Regeneration and Placemaking REG 01 – 06	Regeneration and Placemaking REG 07 - 11 and 20 - 22	Regeneration and Placemaking REG 12 – 15	Regeneration and Placemaking REG 16 - 19	Master Planning MP 01 – 06	Public Realm, Universal Design and Age Friendliness PUA 01 - 08
Water	0	+	0	0	+/-	0
Cultural Heritage	+/-	+	++/-	++	++/-	+
Landscape	++	++	++	0	++	++
Material Assets	++	++	++	+	++	0

EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora

5.85 Minor positive effects are expected for REG 07 - 11 and 20 – 22 for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna**. These objectives (in particular REG 10) support enhancing the permeability and sustainable mobility within the town centre by improving links between the core and surrounding areas through the further integration of public transport, walking and cycling facilities. This will result in fewer people travelling via private vehicles and thus result in a decrease in vehicle pollution which can adversely affect biodiversity.

5.86 Improvements to the public realm may also have benefits for biodiversity depending on design. Therefore, minor positive effects are also identified for objectives PUA 01 - 08. However, these effects are uncertain as they depend on whether more natural features (e.g., trees) are incorporated into design of the public realm.

5.87 An uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for objectives REG 12 – 15 and an uncertain minor negative effect for objectives REG 01 - 06 as enhanced tourism development will result in increased visitor numbers which may increase associated pressures on the environment, including recreational disturbance to biodiversity and increased air pollution from cars visiting the area. However, minor positive effects are also identified for REG 12 - 15 as they support the delivery of recreational routes and trails, which if well designed, could enhance habitat connectivity.

5.88 A mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the Master Planning objectives as they prioritise the development of master plans for ‘Strategic Sites’ which comprise a mix of brownfield and greenfield land which will enhance biodiversity. However, the objectives also support master plans for greenfield sites including The Mall and Camlin Village.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the Regeneration and Placemaking objectives regarding **EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna**.

EPO 2: Population and human health

5.89 Significant positive effects are expected for the Regeneration and Placemaking objectives as they support a number of actions which will enhance the wellbeing of Longford's residents. The objectives prioritise the regeneration of areas suffering from social and economic deprivation which will help to reduce inequalities in these areas. The objectives also support the provision of open spaces and similar areas for recreation, as well as the development of public transport, walking and cycling networks, which will improve accessibility in Longford Town and will encourage people to lead healthier lifestyles.

5.90 Supporting regeneration, social inclusion measures and promoting social, economic and environmental gain for communities will bring development to the town centre which will have several positive effects for the residents of Longford, for example by enhancing access to services and facilities. Implementation of the Town Centre First Strategy as supported by these objectives will also enhance housing and the living environment in Longford. Additionally, improving transport infrastructure links in accordance with the Sustainable Transport measures of this plan will improve opportunities for active and sustainable travel, encouraging active lifestyles and supporting economic development.

Overall, a significant positive effect is identified for the Regeneration and Placemaking objectives for **EPO 2: Population and human health**.

EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation

5.91 REG 07 - 11 and REG 16 – 22 supports enhancing the permeability and sustainable mobility within the town centre by improving links between the core and surrounding areas through the further integration of public transport, walking and cycling facilities. This will result in fewer people travelling via private vehicles and thus result in a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions. This will help mitigate the effects of climate change and improve air quality. Therefore, these objectives are expected to have minor positive effects for EPO **3: Energy / Climate Change Mitigation**. Additionally, REG 19 supports pursuing complementary funding streams that support broader aims to achieve outcomes in climate action, benefiting climate change mitigation.

5.92 Minor positive effects are expected for the Master Planning objectives as MP 05 outlines measures to improve transport links in accordance with the Sustainable Transport section of this Plan, which will facilitate the use of active and public transport. This will reduce reliance on private vehicles, hence reduce the associated emissions.

5.93 Mixed effects (minor positive / minor negative) are identified for objectives REG 01 – 06 and 12 – 15 as active travel supported by the objectives may discourage private car use and associated emissions. Similarly, the regeneration of the town to provide more employment and tourism will help to reduce out-commuting and will encourage people to access employment opportunities and tourist attractions via more sustainable and active travel modes of transport. However, the objectives may also attract more people to travel to Longford from other areas for employment and tourism, which may increase traffic and have an adverse effect on air quality. The effects are uncertain and will depend on travel behaviours.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the Regeneration and Placemaking objectives for **EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation**.

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

5.94 Minor positive effects are expected for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation** for REG 07 - 11 and 16 – 22 and MP 01 - 06 as these objectives support brownfield development over greenfield, which will reduce soil sealing and surface water runoff and flood risk. Additionally, REG 19 supports pursuing complementary funding streams that support broader aims to achieve outcomes in climate action, benefiting climate change adaptation. However, for the Master Planning objectives the effect is expected to be mixed with minor negative as not all of the Strategic Sites are brownfield, for example The Mall and Camlin Village.

Overall, a mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the Regeneration and Placemaking objectives for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation**.

EPO 5: Air

5.95 The effects identified for **EPO 5: Air** for the Regeneration and Placemaking objectives are the same as those identified for EPO 3: Energy / climate change mitigation.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the Regeneration and Placemaking objectives for **EPO 5: Air**.

EPO 6: Soil

5.96 Significant positive effects are identified for objectives REG 07 – 11, 20 – 22 as they support the enhancement and linking of brownfield and outlying sites

to the town centre, with a focus on the regeneration of publicly owned land, underused buildings and strategic sites. This will therefore protect greenfield land by prioritising development of brownfield land resulting in significant positive effects for **EPO 6: Soil**. A mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the Master Planning objectives as they prioritise the development of master plans for 'Strategic Sites' which comprise a mix of brownfield and greenfield land.

Overall, a mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is expected for the Regeneration and Placemaking objectives for **EPO 6: Soil**.

EPO 7: Water

5.97 Minor positive effects are expected for EPO 7: **Water** for objectives REG 07 - 11 and 20 – 22 and MP 01 - 06 as these objectives support brownfield development over greenfield, which will reduce soil sealing and surface water runoff and flood risk. However, for the Master Planning objectives the effect is expected to be mixed with a minor negative as not all of the Strategic Sites are brownfield, for example The Mall and Camlin Village.

Overall, a mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the Regeneration and Placemaking objectives for **EPO 7: Water**.

EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

5.98 A significant positive effect is identified for REG 16 - 19 for **EPO 8: Cultural Heritage** as REG 19 supports pursuing complementary funding streams that support broader aims to achieve outcomes in heritage. In addition, REG 18 support the development of projects in the Military Assets as Public

Spaces Integrated Action Plan, which may result in increasing accessibility to and understanding of military heritage assets.

5.99 Objectives REG 12 – 15 support the regeneration of the Camlin Quarter in accordance with the Camlin Quarter Masterplan and objectives MP 01 - 06 promote the regeneration of 'Strategic Sites'. These seek to reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land; encourage the re-use/enhancement of existing buildings; and develop the Camlin Quarter as an area where cultural heritage and visitor attractions can be clustered. This will enhance the appreciation and preservation of the historic environment in Longford. REG 12 – 15 objectives also support enhancing public realm and creating linkages to important heritage assets (e.g. St Mel's Cathedral). Such improvements may also improve the setting of cultural heritage assets. However, the increase in visitor numbers to the area may have adverse effects on heritage assets if not properly manged. Additionally, due to the proximity of the Strategic Sites to heritage assets, there is potential for the regeneration to also adversely affect the fabric or setting of these assets if poorly designed. Therefore, mixed effects (significant positive / minor negative) are expected for these objectives.

5.100 Minor positive effects are expected for objectives REG 07 - 11 and 20 – 22, PUA 01 - 08. These objectives support the enhancement and linking of brownfield and outlying sites to the town centre, with a focus on the regeneration of underused buildings and strategic sites. This will therefore aid in reducing the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land and encourage the re-use/enhancement of existing buildings. This could also have positive effects on cultural heritage if protected structures are reused and enhanced. In addition, the PUA and REG 20 - 22 objectives promote improvements in the public realm and enhancement of shop fronts. Such general improvements may contribute towards improving the setting of cultural heritage assets.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is identified for the Regeneration and Placemaking objectives for **EPO 8: Cultural heritage**.

EPO 9: Landscape

5.101 A significant positive is expected regarding **EPO 9: Landscape** for all the objectives except REG 16 – 19 (which is negligible) as the objectives support the regeneration of the town; improving the public realm; creating linkages to important landscape features; and enhancing shop fronts which will help to tackle physical dereliction and will improve the attractiveness of the area, creating a distinct sense of place.

Overall, a significant positive effect is identified for the Regeneration and Placemaking objectives for **EPO 9: Landscape**.

EPO 10: Material assets

5.102 Significant positive effects are identified for objectives REG 01 – 15, and 20 – 22 and MP 01 - 06 regarding **EPO 10: Material assets** as the objectives promote the regeneration of the town through the improvement of transport infrastructure, enhancement and linking of brownfield and outlying sites to the town centre and reuse and repair of existing buildings. This will therefore protect greenfield land by prioritising development of brownfield land and will optimise the use of existing buildings. Minor positive effects are expected for the remaining objectives as the regeneration of the town will help enhance Longford's material assets.

Overall, a significant positive effect is identified for the Regeneration and Placemaking objectives for **EPO 10: Material assets**.

Social Infrastructure

5.103 The results of the appraisal findings for the 'Social Infrastructure' objectives in the Longford Town LAP are described in this section with a summary of the SEA effects detailed in **Table 5.8.**

Table 5.8: Summary of the likely sustainability effects of the 'Social Infrastructure' objectives of the Longford Town LAP

EPO	Education, Childcare and Health Facilities ECH 01 - 07	Social Infrastructure CSR 01 - 06	Social Infrastructure CSR 07 - 19
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	0	0	++/-
Population and Human Health	++	++	++
Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	+/-	0	+
Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	0	0	+
Air	+/-	0	+
Soil	0	0	+
Water	0	0	+
Cultural Heritage	0	0	+
Landscape	0	0	++
Material Assets	+	+	+

EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora

5.104 The CSR 07 - 19 LAP objectives will have a mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora** as they support maintaining and enhancing the network of green and blue infrastructure. A connected network of open spaces across the town, such as local parks, amenity greenspace, community gardens, and green corridors etc. will prevent the fragmentation of ecological networks. Thus, a more connected network of open spaces will provide valuable habitats and a net gain in biodiversity**.** However, increased recreational use of the River Camlin and Royal Canal is also likely to result in minor negative effects for biodiversity due to increased disturbance. Negligible effects are identified for objectives ECH 01-07 and CSR 01-06.

Overall, a mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora**.

EPO 2: Population and human health

5.105 The 'Social Infrastructure' objectives are expected to result in significant positive effects for **EPO 2: Population and human health**. The provision of educational, childcare, health, recreational and community facilities, as well as multi-functional public open spaces, will help improve skills, encourage active travel / recreation, and will increase access to services and facilities. This will improve people's physical and mental health and reduce inequalities (particularly when provided in disadvantaged areas of the town). The delivery of these objectives is particularly important as, in the 2022 Census, Longford Town recorded the lowest number of people in 'very good' health and the highest number of people in Ireland who stated that their health was 'bad' or 'very bad'.

Overall, a significant positive effect is identified for **EPO 2: Population and human health**.

EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation

5.106 A minor positive effect is expected for **EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation** for the CSR 07 – 19 objectives. The provision of open space and trees help to mitigate against the effects of climate change by sequestering carbon and filtering pollutants from the air. A mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the ECH 01 - 07 objectives. The expansion and delivery of new educational and healthcare facilities may generate additional private car journeys in the town contributing to traffic congestion and the release of GHG emissions. However, the proximity of new schools or healthcare facilities to public transport links / greenways may help to reduce the use of cars, particularly for school drop-offs / collections, by encouraging sustainable transport alternatives, reducing emissions.

Overall, a mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for **EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation**.

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

5.107 A minor positive effect is expected for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation** for the CSR 07 – 19 objectives. The provision of greenspace can slow the movement of water and therefore help reduce flood risk. Areas of open space also offer opportunities for flood attenuation, storing flood water to prevent flooding elsewhere. Negligible effects are identified for objectives ECH 01-07 and CSR 01-06.

Overall, a minor positive effect is expected for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation.**

EPO 5: Air

5.108 A minor positive effect is expected for **EPO 5: Air** for the CSR 07 – 19 objectives. The provision of open space and trees as supported by these objectives will improve air quality by sequestering carbon and filtering pollutants from the air. The objectives also support the expansion of the Green and Blue Infrastructure Network which will encourage active travel rather than private vehicle use, thereby further improving air quality in the town.

5.109 A mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the ECH objectives. The expansion and delivery of new educational and healthcare facilities may generate additional private car journeys in the town contributing to traffic congestion and the release of transport-related emissions. However, the proximity of new schools or healthcare facilities to public transport links / greenways may help to reduce the use of cars, particularly for school drop-offs / collections, by encouraging sustainable transport alternatives, reducing emissions and improving air quality.

Overall, a mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for **EPO 5: Air**.

EPO 6: Soil

5.110 The reuse of land for new facilities and the protection and expansion of greenspaces under CSR objectives 07 – 19 will bring minor positive effects for **EPO 6: Soil**. Negligible effects are identified for ECH 01 -07 and CSR 01-06.

Overall, a minor positive effect is expected for **EPO 6: Soil**.

EPO 7: Water

5.111 A minor positive effect is expected for **EPO 7: Water** for CSR 07 – 19 as increased greenspace may help reduce surface water runoff, preventing pollution entering into watercourses. Negligible effects are identified for ECH 01 -07 and CSR 01-06.

Overall, a minor positive effect is expected for **EPO 7: Water**.

EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

5.112 A minor positive effect is expected for CSR objectives 07 -19 as improving multi-functional open space will enhance the visual amenity of Longford's heritage assets. These objectives also support the expansion of the Green and Blue Infrastructure Network which could enhance accessibility to heritage assets. Negligible effects are identified for ECH 01 -07 and CSR 01-06.

Overall, a minor positive effect is expected for objectives for **EPO 8: Cultural heritage**.

EPO 9: Landscape

5.113 A significant positive effect is likely to arise for the landscape, townscape and visual amenity of Longford Town which will be enhanced as a result of

improved multi-functional open space under CSR objectives 07 -19. Negligible effects are identified for ECH 01 -07 and CSR 01-06.

Overall, a significant positive effect is expected for **EPO 9: Landscape**.

EPO 10: Material assets

5.114 Minor positive effects are expected for the objectives for **EPO 10: Material assets**. Ensuring the adequate provision of educational, childcare, healthcare, recreational and community facilities will have positive effects for material assets. These objectives optimise existing infrastructure and provide new infrastructure sufficient to resolve current capacity issues at existing facilities (in particular at existing schools). Objectives CSR 07 – 19 specifically support the reuse of land for new facilities and the protection and expansion of greenspaces.

Overall, a minor positive effect is expected for **EPO 10: Material Assets**.

Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure

5.115 The results of the appraisal findings for the 'Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure' objectives in the Longford Town LAP are described in this section with a summary of the SEA effects detailed in **Table 5.9**.

Table 5.9: Summary of the likely sustainability effects of the 'Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure' objectives of the Longford Town LAP

EPO	Natural Heritage NHB 01 – 08, 20, 24 and 25	Natural Heritage NHB 09 - 10	Natural Heritage NHB 11 - 19	Natural Heritage NHB 21 - 23	Green Infrastructure GI 01 - 13
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	++	++	++	++	++/-
Population and Human Health	+	+	+	0	++
Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	+	+	+	0	++
Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	+	++	+	0	++
Air	+	+	+	0	++
Soil	+	+	+	0	+
Water	+	++	+	0	+
Cultural Heritage	+	+	+	0	+
Landscape	++	+	+	0	++
Material Assets	+	+	+	0	+

EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora

5.116 Significant positive effects are expected for this EPO as the 'natural heritage and green infrastructure' objectives promote the protection, conservation and enhancement of green infrastructure, biodiversity and natural features, recognising the ecosystem services they provide.

5.117 These effects are further enhanced as the objectives seek to control and eradicate invasive species; prevent development which would be harmful to habitats and species; and develop better habitat mapping. In addition, riparian planting and measures to restore and conserve rivers and riverbanks will provide benefits for biodiversity by improving connectivity of habitats along river corridors, filtering pollution entering watercourses, and providing areas of shade along the rivers. Additionally, screening for Appropriate Assessment will be required on developments that may have impacts on SACs/SPAs in the region and an Ecological Assessment for developments that may potentially impact the pNHA.

5.118 The LAP objectives NHB 21 – 23 seek to incorporate lighting schemes of waterways infrastructure that minimise adverse impacts on protected species (e.g. bats, birds, otters, etc). These objectives also support the surveying of current structures for bat roosts; and identifying opportunities for bat roosts and bird nesting boxes which will benefit the protected species.

5.119 The objectives seek to protect and enhance existing natural vegetation, incorporating it into any new development or incorporating native species where vegetation loss is unavoidable. Damage and/or removal of trees is discouraged, with actions to identify further trees suitable for Tree Preservation Order protection. Objectives also promote planting of trees, native species and pollinator friendly species.

5.120 A minor negative effect is also expected for the green infrastructure objectives as increased recreational use of the Royal Canal and River Camlin may result in species disturbance.

Overall, a mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is expected for the Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure objectives for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora**.

EPO 2: Population and human health

5.121 Minor positive effects are expected for natural heritage objectives NHB 01 – 19, 23 and 24. Measures to identify green infrastructure opportunities and preserve and enhance the natural environment, including areas of open space, will have positive effects on the population as it provides a recreational resource which encourages active lifestyles and contributes towards improved mental and physical health and wellbeing.

5.122 Significant positive effects are identified for the green infrastructure objectives. The protection and creation of open spaces and walking and cycling routes as part of green infrastructure networks, will encourage people to lead more active lifestyles. The incorporation of well-connected walking and cycling routes will encourage a modal shift to sustainable, active modes of transport. This will have subsequent benefits for population and human health, and associated benefits for air quality due to reduced reliance on private vehicles. Increased vegetation will also help filter pollutants from the air.

Overall, a significant positive effect is expected for the Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure objectives for **EPO 2: Population and human health**.

EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation

5.123 Protecting, managing and enhancing green infrastructure within development and between open spaces creates more adaptable and sustainable green spaces that can help sequester carbon, reducing the future effects of climate change. Therefore, significant positive effects are expected for **EPO 3: Climate change mitigation** for the green infrastructure objectives.

5.124 Minor positive effects are expected for natural heritage objectives NHB 01 – 19, 23 and 24. Identifying green infrastructure opportunities and the protection and creation of open spaces and well-connected walking and cycling routes as

part of green infrastructure networks will encourage a modal shift to sustainable, active modes of transport. This will reduce carbon emissions from a decrease in private vehicle use. Natural and semi-natural areas, including, planting and enhancement of trees and vegetation also help mitigate against the effects of climate change by sequestering carbon.

Overall, a significant positive effect is expected for the Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure objectives for **EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation**.

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

5.125 The NHB 08-09 objectives will have a significant positive effect for **EPO 4: Flood risk / climate change adaptation** as they support measures to restore and conserve rivers and riverbanks, and promote riparian planting. These objectives will help preserve the natural flood regime of the area. Protecting, managing and enhancing green infrastructure within development and between open spaces as outlined under GI 01 -13 creates more adaptable and sustainable places that are resilient to the effects of climate change and offer opportunities for flood attenuation, storing flood water to prevent flooding elsewhere.

5.126 Minor positive effects are also expected for NHB 01 – 07, NHB 10 – 19, 23 and 24 objectives. Natural and semi-natural areas adapt to climate change by increasing connectivity and resilience of the green space network. Such areas, as well as planting and enhancement of trees, also provide opportunities for shading and reducing flood risk.

Overall, a significant positive effect is expected for the Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure objectives for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation**.

EPO 5: Air

5.127 Protecting, managing and enhancing green infrastructure within developments and between open spaces will encourage a modal shift to sustainable, active modes of transport. This will have subsequent benefits for population and human health, and associated benefits for air quality due to reduced reliance on private vehicles. Increased vegetation will also help filter pollutants from the air. Therefore, a significant positive effect is expected for **EPO 5: Air** for the green infrastructure objectives.

5.128 Minor positive effects are expected for natural heritage objectives NHB 01 – 19, 23 and 24. The protection and creation of open space, and well-connected walking and cycling routes as part of green infrastructure networks will encourage a modal shift to sustainable, active modes of transport. This will reduce carbon emissions from a decrease in private vehicle use. Improving the extent and quality natural heritage features, such as via planting, will help improve air quality through filtering air pollutants.

Overall, a significant positive effect is expected for the Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure objectives for **EPO 5: Air**.

EPO 6: Soil

5.129 Minor positive effects are expected from NHB 01 – 19, 23 and 24 and GI 01 -13. Planting and improving the extent and quality of natural heritage features, such as habitats, will help improve soil quality. The green infrastructure objectives will also have associated minor positive effects for **EPO 6: Soil** as undeveloped land helps maintain and improve soil quality, and planting can improve the structure of soil.

Overall, a minor positive effect is expected for the Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure objectives for **EPO 6: Soil**.

EPO 7: Water

5.130 The NHB 08 – 09 objectives which support measures to restore and conserve rivers and riverbanks, and promote riparian planting are expected to have a significant positive effect for **EPO 7: Water**. These objectives will help protect and enhance water quality as well as preserve the natural flood regime of the area. In addition, riparian planting filtering pollution entering watercourses.

5.131 Objectives NHB 01 – 07, 10 – 19, 23 and 24 and GI 01 -13 are expected to have associated minor positive effects as planting can have benefits for water quality by reducing surface water runoff and capturing pollutants before they reach watercourses. Improving the extent and quality natural heritage features, such as habitats, will help improve water quality.

Overall, a minor positive effect is expected for the Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure objectives for **EPO 7: Water**.

EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

5.132 Minor positive effects are expected for objectives GI 01-13 as high-quality green infrastructure may help improve the setting of heritage assets and enable opportunities to incorporate heritage features into the GI network. Minor positive effects are also expected for objectives NHB 01 – 19, 23 and 24 as the protection and enhancement of the natural environment is likely to have positive effects for the setting of cultural heritage assets.

Overall, a minor positive effect is expected for the Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure objectives for **EPO 8: Cultural heritage**.

EPO 9: Landscape

5.133 The implementation of objectives NHB 01 – 07, 19, 23 and 24 and GI 01 – 13 is expected to have significant positive effects for **EPO 9: Landscape**, recognising the importance of natural landscape features and habitats in contributing to overall character of an area. Protecting, managing and enhancing green infrastructure within developments and between open spaces will create more adaptable and sustainable places that enhance landscape character. The protection and enhancement of riparian planting and the conservation of rivers and riverbanks as supported through objectives NHB 08 – 18 is likely to have a minor positive effect for landscape/townscape character.

Overall, a significant positive effect is expected for the Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure objectives for **EPO 9: Landscape.**

EPO 10: Material assets

5.134 Minor positive effects are expected from NHB 01 – 19, 23 and 24 and GI 01 -13. Protecting and enhancing natural heritage features will have positive effects for material assets by ensuring the efficient use of natural resources.

Overall, a minor positive effect is expected for the Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure objectives for **EPO 10: Material assets**.

Built and Cultural Heritage

5.135 The results of the appraisal findings for the 'Built and Cultural Heritage' objectives in the Longford Town LAP are described in this section with a summary of the SEA effects detailed in **Table 5.10**.

Table 5.10: Summary of the likely sustainability effects of the 'Built and Cultural Heritage' objectives of the Longford Town LAP

EPO	Protected structures PS 01 - 10	Architectural conservation AC 01 - 13	Archaeological heritage AH 01 - 06
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	-?	0	0
Population and Human Health	+	+	+
Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	+	+	0
Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	0	0	0
Air	0	0	0
Soil	0	0	+
Water	0	0	+
Cultural Heritage	++	++	++
Landscape	+	++	+
Material Assets	+	+	0

EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora

5.136 Vacant and derelict buildings are often home to bats and protected birds, and the redevelopment or reuse of these buildings under objectives PS 01 – 10 could result in disturbance to any species nesting in these buildings. Therefore, an uncertain minor negative is identified for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna** for these objectives. Negligible effects are expected for the remaining objectives.

Overall, an uncertain minor negative effect is identified for the Built and Cultural Heritage objectives for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora**.

EPO 2: Population and human health

5.137 Minor positive effects are expected for the Built and Cultural Heritage objectives regarding **EPO 2: Population and human health**. Heritage-led regeneration within Longford Town, and in particularly along the Battery Road ACA, will increase investment and employment opportunities; and public enjoyment of heritage assets through increased access and understanding of the historic environment via regeneration and increased tourism. Additionally, support for appropriate new infill development along Battery Road ACA will help meet housing demand.

Overall, a minor positive effect is identified for the Built and Cultural Heritage objectives for **EPO 2: Population and human health**.

EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation

5.138 Minor positive effects are expected for **EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation** as the reuse of buildings will ensure there is no loss of embodied carbon.

Overall, a minor positive effect is identified for the Built and Cultural Heritage objectives for **EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation**.

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

5.139 Negligible effects are identified for all objectives for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation**.

Overall, a negligible effect is identified for the Built and Cultural Heritage objectives for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation**.

EPO 5: Air

5.140 Negligible effects are identified for all objectives for **EPO 5: Air**.

Overall, a negligible effect is identified for the Built and Cultural Heritage objectives for **EPO 5: Air**.

EPO 6: Soil

5.141 Avoiding development which may be detrimental to buried archaeology will help protect soil resources, such as greenfield land, from being developed. Therefore, a minor positive effect is expected for **EPO 6: Soil** for the archaeological heritage objectives. Negligible effects are identified for the remaining objectives.

Overall, a minor positive effect is expected for the Built and Cultural Heritage objectives for **EPO 6: Soil**.

EPO 7: Water

5.142 A minor positive effect is identified for **EPO 7: Water** regarding the archaeological heritage objectives, as ensuring proposals protect the archaeological heritage of the River Camlin and Royal Canal may indirectly protect water quality.

Overall, a minor positive effect is expected for the Built and Cultural Heritage objectives for **EPO 7: Water**.

EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

5.143 These LAP objectives seek the protection, conservation, and enhancement of Protected Structures, the character of the Battery Road ACA, archaeological heritage, historical burial grounds and other cultural heritage assets in Longford Town. The objectives also support heritage-led conservation and regeneration of Longford Town. These objectives directly relate to this EPO

and therefore significant positive effects are identified for **EPO 8: Cultural Heritage**.

Overall, a significant positive effect is expected for the Built and Cultural Heritage objectives for **EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage**.

EPO 9: Landscape

5.144 Positive effects are expected for all objectives for **EPO 9: Landscape** as protecting and enhancing the setting of Protected Structures, the ACA character, archaeological heritage, historical burial grounds and other cultural heritage assets will enhance the townscape and visual amenity of Longford Town. The effect is expected to be significant for the 'Architectural Conservation' objectives as these objectives require high-quality design of new developments that are sympathetic to the area and discourage demolition where it contributes to the character of the town which will help preserve and enhance the townscape character.

Overall, a significant positive effect is expected for the Built and Cultural Heritage objectives for **EPO 9: Landscape**.

EPO 10: Material assets

5.145 Addressing dereliction, endangerment, neglect and vacancy through the promotion of appropriate uses and the sensitive conservation of historic buildings and materials will optimise the use of existing infrastructure, which is an efficient use of material assets. Additionally, the objectives support appropriate new infill development in preference to greenfield development.

Therefore, minor positive effects are identified for **EPO 10: Material Assets** for the ‘Protected Structures’ and ‘Architectural Conservation’ objectives.

Overall, a minor positive effect is expected for the Built and Cultural Heritage objectives for **EPO 10: Material Assets**.

Energy and Communications

5.146 The results of the appraisal findings for the ‘Energy and Communications’ objectives in the Longford Town LAP are described in this section with a summary of the SEA effects detailed in **Table 5.11.**

Table 5.11: Summary of the likely sustainability effects of the 'Energy and Communications' objectives

EPO	Energy, communications and waste EC 01 – EC 03	Energy, communications and waste EC 04 and EC 05	Energy, communications and waste EC 06	Energy, communications and waste EC 07 - 09	Water supply and wastewater services WS 01 – WS 22	Surface Water SW 01 – SW 07	Flood risk management FR 01 - FR 05
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	-	-?	+?	0	+	+	++
Population and Human Health	+	-?	+?	+	+	+	+
Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	+	0	++	++	0	0	0
Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	0	0	0	0	++	++	++
Air	+	0	+	++	0	0	0
Soil	0	-?	0	0	0	+	0
Water	+	-?	0	0	++/--	++	+
Cultural Heritage	+/-	0	+/-?	0	0	0	0

EPO	Energy, communications and waste EC 01 – EC 03	Energy, communications and waste EC 04 and EC 05	Energy, communications and waste EC 06	Energy, communications and waste EC 07 - 09	Water supply and wastewater services WS 01 – WS 22	Surface Water SW 01 – SW 07	Flood risk management FR 01 - FR 05
Landscape	+/-	0	+/-?	0	0	0	0
Material Assets	++	++	++	++	++	++	+

EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora

5.147 The flood risk management objectives will result in a significant positive effect for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna** as ensuring the protection of environmentally sensitive sites and habitats in flood risk management measures will conserve and enhance Longford's biodiversity.

5.148 The majority of the energy and communications objectives were considered to have minor positive effects for this EPO. Objectives WS 01 – WS 22 and SW 01 – SW 07 will aid in mitigating water pollution and require water supply and waste water developments to be screened for Appropriate Assessment, thereby helping to protect aquatic habitats and species. Furthermore, SW 01 – SW 07 promote the use of SuDS and nature-based solutions which can provide valuable habitats for biodiversity and can help filter pollution from water which will benefit aquatic species.

5.149 A minor negative effect is identified for objectives EC 01- 03 as they support the development of infrastructure and the undergrounding of cables which is likely to impact habitats and species. Similarly, a minor negative effect is identified for EC 04 - 05 as they support hazardous waste collection at the Athlone Road Civic Amenity Site. The effects are uncertain and will be subject to appropriate environmental and amenity safeguards.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is expected for the Energy and Communications objectives for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora**.

EPO 2: Population and human health

The majority of the energy and communications objectives are likely to have minor positive effects for **EPO 2: Population and human health**. Objectives

EC 01- EC 03 support the provision of appropriate and adequate water, energy, telecommunications and waste management infrastructure which will meet the needs of the people of Longford. Objective EC 06 promotes the development of renewable energy which will help improve air quality, and thus improve residents' health. Objectives WS 01 – WS 22 seek to protect and improve waterbodies, sources and supply, including providing appropriate future capacity, which will enhance the wellbeing of Longford's population. Minor positive effects are expected for objectives SW 01 – SW 07 and FR 01 – FR 05 as they seek to reduce flood risk, both now and in the future, which will reduce the impacts of flood events on communities.

5.150 An uncertain minor negative effect is identified for EC 04 - 05 as objective EC 05 supports hazardous waste collection at the Athlone Road Civic Amenity Site. The effect is uncertain and will be subject to appropriate environmental and amenity safeguards.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the Energy and Communications objectives for **EPO 2: Population and human health**.

EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation

5.151 Objective EC 06 is expected to have a significant positive effect for this EPO objective, while objectives EC 01 – EC 03 are expected to have a minor positive effect. EC 06 promotes the use of renewable energy, which will minimise greenhouse gas emissions and the consumption of non-renewable energy. Objectives EC 01 – EC 03 seek to develop public transport infrastructure. This may discourage private car use, reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Overall, a significant positive effect is expected for Energy and Communications objectives for the **EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation**.

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

5.152 Significant positive effects are expected for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation** for objectives WS 01 - 22, SW 01 – SW 07 and FR 01 – FR 05 as the objectives seek to reduce flood risk, both now and in the future, as well as consider the impacts of climate change. The Water Supply and Wastewater Services objectives also support water conservation measures which will also contribute towards climate change adaptation, recognising that one of the predicted effects of climate change is water scarcity.

Overall, a significant positive effect is expected for Energy and Communications objectives for the **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation**.

EPO 5: Air

5.153 Minor positive effects are expected for this EPO for objectives EC 01 – EC 03 and EC 06. EC 01 – EC 03 seek to develop public transport infrastructure which may discourage private car use, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality. EC 06 promotes the use of renewable energy over more traditional fossil fuels which may help reduce air pollution.

Overall, a minor positive effect is expected for the Energy and Communications objectives for **EPO 5: Air**.

EPO 6: Soil

5.154 A minor positive effect is expected for **EPO 6: Soil** for the objectives SW 01-06 as they support measures to prevent water pollution which will protect soil resources. A minor negative effect is identified for objectives EC 04 and 05 as objective EC 05 supports hazardous waste collection at the Athlone Road Civic Amenity Site which will affect soil resources (e.g. through contamination, leaching of waste). The effects are uncertain and will be subject to appropriate environmental and amenity safeguards.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the Energy and Communications objectives for **EPO 6: Soil**.

EPO 7: Water

5.155 Objectives WS 01 – WS 22 and SW 01 – SW 07 are expected to have significant positive effects for this EPO objective as they seek to maintain, improve and enhance water quality and quantity, including waterbodies and groundwater sources. The objectives will result in the mitigation of surface water flooding, both now and in the future; the protection of water quality by incorporating SuDS and green infrastructure; minimising the extent of hard surfaces**;** avoiding the discharge of surface water run-off into foul sewage systems; and requiring all new developments to provide sufficient surface water drainage infrastructure. However, a significant negative effect is also identified for the Water Supply and Wastewater Services objectives as, until the Longford Wastewater Treatment Plant is upgraded, there may be a need for new residential developments to install onsite treatment plants to treat wastewater (i.e. individual septic tanks) which increases the risk of water pollution.

5.156 Positive effects are identified for EC 01 – 03 as the objectives support the delivery of adequate water infrastructure which will help to reduce pollution of water resources. Similarly, positive effects are expected for objectives FR 01-

FR 05 as they seek to reduce flood risk and surface water run-off which will protect water quality.

5.157 An uncertain minor negative effect is identified for EC 04 and 05 as objective EC 05 supports hazardous waste collection at the Athlone Road Civic Amenity Site which may have an adverse effect if there is leeching of waste into the soil and water bodies. The effect is uncertain and will be subject to appropriate environmental and amenity safeguards.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (significant positive / significant negative) is expected for the Energy and Communications objectives for **EPO 7: Water**.

EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

5.158 Mixed effects (minor positive / minor negative) are expected for objectives EC 01 - EC 03 and EC 06 for this EPO as new infrastructure development may impact the landscape, townscape and historic environment of Longford. However, the objectives support the protection of amenities within the town, which may aid in mitigating harm. In addition, the undergrounding of all electricity, telephone and television cables is supported is likely to have positive effects for the setting of heritage assets, landscape character, and visual amenity.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the Energy and Communications objectives for **EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage**.

EPO 9: Landscape

5.159 The effects identified for these objectives are for the same reasons as outlined above for EPO 8: Cultural heritage.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the Energy and Communications objectives for **EPO 9: Landscape**.

EPO 10: Material assets

5.160 Positive effects are expected for all of the objectives for this EPO, with objectives EC 01- EC 06, SW 01 – SW 07 and WS 01 – WS 22 all expected to have significant positive effects.

5.161 The objectives will optimise existing infrastructure and provide new infrastructure sufficient to meet demand, including waste infrastructure (EC 01-06). Objectives WS 01 – WS 22 seek to ensure sufficient water supply and wastewater facilities are in place to support new development. In addition, objective WS 08 requires the restriction or prohibition of large-scale development of un-serviced land where serviced land, of an appropriate size and nature to meet the needs of the proposed development, exists in the vicinity. This will result in more efficient use of land and resources. Objective EC 06 promotes the use of renewable energy, which will aid in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and minimise the consumption of non-renewable energy. In addition, promoting renewable energy may help increase security of energy supply. The Surface Water objectives aim to mitigate surface water flooding by incorporating SuDS and requiring all new developments to provide sufficient surface water drainage infrastructure.

5.162 A minor positive effect is identified for objective FR 01 - FR 05 as the objectives seek to protect material assets by restricting development in areas identified as being of high risk of flooding.

Overall, a significant positive effect is expected for Energy and Communications objectives for **EPO 10: Material Assets**.

Sustainable Transport

5.163 The results of the appraisal findings for the 'Sustainable Transport' objectives in the Longford Town LAP are described in this section with a summary of the SEA effects detailed in **Table 5.12**.

Table 5.12: Summary of likely sustainability effects of the 'Sustainable Transport' objectives of the Longford Town LAP

EPO	ST 01 – 09, 17and ST 30	ST 10 – 16 and ST 33	ST 18 – 20	ST 21 – 25	ST 26 – 29 and ST 31 – 32
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	+?	0	0	-?	+/-?
Population and Human Health	++	++	++	+/-?	++/-
Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	++	++	++	--	--/+
Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	0	0	0	-?	-?

EPO	ST 01 – 09, 17and ST 30	ST 10 – 16 and ST 33	ST 18 – 20	ST 21 – 25	ST 26 – 29 and ST 31 – 32
Air	++	++	++	--	--/+
Soil	0	0	0	--	--?
Water	0	0	0	-?	--?
Cultural Heritage	0	0	0	-?	-?
Landscape	+	0	0	-?	+/-?
Material Assets	++	++	++	++/--	++/--

EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora

5.164 New walking and cycle routes may act as corridors for wildlife, particularly if well vegetated. Therefore, a minor positive but uncertain effect is identified for objectives ST 01 – 09, 17, 30 and 33 for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna**.

5.165 An uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for objectives ST 26 – 29 and ST 31 - 32. There are no biodiversity sites in close proximity of the Abbeycartron site, however, there may still be some adverse effects to habitats and species that exist on the rural land that is currently in agricultural use on the edge of Longford Town from new residential development, associated traffic, and an increase in active travel in the area. These adverse effects may be minimised through the incorporation of habitat enhancement measures as part of the delivery of the Abbeycartron Access Strategy, thereby contributing to the network of functionally linked habitats in Longford Town.

5.166 An uncertain minor negative effect is expected for ST 21 – 25 as expanding the road network is likely to have an adverse effect on habitats and

species. The effect is uncertain as traffic impact assessments may mitigate the potential adverse effects on biodiversity.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for the Sustainable Transport objectives for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora**.

EPO 2: Population and human health

5.167 Significant positive effects are expected for sustainable transport objectives ST 01 – 20, 30 and 33. The development and promotion of active modes of travel such as walking and cycling will encourage people to lead more active and healthy lifestyles. This will help improve the mental and physical wellbeing of the population. Additionally, encouraging model share and providing suitable infrastructure on public transport corridors to improve safety and efficiency, as set out in objectives ST 10 – 16, will increase accessibility for all, reducing inequalities. Objectives ST 18 – 20 support the provision of EV infrastructure which will encourage people to switch from private petrol and diesel cars to more sustainable EV powered vehicles, minimising emissions. This will have positive effects on the health of the population of Longford Town. Positive effects on the population are further enhanced as objectives ST 01 – 09 and 17 require Accessibility Audits to be prepared for new developments with the aim of improving accessibility for all, including the elderly, disabled and those less mobile. In addition, the Accessibility Audits will help provide accessible, attractive, vibrant and safe places to work, live, shop and engage in community life.

5.168 A mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for objectives ST 21 - 25. Improving the road network and connectivity may enhance accessibility to facilities and services, with subsequent benefits for health and wellbeing. However, improvements to the road network may also increase residents' exposure to noise/air/vibration/light pollution related to the increased volume of traffic.

5.169 A mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is identified for the ST 26 – 29 and 31 - 32 objectives which relate to the Abbeycartron Access Strategy. The scheme proposes new pedestrian/cycle links and improved permeability routes to connect to the town and the Mall. The scheme also includes a new road between Battery Road roundabout and Abbeycartron Lane, providing access to Battery Road at two points, thereby reducing the overall volume of vehicles that utilise any one entrance. A new road is also proposed across the Camlin to link to the Templemichael Industrial Estate. The new roads will also incorporate designated footpaths and cycle infrastructure. These interventions are likely to encourage walking and cycling for new and existing residents of Abbeycartron and improve access to services, facilities and employment opportunities for sustainable travel modes. This will encourage healthy lifestyles by promoting active travel. However, a minor negative effect is also identified for this EPO as the new access roads that will accommodate significant residential development are likely to increase residents' exposure to noise/air/vibration/light pollution related to the increased volume of traffic in the area. This will be mitigated to some extent by the proposed active travel elements of the strategy, and the close proximity of zoned education facilities, however it is likely that new residents will still rely on private vehicles for some journeys as they are located on the periphery of Longford Town.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is identified for the Sustainable Transport objectives for **EPO 2: Population and human health**.

EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation

5.170 Significant positive effects are expected for objectives ST 01 – 20, ST 30 and 33 as they support the implementation, enhancement and promotion of active and sustainable modes of travel, including by encouraging modal share and requiring new developments to provide sufficient cycling infrastructure, a permeable layout, and EV infrastructure. Promoting sustainable modes of travel

will reduce the dependency to travel by private petrol and diesel cars, minimising transport-related emissions.

5.171 Conversely, expanding the road network as supported by objectives ST 21 – 29 and 31-32 will likely encourage increased traffic volumes and transport-related emissions. Therefore, significant negative effects are identified for these objectives.

5.172 A minor positive effect is identified for the objectives relating to the development of Abbeycartron (ST 26 and-31 - 32). The Abbeycartron Access - Strategy requires a traffic and transport, and permeability assessment and supports the delivery of new pedestrian and cycle links which will help support the modal shift away from private vehicle use and reduce unnecessary car journeys thus lowering transport-related emissions and Longford's contribution to climate change.

Overall, a mixed effect (significant positive / significant negative) is identified for the Sustainable Transport objectives for **EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation**.

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

5.173 Expanding the road network may have adverse effects on the water environment due to the sealing of soils and increased surface water runoff from roads. Therefore, minor negative but uncertain effects are expected for objectives ST 21 - 25. These effects are uncertain as traffic impact assessments may mitigate the potential adverse effects of increased traffic on the water environment.

5.174 An uncertain minor negative effect is identified for objectives ST 26 – 29 and 31 - 32. The Abbeycartron redevelopment area is located in close proximity to the River Camlin, which has a high probability of river flood events, although

not within the redevelopment area itself. Without appropriate mitigation, new development on greenfield land has the potential to exacerbate flood risk with the introduction of more impermeable surfaces within the plan area. The Access Strategy proposes the development of a number of new roads on greenfield land, as well as new paths, some of which cross the River Camlin. This is likely to introduce impermeable surfaces in an area at high risk of flooding, thereby potentially increase the severity and risk of flooding within the plan area. As such, an uncertain minor negative effect is identified for this EPO. Negligible effects are expected for objectives ST 01 -17, 30 and 33.

Overall, an uncertain minor negative effect is identified for the Sustainable Transport objectives for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation**.

EPO 5: Air

5.175 The effects identified for these objectives are for the same reasons as outlined above for EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation.

Overall, a mixed effect (significant positive / significant negative) is identified for the Sustainable Transport objectives for **EPO 5: Air**.

EPO 6: Soil

5.176 Significant negative effects are identified for objectives ST 21 – 29 and 31 - 32 for **EPO 6: Soil** as the development of these infrastructure projects will likely result in the loss of large areas of greenfield land. Negligible effects are identified for objectives ST 01 – 20 and 33.

Overall, an uncertain significant negative effect is identified for the Sustainable Transport objectives for **EPO 6: Soil**.

EPO 7: Water

5.177 Expanding the road network may potentially have adverse effects on the water environment due to the sealing of soils and increased surface water runoff from roads. Therefore, minor negative but uncertain effects are expected for ST 20 - 24 regarding **EPO 7: Water**. These effects are uncertain as traffic impact assessments may mitigate the potential adverse effects of increased traffic on the water environment.

5.178 An uncertain significant negative effect is identified for ST 25 – 29 and ST 31 – 32. The Abbeycartron redevelopment area is located in close proximity to the River Camlin and its tributaries and transport interventions within the area, including the road connection and a number of new pedestrian/cycle routes, will cross the River Camlin. As such, development has the potential to adversely affect the quality of waterbodies although this is uncertain.

Overall, an uncertain significant negative effect is identified for the Sustainable Transport objectives for **EPO 7: Water**.

EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

5.179 The construction of new roads and the increase in traffic along these routes could detract from the setting of heritage assets. Therefore, minor negative but uncertain effects are expected for ST 20 – 29 and 31 - 32 regarding **EPO 8: Cultural heritage**. These effects are uncertain as traffic

impact assessments may mitigate the potential adverse effects of increased traffic on cultural heritage assets.

5.180 The Abbeycartron redevelopment area is located in close proximity to a small number of features listed on the Record of Protected Structures. However, the proposed Access Strategy will be located adjacent to the Battery Road Architectural Conservation Area. It is therefore possible that the proposed redevelopment and associated transport infrastructure/traffic could have adverse effects on the setting of the Architectural Conservation Area although this will depend on the design of traffic interventions.

Overall, an uncertain minor negative effect is identified for the Sustainable Transport objectives for **EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage.**

EPO 9: Landscape

5.181 Objectives ST 01 – 09 and 16 seek to manage space in town centres to deliver a high priority of permeability by active travel routes to create attractive and vibrant places to work and live. This will help enhance the character of the townscape. Therefore, a minor positive effect is identified for these objectives for **EPO 9: Landscape**.

5.182 The construction of new roads and the increase in traffic along these routes could detract from landscape character and visual amenity. Therefore, minor negative effects are expected for ST 20 - 24. These effects are uncertain as traffic impact assessments may mitigate the potential adverse effects of increased traffic on the landscape.

5.183 An uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for ST 25 – 29 and 31-32 in relation to the Abbeycartron Access Strategy. The impact on Longford's existing landscape and townscape will depend largely on

the detailed design of the Access Strategy and its associated residential development, therefore the effects are uncertain, however, due to the scale of the proposed Access Strategy, it is likely that the scheme will have an adverse effect on the landscape of Longford Town's rural edge. The Access Strategy provides new pedestrian and cycle links which will improve urban and rural connectivity, as well as improving access to valued landscapes and viewpoints including to the River Camlin and the Mall. The additional volume of traffic along Battery Road, associated with the new road and new population, has the potential to increase adverse effects on the townscape character of Battery Road, including through noise, air and light pollution. However, the Access Strategy could be strengthened by encouraging the retention and planting of green infrastructure along transport routes to protect landscape character and create a sense of place.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for the Sustainable Transport objectives for **EPO 9: Landscape**.

EPO 10: Material Assets

5.184 Creating a more vibrant town centre and the increased provision of services and transport infrastructure will help increase the vitality and viability of the town, with significant positive effects expected for **EPO 10: Material Assets** for objectives ST 01 - 16. The enhanced provision of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure will further contribute to positive effects for material assets. Furthermore, promoting high-capacity sustainable transport over petrol and diesel fuelled cars represents a more efficient use of natural resources. A significant positive effect is also expected for objectives ST 17-19 due to improved EV infrastructure within Longford Town.

5.185 Safeguarding and extending road networks as well as addressing safety, capacity and strategic function, as supported by objectives ST 20 – 24, will have a significant positive effect for **EPO 10: Material Assets**. However, a significant

negative effect is also identified as the proposed road network projects will require the significant consumption of resources.

5.186 Similarly, an overall mixed effect (significant positive / significant negative) is identified for objectives ST 25 – 29 and 31-32. The Abbeycartron Access Strategy will provide essential transport infrastructure to support the zoned residential development of the area. This will provide road, cycle and walking infrastructure for the growing population of Longford Town in a key redevelopment area. The inclusion of high-quality pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, and new permeability routes will help support the modal shift away from private vehicles for new and existing residents, supporting a reduction in energy demand from the transport sector. However, supporting the Access Strategy will require development of new infrastructure, such as new roads, which will require the significant use of resources.

Overall, a mixed (significant positive / significant negative) effect is expected for **EPO 10: Material assets**.

Climate Change

5.187 The results of the appraisal findings for the 'Climate Change' objectives in the Longford Town LAP are described in this section with a summary of the SEA effects detailed in **Table 5.13**.

Table 5.13: Summary of the likely sustainability effects of the 'Climate Change' objectives of the Longford Town LAP

EPO	CC 01 – 05	CC 06 and 08 – 11	CC 07 and CC 12 – 18	CC 19 - 27
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	++	++	0	0

EPO	CC 01 – 05	CC 06 and 08 – 11	CC 07 and CC 12 – 18	CC 19 - 27
Population and Human Health	++	++	+	+
Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	++	0	++	++
Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	++	++	0	+
Air	++	0	++	++
Soil	++	++	++	0
Water	++	++	0	0
Cultural Heritage	++	+	0	0
Landscape	++	+	+	+
Material Assets	++	++	++	++

EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora

5.188 Objectives CC 01 - 05 support objectives and actions in various climate change strategies/plans to conserve and enhance Longford's biodiversity and to increase blue and green spaces. Objectives CC 06 and 08-11 support the use of biodiversity techniques (i.e. green roofs and walls) and creating green and blue infrastructure networks which helps enhance biodiversity and their associated habitats. Therefore, significant effects are expected for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna** regarding objectives CC 01 – 06, 08 - 11. Negligible effects are identified for objectives CC07 and CC 12 - 27.

Overall, a significant positive effect is identified for the Climate Change objectives for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora**.

EPO 2: Population and human health

5.189 Increasing sustainable travel options will have positive effects for **EPO 2: Population and human health** by improving access to local facilities, promoting active and healthier lifestyles, and reducing respiratory related illnesses due to improvements in air quality. CC 18 will also ensure that all new developments will be assessed against technical standards relating to traffic and pedestrian safety which will improve road safety and reduce road accidents.

5.190 The effects are expected to be significant for objectives CC 01 – 06, 08 – 11 as building at sustainable densities and incorporating green infrastructure is likely to benefit health and wellbeing by preventing overcrowding and promoting physical activity and outdoor recreation.

Overall, a significant positive effect is identified for the Climate Change objectives for **EPO 2: Population and human health**.

EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation

5.191 Significant positive effects are expected for **EPO 3: Energy/ Climate Change Mitigation** for objectives CC01 – 05, 07, 12 – 18, 19 - 27 as supporting the implementation of climate mitigation measures will contribute to a reduction in emissions. In addition, the objectives support implementation of the climate objectives and actions within the County Longford Development Plan and Longford's Draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. The development of local renewable and low carbon energy sources and using sustainable building construction and materials in new development, as outlined in CC objectives 07,12 – 18 and 26 -27 is likely to reduce the consumption of non-renewable energy. Additionally, designating Longford Town as a 'Decarbonisation Zone' will minimise greenhouse gas emissions. However, negative effects may occur as a result of an increase in emissions during construction and operation of

developments (unless new development replaces much less efficient buildings, outweighing the loss of embodied carbon).

Overall, a significant positive effect is identified for the Climate Change objectives for **EPO 3: Energy / Climate change mitigation**.

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

5.192 As for EPO 3, a significant positive effect is identified for **EPO 4: Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation** for objectives CC 01 – 05 as they support the implementation of climate resilient measures in the County Longford Climate Change Adaption Strategy, climate objectives and actions within the County Longford Development Plan and Longford's Draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. Objectives CC 01 – 06 and 08 – 11 are also expected to have significant positive effects as they support the incorporation of SuDS in all new developments; avoiding inappropriate development in flood prone lands; and enhancing the GBI network which will support water retention and flood alleviation.

Overall, a significant positive effect is identified for the Climate Change objectives for **EPO 4: Flood risk / Climate change adaptation**.

EPO 5: Air

5.193 Objectives which seek to increase connectivity and prioritise sustainable and active transport routes will result in positive effects for emissions reductions, via reducing traffic congestion, therefore having subsequent benefits for air quality. Objective CC 17 relates specifically to preserving air quality. Objectives which support the adaptation of buildings to become more energy efficient will also reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality.

Hence a significant positive effect is expected for **EPO 5: Air** for objectives CC 07, 12 – 27. As well as a reduction in private vehicle travel, the implementation of green and blue spaces as outlined in objectives CC 01 - 05 will improve carbon sequestration, hence improving air quality. Therefore, a significant positive effect is identified for these objectives.

Overall, a significant positive effect is identified for the Climate Change objectives for **EPO 5: Air**.

EPO 6: Soil

5.194 A significant positive effect is identified for **EPO 6: Soil** for objectives CC 06 and 08 – 11 as they encourage the reuse of existing buildings and the development of brownfield land in preference to greenfield land, as well as enhancing the GBI network, which will protect soil resources. Furthermore, the development of local renewable and low carbon energy sources, as well as using sustainable building construction techniques and materials in new development, will reduce the consumption of non-renewable energy (i.e. fossil fuels) and will use resources efficiently, safeguarding soils. Additionally, for objectives CC 01 – 05 soil resources will be safeguarded through climate actions to monitor, manage and improve soil resources.

Overall, a significant positive effect is identified for the Climate Change objectives for **EPO 6: Soil**.

EPO 7: Water

5.195 Significant positive effects are identified for objectives CC 01 – 05 as actions and measures set out in the climate strategies and plans seek to monitor, manage and improve water quality. Objectives CC 06 and 08 - 11

support incorporating SuDS in new developments; avoiding inappropriate development in flood prone lands; and integrating green infrastructure throughout the LAP area to support water retention and flood alleviation which will improve the quality of water, mitigate runoff and promote the efficient use of water.

Overall, a significant positive effect is identified for the Climate Change objectives for **EPO 7: Water**.

EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

5.196 A significant positive effect is identified for objectives CC 01 – 05 as the decrease in private vehicle use will reduce traffic congestion and emissions, improving the setting of heritage assets. Increasing green infrastructure throughout the LAP area is also likely to positively enhance the setting of heritage assets. Therefore, a minor positive effect is expected for **EPO 8: Cultural Heritage** for CC 01 – 06 and 08 - 11.

Overall, a minor positive effect is identified for the Climate Change objectives for **EPO 8: Cultural heritage**.

EPO 9: Landscape

5.197 A significant positive effect is identified for objectives CC 01 – 05 as the actions and measures in the climate change strategies support the delivery of sustainable travel infrastructure which will reduce private vehicle use, and consequently traffic congestion, improving the character and visual amenity of the town. Supporting the use of biodiversity techniques (i.e. green roofs and walls) and creating green infrastructure networks will protect landscape

character and create a sense of place. Therefore, minor positive effects are identified for objectives CC 06 – 27 for **EPO 9: Landscape**.

Overall, a minor positive effect is identified for the Climate Change objectives for **EPO 9: Landscape**.

EPO 10: Material assets

5.198 Significant positive effects are expected for the climate change objectives for **EPO 10: Material Assets**. Development of local renewable and low carbon energy sources, supporting circular economy principles as well as using sustainable building construction techniques and materials in new development, will reduce consumption of non-renewable energy (i.e. fossil fuels) and will use resources efficiently.

5.199 As well as the actions above, objectives to prioritise brownfield land and improve the circular economy will result in positive effects for **EPO 10: Material Assets**, as it increases resource use efficiency.

Overall, a significant positive effect is identified for the Climate Change objectives for **EPO 10: Material assets**.

Implementation and Monitoring

5.200 The results of the appraisal findings for the 'Implementation and Monitoring' objectives in the Longford Town LAP are described in this section with a summary of the SEA effects detailed in **Table 5.14**.

Table 5.14: Summary of the likely sustainability effects of the 'Implementation and Monitoring' objectives of the Longford Town LAP

EPO	AL 01 – AL 08
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	+/-
Population and Human Health	++
Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	+/-?
Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	+/-
Air	+/-?
Soil	++/-
Water	+/-
Cultural Heritage	+/-
Landscape	++/-
Material Assets	++/-

EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora

5.201 A mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna** as the objectives support the development of brownfield land in preference to greenfield sites which will minimise adverse effects on biodiversity, although it is recognised that brownfield sites contain their own niche habitats and species. The minor negative effect also relates to the development of Tier 2 greenfield sites which can result in the loss of habitats, fragmentation of ecological corridors, and disturbance to species.

Overall, a mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for the Implementation and Monitoring objectives for **EPO 1: Biodiversity, fauna and flora**.

EPO 2: Population and human health

5.202 These LAP objectives support compact growth of Longford Town through sustainable and sequential land use development which consolidates the town centre, commercial areas and residential areas. This will have a significant positive effect for **EPO 2: Population and human health** as it discourages urban sprawl, improves access to services and facilities, reduces traffic movements and encourages more sustainable transport methods. The effect is further strengthened as the objectives support the protection of lands zoned as 'Strategic Residential Reserves' for the longer-term provision of housing to meet the needs of Longford Town's population.

Overall, a significant positive effect is identified for the Implementation and Monitoring objectives for **EPO 2: Population and human health.**

EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation

5.203 A positive effect is identified for **EPO 3: Energy / climate change mitigation** as the objectives support the compact growth of Longford Town which discourages urban sprawl, reduces traffic movements and encourages more sustainable transport methods. A minor negative effect is also expected as the objectives support the development of both Tier 1 and Tier 2 lands. Tier 1 lands are already well serviced and may facilitate active and sustainable travel, whereas Tier 2 are not serviced yet but will be over the lifetime of the plan. Tier 2 developments are generally located further from Longford Town

centre compared to Tier 1 and therefore may result in residents being more reliant on private vehicles, although this is uncertain.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for the Implementation and Monitoring objectives for **EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation.**

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

5.204 The redevelopment of brownfield land in preference to development of greenfield land will protect permeable surfaces in the town which will help reduce flood risk, surface water runoff, and pollution of water resources. However, the objectives provide some support for the development of Tier 2 lands, which include areas of greenfield land. Therefore, a mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation**.

Overall, a mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for the Implementation and Monitoring objectives for **EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation.**

EPO 5: Air

5.205 An uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the Implementation and Monitoring objectives for the same reasons as outlined above for EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for the Implementation and Monitoring objectives for **EPO 5: Air.**

EPO 6: Soil

5.206 The objectives strongly support urban regeneration of brownfield lands in preference to greenfield sites which will protect valuable soil resources. However, the objectives provide some support for the development of Tier 2 lands, which include areas of greenfield land. Development of greenfield sites can have adverse effects as soil sealing can increase surface water run-off and flood risk. Therefore, a mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is identified for **EPO 6: Soil**.

Overall, an uncertain mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is identified for the Implementation and Monitoring objectives for **EPO 6: Soil.**

EPO 7: Water

5.207 An uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for the Implementation and Monitoring objectives for the same reasons as outlined above for EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation.

Overall, a mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for the Implementation and Monitoring objectives for **EPO 7: Water.**

EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

5.208 The objectives encourage the regeneration of vacant and brownfield land which may enhance the setting of cultural heritage assets. However, delivering a higher quantum of development, particularly if not designed well, could harm the historic environment of Longford Town and the setting of heritage assets. Therefore, a mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for **EPO 8: Cultural Heritage**.

Overall, a mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for the Implementation and Monitoring objectives for **EPO 8: Cultural heritage.**

EPO 9: Landscape

5.209 These objectives promote sequential development of lands from the town core out according to the availability or feasibility of delivering services. Delivering appropriate designed development on vacant and brownfield sites will help improve townscape character. However, the sequential development of lands may include greenfield land outside the town centre which could adversely affect landscape character and visual amenity. Therefore, a mixed effect (significant positive and minor negative) is identified for **EPO 9: Landscape**.

Overall, a mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is identified for the Implementation and Monitoring objectives for **EPO 9: Landscape.**

EPO 10: Material assets

5.210 The objectives promote actions such as active land management; the development of strategically located landbanks; urban regeneration of brownfield lands in preference to the development of greenfield sites; maintaining and updating a Vacant Sites Register; and utilising site activation measures. In addition, the objectives will result in more optimal use of land and resources by supporting the sequential development of lands with preference for Tier 1 (Serviced Zoned Land) followed by Tier 2 (Serviceable Zoned Land) lands. Therefore, a significant positive effect is identified for these objectives for EPO 10: Material Assets. This is combined with a minor negative effect as the higher population density in Longford Town could put a strain on existing material assets, however it is assumed that development would only occur where it could be ensured that there is sufficient infrastructure in place prior to development.

Overall, a mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is identified for the Implementation and Monitoring objectives for **10: Material assets.**

Summary of the SEA findings of the Longford Town Local Area Plan

Table 5.15: Summary of the SEA findings of the Longford Town Local Area Plan

SEA findings	1: Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	2: Population and Human Health	3: Energy and Climate Change Mitigation	4: Flood Risk and Climate Change Adaptation	5: Air	6: Soil	7: Water	8: Cultural Heritage	9: Landscape	10: Material Assets
Alternative 1	+/-	++/-	++/-	++/-	++/-	++/-	++/-	++/-	++/-	++/-
Alternative 2	--/+	--/+	--/+	--/+	--/+	--/+	--/+	--/+	--/+	--/+
Vision and Strategic Aims	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Core Strategy Compliance	+/-?	++/-	++/-	+/-	++/-	++/-	+/-	++/-?	++/-?	++
Residential Sustainability and Placemaking	-?	++	+/-?	0	+/-?	+	-?	+/-?	+/-?	+?
Economic Development	-?	++	+/-?	0	+/-?	+	0	+/-?	+/-?	+
Tourism	+/-?	++	+/-?	+/-	+/-?	+/-	+/-	+/-?	++	++

SEA findings	1: Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	2: Population and Human Health	3: Energy and Climate Change Mitigation	4: Flood Risk and Climate Change Adaptation	5: Air	6: Soil	7: Water	8: Cultural Heritage	9: Landscape	10: Material Assets
Regeneration and Placemaking	+/-?	++	+/-?	+/-	+/-?	++/-	+/-	++/-?	++	++
Social Infrastructure	+/-	++	+/-	+	+/-	+	+	+	++	+
Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure	++/-	++	++	++	++	+	+	+	++	+
Built and Cultural Heritage	-?	+	+	0	0	+	+	++	++	+
Energy and Communications	+/-?	+/-?	++	++	+	+/-?	++/--?	+/-?	+/-?	++
Sustainable Transport	+/-?	++/-?	++/--	-?	++/--	--?	--?	-?	+/-?	++/--
Climate Change	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	+	+	++
Implementation and Monitoring	+/-	++	+/-?	+/-	+/-?	++/-	+/-	+/-	++/-	++/-

Duration of effects

5.211 The Longford Town Local Area Plan sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Longford, guiding the overall development of the town to 2030. Effects may be experienced in the short-term (defined in this SEA as up to 2025), medium term (defined in this SEA as up to 2027) or long-term effects (defined as over the whole plan period and beyond). Given the nature of the policies in the LAP, it is difficult to be precise about when, where and in what form all the effects will arise, and how one effect might relate to another. However, it is possible to draw some broad conclusions about the nature and inter-relationship of the effects that the SEA has identified.

Short-term Effects

5.212 The effects of the LAP in the short-term are mostly related to the initial impacts of commencing development early in the Plan period. These will include the removal of vegetation, soil, and provision of infrastructure required. Such works could have negative impacts on biodiversity, health and well-being, amenity of local communities (possible disruption to rights of way, traffic flows, noise generation, vibration, dust etc.), soil quality, and the landscape. However, these impacts are temporary in nature, and some may be minimised through good design, adherence to the policies in the LAP or reversed through restoration measures in the long-term.

Medium-term Effects

5.213 Medium-term positive effects relate to the employment and economic benefits of development, new communities and employment centres. Negative effects in the medium-term include the implications of having greater densities of residents and workers in parts of Longford Town on health and well-being, the amenity of local communities (e.g. noise, increased traffic etc.), and on

environmental quality. However, these impacts should be avoided or mitigated through the adherence to the objectives in the LAP when planning proposals are assessed and determined by Longford County Council.

Long-term Effects

5.214 Long-term, permanent benefits that would result from the LAP include the provision of sufficient homes, new services, facilities and infrastructure and employment opportunities to meet Longford's needs. New developments will also enable flood alleviation schemes, habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement, recreation enhancement as well and the conservation of Longford's landscapes and historic environment. Long-term, permanent negative impacts of the LAP are potentially: loss of habitats and areas of greenfield land; and climate change implications of the energy required to power new homes and businesses. However, it is noted that objectives in the LAP promote the use of renewable energy in existing and proposed buildings.

Secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects

5.215 As specified in the SEA Regulations, there is a requirement to consider secondary, cumulative, synergistic, and indirect effects of the implementation of the Longford Town LAP. Secondary (or indirect) effects are effects that are not a direct result of a proposal but occur away from the original effect or as a result of a complex pathway. Cumulative effects occur where two or more insignificant effects combine to form a significant effect. Synergistic effects occur as the result of interactions between individual effects producing a total effect greater than the sum of each of the individual effects. Secondary, cumulative or synergistic effects may be either positive or negative.

5.216 The secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects of the strategies and schemes of the Longford Town LAP are summarised in the following paragraphs.

- **1. Biodiversity, flora and fauna:** It is anticipated that there will be a cumulative mix of beneficial and adverse effects on biodiversity from the implementation of the LAP. For example, increased residential and employment development in Longford Town could lead to direct loss of habitat or both direct and indirect disturbance on species and habitats. In addition, the LAP supports increased tourism and associated development, which will also increase pressure on Longford Town's biodiversity. However, elements of the LAP such as the objectives relating to natural heritage and green infrastructure will mitigate effects on biodiversity, such as those which support protecting, conserving and enhancing Longford Town's biodiversity and natural heritage; prohibiting development that would be harmful to habitats and species; promoting appropriate tree planting and pollinator friendly planting; supporting restoration and conservation works to protect and enhance water quality; enhancing and further developing the Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Network in Longford Town; and reducing fragmentation of the GBI network In addition, the LAP prioritises development on brownfield land in preference to greenfield land, which will further protect habitats and species in Longford Town. The LAP also supports eco-tourism and measures which will aid in improving air quality and mitigating the negative effects of climate change, such as via the delivery of sustainable and active modes of transport, which will result in reduced pressures on Longford's natural environment.
- **2. Population and human health:** It is anticipated that the LAP will have a cumulative beneficial effect on health, wellbeing and equalities by supporting the development of sustainable neighbourhoods which provide appropriate numbers and types of housing; mitigating population decline, lack of investment and physical dereliction; and supporting the provision of social infrastructure to support existing and new communities in Longford Town. In addition, the LAP promotes increased provision and access to services, facilities, employment and recreation including by promoting development in brownfield areas over greenfield land, and by supporting the delivery of sustainable transport. Increased active travel and access to

recreation will also benefit the health of Longford Town's population by promoting healthy and active lifestyles. The LAP also includes objectives which will aid in mitigating climate change and associated emissions, which along with a shift to more sustainable travel, will improve air quality in Longford, as well as mitigate effects of climate change. This will positively impact the health and well-being of residents. The climate change objectives also support climate change adaptation in Longford Town, which will make the town and its residents more resilient to the effects of climate change. The LAP also supports objectives which make Longford Town a safer and more pleasant place to live in for all, including objectives which promote age friendly town principles. However, negative effects may occur as development of brownfield land may increase the urban population and increase pressure on urban services and facilities. In addition, the LAP supports increased tourism which may increase traffic and congestion in Longford, resulting in decreased air quality.

- **3: Energy and climate change mitigation:** It is anticipated that the LAP will have a cumulative beneficial effect on energy and climate change mitigation via its climate change objectives which promote the economic, social and environmental benefits of low-carbon development; the creation of an integrated GBI network; and the prioritisation of sustainable mobility. Promoting sustainable forms of transport will result in decreased transport-related emissions. The LAP's objectives seeking to regenerate the town centre and promote the development of brownfield over greenfield land will further promote use of sustainable transport modes as these sites are usually within the town centre core. In addition, the LAP contains objectives which support increased energy efficiency, including in buildings, as well as the development of renewable energy. A number of objectives also support the development of green infrastructure and protecting and enhancing habitats, including tree planting, which will aid in the sequestration of carbon from the atmosphere. However, negative effects may occur as a result of an increase in emissions during construction and operation of developments (unless new development replaces much less efficient buildings, outweighing the loss of embodied carbon). Furthermore, objectives which support the development and maintenance of Longford Town's road networks as this does not support a modal shift away from private car use and may encourage it. In addition,

the LAP supports increased tourism which may increase traffic and congestion in Longford Town, resulting in increases in emissions.

- **4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation:** It is anticipated that the LAP will have a cumulative beneficial effect on flood risk and climate change adaptation by supporting objectives to create an integrated GBI network which includes open spaces and habitats. This will help reduce flood risk by increasing flood attenuation, as well as contribute to climate change adaptation. In addition, the LAP supports prioritising developing brownfield land over greenfield land which will mitigate potential surface run-off in Longford Town, thereby mitigating flood risk. In addition, the surface water and flood risk management objectives will directly result in the mitigation of flood risk in Longford Town by pursuing the resolution of surface water drainage issues; providing sufficient surface water drainage facilities; providing surface water attenuation measures; and supporting the incorporation of Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).
- **5: Air:** Secondary effects are expected for EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation and EPO 5: Air as the development of compact and sustainable settlements in Longford Town will encourage the use of sustainable and active travel modes of transport in preference to private car travel, which will decrease transport emissions and improve air quality. It is anticipated that the LAP will have a majority cumulative beneficial effect on air, particularly by promoting the use and increased delivery of sustainable modes of transport within the town. The use of sustainable transport in Longford Town is supported by objectives which prioritise the development of brownfield land within the town centre over more peripheral greenfield land. Furthermore, objectives which support the protection and creation of green infrastructure may also lead to more active travel and reductions in vehicle-derived air pollution. In addition, the LAP supports the protection and enhancement of greenspace and habitats, and associated planting, such as trees. Increased vegetation will help improve air quality by filtering pollution. In addition, the LAP supports the development of renewable energy which will aid in decreasing emissions from energy generation. However, objectives which support the maintenance and expansion of Longford Town's road network will encourage increased use of private vehicles on the road which will subsequently increase greenhouse gas emissions. The LAPs support of

tourism, as well as development in urban areas, may also increase traffic and congestion in Longford Town.

- **6: Soil:** Secondary positive effects are expected for the EPOs relating to soil, water, biodiversity and flood risk from the regeneration of brownfield land, the protection of greenfield land, and the creation of a more integrated network of green infrastructure which will support habitat connectivity, reduce surface water run-off, increase areas for flood attenuation, and increase areas of permeable surfaces. It is anticipated that the LAP will have a majority cumulative beneficial effect on soil, in particular because the LAP supports the prioritisation of developing brownfield over greenfield land and the reuse of existing buildings, which will aid in protecting Longford Town's soil resources. In addition, the LAP promotes the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, which will maintain and improve Longford Town's soil quality. Furthermore, objectives relating to climate change will aid in managing and improving soil resources. However, the LAP supports increased development, including the expansion of road networks, which may negatively impact the soil environment.
- **7: Water:** It is anticipated that there will be a cumulative mix of beneficial and adverse effects on the water environment, in particular by supporting the prioritisation of developing brownfield over greenfield land, which will aid in reducing surface run-off. Furthermore, the LAP supports the protection and enhancement of habitats and green space, including green infrastructure in Longford Town, which will be beneficial to water quality, as vegetation can capture and filter pollutants carried in surface water runoff before it reaches a water course/body. In addition, objectives relating to water supply, wastewater services and surface water will directly benefit the water environment in Longford Town as they seek to protect both water quality and quantity, including waterbodies and groundwater sources. This includes avoiding adverse impacts from pollution and changes to drainage, and promoting the efficient use of water and SuDS. However, negative effects on the water environment may occur as, until the Longford Wastewater Treatment Plant is upgraded, there may be a need for new residential developments to install onsite treatment plants to treat wastewater (i.e. individual septic tanks) which increases the risk of water pollution.

- **8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage:** It is anticipated that there will be a cumulative mix of beneficial and adverse effects on cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage from the implementation of the LAP. For example, the LAP supports regeneration and redevelopment of existing buildings, including protected structures, which provides opportunities for enhancing the setting of Longford Town's historic environment. In addition, the LAP supports the promotion of Longford Towns's heritage assets to the public which will increase accessibility and appreciation of the historic environment. In particular, the built and cultural heritage objectives have positive effects on this EPO as they include actions which support the protection and preservation of all protected structures; the development of a Longford Town Heritage Centre and Museum; the redevelopment of the Camlin Quarter as an area where cultural heritage and visitor attractions can be clustered; and the safeguarding of archaeological heritage located within the boundary of the LAP. The LAP also supports the designation of, and adherence to the planning requirements of the Battery Road Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), which will aid in conserving and enhancing the significant qualities, fabric and setting of Longford Town's historic environment. The LAP also supports actions to mitigate the effects of climate change which will have positive effects for the historic environment, for example, by reducing transport-related emissions which can damage the fabric of protected structures. Secondary effects are expected for EPO 8: Cultural Heritage and EPO 9: Landscape as improvements to the public realm; the regeneration of areas; and adherence to high-quality design principles will have positive effects on the setting of heritage assets, townscape character, and visual amenity. However, the LAP supports increased development in Longford Town, which if done insensitively could harm its historic character. Furthermore, the LAP prioritises development of brownfield over greenfield land, which may increase the risk of harm to heritage assets and their settings as urban areas tend to contain the highest concentrations of heritage assets. Although the priority is to develop brownfield land, the LAP will also result in development of greenfield land which may result in disturbance to buried archaeology. In addition, the LAP supports increased access and tourism. Whilst this increases understanding and appreciation of the

historic environment, tourism-related pressures could be harmful to heritage assets if visitor numbers are not properly managed.

- **9: Landscape:** It is anticipated that there will be a cumulative mix of beneficial and adverse effects on landscape from the implementation of the LAP. The LAP supports increased residential, employment and community development, including associated infrastructure, which could harm Longford Town's landscape/townscape if poorly designed. However, the LAP supports prioritising development on brownfield land which regenerates derelict and degraded land, providing opportunities to improve townscape character and visual amenity. In addition, the LAP supports improvements to the public realm and the protection and enhancement of the natural environment which will help enhance townscape character and create a sense of place.
- **10: Material assets:** It is anticipated that there will be a cumulative mix of beneficial and adverse effects on material assets. The LAP directly supports this EPO by supporting the optimisation of existing buildings and supporting the regeneration of degraded and underused land in preference to the development of greenfield land which will protect natural resources. Promoting the regeneration of the town will result in more investment in new services, facilities and infrastructure. This will help improve the vitality and viability of the town. The LAP encourages the development of renewable energy and supports increased energy efficiency in buildings. This will encourage the efficient use of resources, mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, and minimising the consumption of non-renewable energy. The LAP also promotes the development of infrastructure for transport, waste, water and energy which meet the current and future needs of the people of Longford Town. However, the development of new infrastructure, such as the construction of new roads, which will require the significant use of resources.

Chapter 6

Mitigation and recommendations

Introduction

6.1 This chapter outlines ways in which potential adverse effects of the Longford Town LAP could be avoided or minimised. It also sets out recommendations for strengthening the mitigation outlined in the proposed LAP. These recommendations were presented to the plan-making team prior to consultation, enabling them to update the LAP to integrate the recommended mitigation.

Mitigation and recommendations

6.2 The proposals in the Longford Town LAP (in a similar way to other plans and projects from any sector) will have to demonstrate compliance with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes, including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate.

6.3 The following paragraphs set out potential effects for each SEA topic and the County Policy Objectives (CPOs) included in the Longford County Development Plan **[See reference** 62**]** which are likely to provide mitigation measures for adverse effects, or enhancement of positive effects.

Several recommendations can apply to multiple EPOs. To avoid repetition these are only recorded once under one EPO. Some EPOs do not have any specific recommendations.

Biodiversity, flora and fauna

6.4 There may be adverse effects on some habitats and species from the measures included in the Longford Town LAP. These relate primarily to loss of habitat through development of semi-natural land, and increased disturbance as a result of greater tourism and recreational pressure within the town.

6.5 Mitigation at project-level is likely to be provided by adherence to the following policies of the Longford County Development Plan:

- Development Management Standards (DMS) 16.201 – 16.203 set out the criteria that the Council will consider when assessing development proposals for their impacts on natural heritage.
- CPO 12.10 sets out the requirement for the clear demonstration of no significant effects from the appropriate level of assessment for development on/adjacent to designated sites, including pNHA (i.e. the Royal Canal pNHA). CPO 12.17 requires Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) for development which may impact protected species and non-designated habitats of biodiversity value.
- CPO 12.19 – 12.23 provide measures for the protection of non-designated sites, including the requirement for the appropriate level of ecological assessment for proposals. Non-designated sites include locally important landscapes or landscape features which form part of a network of habitats essential for wildlife.
- CPO 12.57 – 12.71 provide measures to protect biodiversity and for nature conservation. For example, CPO 12.63 requires mitigation measures in cases where it is evident that biodiversity is likely to be affected by development. Measures could include the establishment of wildlife areas/corridors/parks, tree planting, wildflower meadows/marshes and other areas.
- CPO 12.72 – 12.81 provide particular protection for trees, woodlands and hedgerows.

- CPO 12.113 aims to control lighting in urban and rural areas to minimise impacts on habitats and species.

Recommendations

Table 6.1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna recommendations

LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
NHB 04 Ensure screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA), in accordance with Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive is carried out with respect to any plan or project within or adjacent to the Royal Canal pNHA.	In line with the recommendation in the AA, objective NHB 04 could be strengthened to encompass any plan or project that is likely to have a significant impact on the Royal Canal pNHA as well as the River Camlin as this links to the Lough Forbes Complex SAC / Ballykenny Bog SPA: *NHB 04 Require screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA), in accordance with Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, to be carried out with respect to any plan or project which may have a likely significant impact on the River Camlin and Royal Canal pNHA.*	NHB 04 updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.
New objective (from recommendation in the AA)	*"Require an ecological appraisal, in addition to an Appropriate Assessment, for development not directly connected with or necessary to the management of European Sites, or a proposed European Site and which are likely to have significant effects on that site either individually or cumulatively".*	New objective, NHB 05, included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA/AA, with alternative wording.
New objective (from recommendation in the AA)	*"Ensure the provision of appropriate Riparian strips of not less than 10 meters from the top*	New objective, NHB 09, included in the

LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
	of the bank of all watercourses to enhance biodiversity and preserve the natural flood regime of the area. The full extent of the biodiversity protection zone should be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Council, based on site specific characteristics and sensitivities".	LAP as recommended in the SEA/AA.
NHB 06 (previously NHB 05 in earlier draft) Prohibit any development that would be harmful to or that would result in a significant deterioration of habitats and/or disturbance of protected species within Longford town.	Additional mitigation provided in italics: NHB 06 Prohibit any development that would be harmful to or that would result in a significant deterioration of habitats and/or disturbance of protected species within Longford town. *Appropriate species surveys (e.g., bat surveys, bird surveys etc.) will be required for proposals to redevelop and reuse existing buildings, recognising that these structures can provide niche habitats and places of shelter for protected species.*	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.
NHB 12 (previously NHB 11 in earlier draft) Promote the protection and preservation of existing natural vegetation features and hedgerows and encourage the planting of native hedgerow and tree species. Existing feature vegetation (e.g. groups of trees, shrubs, hedgerows etc) should be integrated into any new development wherever possible.	Additional mitigation provided in italics: NHB 12 Promote the protection and preservation of existing natural vegetation features and hedgerows and encourage the planting of native hedgerow and tree species. Existing feature vegetation (e.g. groups of trees, shrubs, hedgerows etc) should be integrated into any new development, wherever possible. *Where the loss of the existing features is unavoidable, new biodiversity features should incorporate native species, and species of local provenance to*	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.

LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
	replace existing hedgerows and trees.	
NHB 21 (previously NHB 20 in earlier draft) Ensure that proposals for the lighting/flood lighting of waterways infrastructure, buildings or pedestrian/cycling routes along waterways incorporate bat friendly lighting schemes as set out in 'Bats and Lighting, Guidance Notes for: Planners, engineers, architects, and developers'.	Additional mitigation provided in italics: NHB 21 Ensure that proposals for the lighting/flood lighting of waterways infrastructure, buildings or pedestrian/cycling routes along waterways *minimise adverse impacts on protected species (e.g. bats, birds, otters, etc) and incorporate lighting schemes* as set out in 'Bats and Lighting, Guidance Notes for: Planners, engineers, architects, and developers'.	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.
NHB 17 (previously NHB 16 in earlier draft) Protect the important stands of trees from damage / removal.	The objective could be strengthened as follows: *NHB 17 Support a presumption against tree felling, topping, lopping or wilful destruction of mature trees as part of development proposals. Where a development proposal involves the felling, topping, lopping or threatens the destruction of a mature tree or trees, a tree survey will need to be included in the submission, carried out by a qualified Tree Specialist to justify the exceptional circumstances for their actions. The applicant must demonstrate the justification and rationale for removal of mature trees in terms of effect on ecology and landscape and demonstrate how replacement planting will compensate for loss of trees and woodland features. An assessment of potential tree roost features by a qualified and experienced ecologist may also*	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.

LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
	be requested as part of such proposals.	
NHB 25 (previously NHB 24 in earlier draft) Facilitate the control and eradication of invasive species within the Plan area.	The objective could be strengthened as follows: *NHB 25 Ensure that where the presence of invasive species is identified at the site of any proposed development or where the proposed activity has an elevated risk of resulting in the presence of these species, details of how these species will be appropriately managed and controlled will be required.*	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.
GI 01 Protect, enhance and further develop the Green Infrastructure network to provide a shared space for amenity, recreation and biodiversity to thrive and to strengthen links to the wider regional network.	Additional mitigation provided in italics: GI 01 Protect, enhance and further develop the Green Infrastructure network to provide a shared space for amenity, recreation and biodiversity to thrive and to strengthen links to the wider regional network. *This should be informed by appropriate ecological surveys and assessment.*	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation, and amended wording following material alterations.
GI 03 Integrate new and existing green infrastructure as an essential component of all new developments and to restrict development that would fragment, damage or prejudice the integrity of the green infrastructure network.	Additional mitigation provided in italics: GI 03 Integration new and existing green infrastructure as an essential component of all new developments and to restrict development that would fragment, damage or prejudice the integrity of the green infrastructure network. *Site specific ecology surveys should be carried out to inform proposed developments.*	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.

LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
Water Supply and Wastewater Services Objectives	A new objective could be included in the LAP as follows: *Require that all developments relating to water supply and wastewater treatment are subject to screening for Appropriate Assessment to ensure there are no likely significant effects on the integrity, defined by the structure and function, of any European sites and that the requirements of Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive are met.*	New objective, WS 15, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.

Population and human health

6.6 There may be adverse effects for population and human health as improvements in road infrastructure, may encourage people to travel more by private vehicle and reduce active travel. Furthermore, more cars on the roads may increase exposure to noise/air/vibration/light pollution from private vehicles. In addition, promoting development in the town may result in denser developments with a reduction in residential amenity and living conditions.

6.7 Mitigation at project-level is likely to be provided by the following CPOs of the Longford CDP:

- CPO 7.1 – CPO 7.8 support healthy placemaking including supporting public health policy, ensuring all levels of disability are catered for, and cycling and walking are promoted. These measures are likely to enhance the positive effects of the Longford Town LAP.
- CPO 7.15 – 7.17 promote and encourage universal design within the public realm and built environment.
- CPO 7.23 supports investment in town centres so they become more sustainable places for communities to live, work and enjoy.

- CPO 7.26 – 7.54 focus on the provision of key services and facilities, including social and community infrastructure, healthcare and educational facilities, and recreation, sports facilities, and open space provision.
- CPO 8.26 – 8.27 set out objectives to promote Longford Town as a centre for economic development and employment with CPO 8.76 – 8.79 supporting retail development within the town.
- Development management standards (DMS) 16.17 – 16-71 set out the criteria that the Council will consider when assessing residential development proposals for residential amenity (e.g., housing density, open space, overlooking, overshadowing etc.)
- CPOs within Chapter 8 of the CDP also set out requirements for other community facility developments which help support the local community.

Recommendations

Table 6.2: Population and human health recommendations

Draft LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
New objective in Chapter 7: Economic Development (Retail)	New objective recommendation to emphasise the need for regeneration of the town and to support the measures in the Local Transport Plan: '*To support, promote and facilitate measures, such as town centre regeneration, implementation of the Longford Town Local Transport Plan to improve accessibility and public realm improvements and other town centre first initiatives over the plan period, to reduce retail and commercial vacancy in Longford town centre*'.	New objective, RET 03, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.

Draft LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
MP 02 Promote the development and regeneration of the 'Strategic Sites' identified in the Longford Local Area Plan, to include on a Master Plan basis.	This objective could be strengthened as follows (new text in italics): MP 02 Promote the development and regeneration of the 'Strategic Sites' identified in the Longford Local Area Plan, *which contribute to the regeneration, vibrancy, diversity, vitality, attractiveness, safety, liveability and compact growth of the town centre. In conjunction with this, proposed developments must demonstrate how they will interact within its context and the wider urban area through the preparation of masterplans.*	Not included in the LAP.
Public Realm, Universal Design and Age Friendly Objectives	Although the promotion of healthy place-making is referred to in RES 10, a new objective could be included in the 'Public Realm, Universal Design and Age Friendly Objectives' as follows: *Support and encourage the principle of healthy place-making in Longford Town*.	New objective, PUA 02, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
Public Realm, Universal Design and Age Friendly Objectives	A new objective could be included in the LAP as follows: *'Support the development of public realm projects in Longford that enhance the aesthetics of the town's built and natural character and improve the overall ambience and visitor experience of the town*'.	New objective, PUA 03, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
CC 13 Create and develop well planned sustainable communities, where sustainable modes of travel are encouraged to local facilities, such as education, work and commercial activity.	This objective could be revised to refer to low-carbon communities, climate adaptation and mitigation as follows: *Support the development of sustainable low-carbon climate resilient communities and encourage a climate adaptation and mitigation*	CC 15 incorporates SEA recommended mitigation.

Draft LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
	approach to developments which will enable regeneration.	

Energy and climate change mitigation

6.8 There may be adverse effects on climate change mitigation from some of the measures included in the Longford Town LAP. Improvements to the road network will encourage people to travel by private vehicle over more sustainable modes of travel. Furthermore, promoting Longford Town as a tourism location will lead to more people travelling from further afield in private vehicles. Mitigation at project-level is likely to be provided by the following policies of the Longford CDP:

- Development management standards (DMS) 16.181 – 16.182 set out the criteria that the Council will consider when assessing renewable energy development proposals.
- CPO 5.137 – 5.140, 5.143 – 5.146 support and encourage renewable energy development, and sets out planning applications should consider and have regard to.

6.9 Mitigation is also provided in the Longford CDP through the proposed climate actions that will be undertaken by Longford County Council:

- A5.1 – A5.5 requires the installation of EV charging points.
- A5.6 requires provision of cycle parking spaces as part of non-residential developments.
- A5.15 and A5.17 promotes community scale and micro-generation of renewable power, and encourages all building electricity to be sourced from renewable sources.

Recommendations

Table 6.3: Energy and climate change mitigation recommendations

Draft LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
New objective for Chapter 7: Economic development	Recommendation for new objective as follows: *Support and promote economic and enterprise development and activity in a manner which contributes to the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainably town.*	New objective, ECON 12, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
New objective for Chapter 13: Energy, Communications and Waste	Recommendation for new objective as follows: *Protect environmental quality in Longford through the implementation of European, national and regional policy and legislation relating to air quality, greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management*.	New objective, EC 07, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
New objectives for Chapter 14: Climate Change	Recommendation for new objective as follows: *Promote sustainable patterns of development including development in sustainable locations.*	New objective, CC 14, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
New objectives for Chapter 14: Climate Change	Recommendation for new objective as follows: *Support the adaption of existing homes to reduce energy use, including Protected Structures and those located within Architectural Conservation Areas, providing there*	New objective, CC 19, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA, with alternative wording.

Draft LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
	is no adverse impact on historic character or appearance.	
New objectives for Chapter 14: Climate Change	Recommendation for new objective as follows: *Support the delivery of facilities needed to divert waste away from landfill and promote the prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery of materials (including heat from waste) with disposal to landfill as the final option.*	New objective, CC 23, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
New objectives for Chapter 14: Climate Change	Recommendation for new objective as follows: *Minimise resource and energy requirements for new developments through appropriate siting, design, and layout, making the most of natural systems both within and around buildings.*	New objective, CC 20, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
New objectives for Chapter 14: Climate Change	Recommendation for new objective as follows: *Promote and encourage positive community and/or co-operative led climate action initiatives and projects in Longford Town that seek to reduce carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency, enhance green infrastructure and encourage awareness on climate change issues*.	New objective, CC 24, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
New objectives for Chapter 14: Climate Change	Recommendation for new objective as follows: *Support high levels of energy conservation, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources in existing buildings, including retrofitting of appropriate energy efficiency measures in the existing building stock, and to actively retrofit Longford County*	New objective, CC 21, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.

Draft LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
	Council's housing stock to a B2 Building Energy Rating (BER) in line with the Government's Housing for All Plan retrofit targets for 2030	
New objectives for Chapter 14: Climate Change	Recommendation for new objective as follows: *Support Energy Master Plans prepared by Sustainable Energy Communities in Longford Town.*	New objective, CC 22, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
New objectives for Chapter 14: Climate Change	Recommendation for new objective as follows: *Encourage innovation and facilitate the development of pilot schemes in Longford Town that support climate change mitigation and adaptation measures*.	New objective, CC 25, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
CC 07 Encourage the development of local renewable and low carbon energy sources in Longford Town both retrofitting and as part of new development proposals in accordance with the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy (LARES).	Objective could be strengthened by (additional text in italics): CC 07 Encourage the development of local renewable, low carbon, *and zero-carbon* energy sources in Longford Town *through* retrofitting and as part of new development proposals, *which meet the highest feasible environmental standards during construction and occupation,* in accordance with the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy (LARES).	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.
CC 09 Support and promote the use of biodiversity techniques, such as green roofs and walls and the integration of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) into all new development schemes.	Objective could be strengthened by (additional text in italics): CC 09 Support and promote the use of biodiversity techniques, such as green roofs and walls and the integration of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) / *Nature Based Solutions* into all new development schemes.	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.

Draft LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
CC 16 (CC 14 in an earlier draft) Support the delivery of Longford Town as a 'Decarbonisation Zone'.	The objective could be strengthened to: *'CC 16 Support the delivery of the 'Decarbonisation Zone' in Longford Town and associated implementation plan promoting measures to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and improve general environmental conditions in this area*'.	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.

Flood risk and climate change adaptation

6.10 There may be adverse effects for flooding where new developments are located in areas within Longford Town with higher risk of flooding. New development should support flood resilient design, the incorporation of Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and green infrastructure, and be designed to be adaptable to the changing climate.

6.11 Mitigation at project-level is likely to be provided by the following policies of the Longford CDP:

- Development management standards (DMS) 16.205 – 16.207 set out the criteria that the Council will consider when assessing development proposals for flooding.
- CPO 5.106 – 5.120 set out standards for flood risk management in County Longford.

Recommendations

Table 6.4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation recommendations

Draft LAP Objective	SEA recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
SW 05 Incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage in all new developments. Note attenuation is not SUDS.	This objective could be updated to refer to minimising hard surfaces and incorporating GI as well as incorporating SuDS: *Minimise flood risk arising from pluvial (surface water) flooding in Longford Town by promoting the use of nature-based solutions including sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), minimising extent of hard surfaces/paving, and smart solutions such as innovative green infrastructure*.	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.
FR 02 Require that development proposals within the 'Constrained Land Use' zone shall be accompanied by a detailed Flood Risk Assessment, carried out in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines and Circular PL 2/2014 (or as updated), which shall assess the risks of flooding associated with the proposed development.	The objective could be strengthened to: FR 02 Require that development proposals within the 'Constrained Land Use' zone shall be accompanied by a detailed Flood Risk Assessment, carried out in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines and Circular PL 2/2014 (or as updated), *and consider the potential impacts of climate change in the application of these guidelines. Applicants should have regard to the most up-to-date Flood Mapping as presented on the Office of Public Works (OPW) maps.*	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.

Draft LAP Objective	SEA recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
New objective for Chapter 13: Flood Risk Management Objectives	Recommendation for new objective as follows: *Demonstrate that future development will not result in increased risk of flooding elsewhere, restrict flow paths, where compensatory storage / storm water retention measures shall be provided on site.*	New objective, FR 04, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.

Air

6.12 There may be adverse effects on air quality and climate change from some of the measures included in the Longford Town LAP, including those relating to increased tourism and road improvements. Mitigation at project-level is likely to be provided by the following policies of the Longford CDP:

- CPO 12.104 – 12.108 provide measures for improving air quality in County Longford.
- CPO 12.91 assesses new development in terms of its potential impact on existing adjacent developments, existing land uses and/or the surrounding landscape to mitigate adverse effects on the amenities of the area.

Recommendations

Table 6.5: Air recommendations

Draft LAP Objective	SEA Recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
New objective (from recommendations in the AA)	Recommendation for new objective as follows: *'Promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/5/0/EC) and ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011) (or any updated/superseding documents)'.*	New objective, CC 17, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA/AA.

Soil

6.13 There may be some adverse effects on soil resource from measures within the Longford Town LAP due to increased soil sealing and the delivery of development on greenfield land outside the town centre (including some Strategic Sites in the LAP). Mitigation is likely to be provided by the following policies of the Longford CDP:

- CPO 12.115 – CPO 12.123 provide measures for soil protection.

Water

6.14 There may be adverse effects on the water quality of water bodies within Longford Town from some of the measures included in the Longford Town LAP, due to increased soil sealing and surface water runoff. Mitigation is likely to be provided by the following policies of the Longford CDP:

- CPO 12.92 – 12.103 provide water protection measures for water quality and groundwater.
- CPO 12.91 assesses new development in terms of its potential impact on existing adjacent developments, existing land uses and/or the surrounding landscape to mitigate adverse effects on the amenities of the area.

Recommendations

Table 6.6: Water recommendations

Draft LAP Objectives	SEA recommendations	Addressed in the LAP
Water Supply and Wastewater Services Objectives	Recommendation for a new objective: *Discourage the over concentration/proliferation of individual septic tanks and treatment plants to minimise the risk of groundwater pollution.*	New objective, WS 17, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
Water Supply and Wastewater Services Objectives	Recommendation for a new objective: *Ensure that all new development proposals include a Drainage Impact Assessment.*	New objective, WS 18, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
Water Supply and Wastewater Services Objectives	Recommendation for a new objective: *Work alongside Uisce Éireann to minimise the number and frequency*	New objective, WS 19, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.

Draft LAP Objectives	SEA recommendations	Addressed in the LAP
	of storm overflows of sewage to watercourses.	
Water Supply and Wastewater Services Objectives	Recommendation for a new objective (recommendation from the AA): *"Promote the sustainable use of water and water conservation in existing and new developments within the town by encouraging demand management measures among all water users and requiring new developments to incorporate water conservation measures".*	New objective, WS 13, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA/AA.
WS 11 Protect valuable groundwater sources and important surface water bodies from pollution through infiltration by domestic, agricultural or other sources of effluent/pollutant material.	WS 11 could be strengthened as follows (recommendation from the AA): *"Maintain, improve and enhance the environmental and ecological quality of surface waters and groundwater in Longford Town in conjunction with the EPA and in accordance with the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027 and future cycles of this Plan".*	Objective WS 11 updated to reflect recommended mitigation in the SEA/AA.

Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

6.15 Measures within the Longford Town LAP may result in adverse effects for the historic environment of Longford Town. Mitigation at project-level is likely to be provided by the following policies of the Longford CDP:

- DMS 16.190 – 16.200 set out development management criteria that Council's will consider development proposals against, for Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas and Archaeology.

- CPO 6.31 – 6.34 support heritage-led urban regeneration which are likely to enhance the positive effects of the Longford Town LTP on the historic environment.
- CPO 11.1 – 11.13 provide measures to protect and enhance architectural heritage.
- CPO 11.14 – 11.26 provide protection measures for structures included on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS).
- CPO 11.27 – 11.30 provide protection measures for the Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) within Longford.
- CPO 11.31 – 11.35 support the protection and enhancement of historic gardens, demesnes or designed landscapes.
- CPO 11.47 – 11.57 provide protection for known and unknown archaeological heritage in Longford.

Landscape

6.16 There may be adverse effects on landscape and townscape character and setting from development proposals which come forward. Mitigation is likely to be provided by the following policies of the Longford County Development Plan:

- DMS 16.204 requires landscape and visual impact assessments to be prepared by suitably qualified professionals for planning applications for development which may have significant impact on landscape character areas of medium or high sensitivity.
- CPO 13.1 – 13.8 sets out measures that protect green infrastructure and CPO 13.9 – 13.14 set out measures for the ongoing development and improvement of green infrastructure within Longford Town.
- CPO 14.1 – 14.8 provide measures for the protection and enhancement of landscape character within Longford, including the requirement for landscape and visual impact assessment for some development.
- CPO 7.9 – 7.14 promotes public realm improvements and enhancement of the townscape.

Recommendations

Table 6.7: Landscape

Draft LAP Objective	SEA recommendation	Addressed in the LAP
EC 03 Seek the undergrounding of all electricity, telephone and television cables in the town centre.	Objective could be strengthened as follows: EC 03 Seek the undergrounding of all electricity, telephone and television cables in the town centre, *wherever possible, while taking into consideration landscape, residential amenity, and environmental considerations.*	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.

Material assets

6.17 There may be adverse effects associated with the use of resources and material assets in Longford arising from the LAP. This could include increased pressure on community services and facilities, and loss of non-renewable resources such as greenfield land. Policies and development management criteria throughout the Longford CDP are likely to provide mitigation for the sustainable use of land, natural resources, energy and waste management.

Recommendations

Table 6.8: Material assets recommendations

Draft LAP Objectives	SEA Recommendations	Addressed in the LAP
New objectives for Chapter 7: Economic development	Recommendation for new objective as follows: *Support the development and expansion of enterprise and employment within Longford Town, and to co-operate with all stakeholders, landowners and relevant agencies to attract investment, while at the same time ensuring there is no resultant negative impact on the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre.*	New objective, ECON 06, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
New objective for Chapter 7: Economic Development (Retail)	Recommendation for new objective as follows: *The Council, in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Local Authorities, will continue to protect and promote the vitality and viability of Longford town centre, including applying a 'town centre first approach' or sequential test for retail developments.*	New objective, RET 06, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
EC 02 Promote and facilitate the development and renewal of energy and communications networks, including broadband services, while protecting the amenities of the town.	Additional mitigation provided in italics: EC 02 Promote and facilitate the development and renewal of energy and communications networks, including broadband services, *while taking into consideration landscape, residential amenity, and environmental considerations*.	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.
New objective for Chapter 13: Energy,	Recommendation for new objective as follows:	New objective, EC 09, is included in the LAP as

Draft LAP Objectives	SEA Recommendations	Addressed in the LAP
Communications and Waste Objectives	'*Support local schools, town and community groups such as Longford Green Towns Initiative, Longford Tidy Towns through education and awareness programmes and where available, through the provision of grant aid*.	recommended in the SEA.
EC 04 Adequately maintain existing recycling and bring bank facilities and assess their locations, and secure the provision of additional facilities at appropriate locations, as required, including in conjunction with development.	The objective could be reworded slightly as follows: EC 04 Adequately maintain existing recycling and bring bank facilities and assess their locations, and secure the provision of additional facilities at appropriate locations *that will not adversely affect residential amenity or environmental quality*, including in conjunction with development.	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.
Recommendation for new objective in Chapter 13: Energy, Communications and Waste Objectives	Recommendation for new objective as follows: *Require all commercial and residential developments to be provided with adequate internal and external space for the correct storage of waste and recyclable materials. This is particularly important in relation to shared bin spaces such as apartment developments.*	New objective, EC 08, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.
Recommendation for new objectives for Chapter 13: Sustainable Transport Objectives	Recommendation for new objective as follows: *Support and facilitate the implementation of the pedestrian, cycle, public transport, car parking, traffic management, and permeability 'Priority Schemes' set out in the Local Transport Plan. Proposals for new development will be required to demonstrate how they will integrate with the provisions of the Local Transport Plan.*	New objective, ST 30, is included in the LAP as recommended in the SEA.

Draft LAP Objectives	SEA Recommendations	Addressed in the LAP
ST 02 supports compliance with the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, including Sustainable Transport, Sustainable Public Transport, Cycling and Walking County Policy Objectives.	The objective could be strengthened as follows: ST 02 Comply with the relevant sections of Chapter 5: Transport, Infrastructure, Energy & Communications of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, including Sustainable Transport, Sustainable Public Transport, Cycling and Walking County Policy Objectives and the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2019).*	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.
ST 14 Support the NTA in the provision of new and upgraded bus stops.	This objective could be strengthened to incorporate other stakeholders and infrastructure as follows: *'Engage and cooperate with the Department of Transport, National Transport Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Irish Rail, Local Link and other stakeholders to improve the provision of public transport and public transport facilities in Longford'.*	Objective updated to incorporate SEA recommended mitigation.

Chapter 7

Monitoring Programme

Introduction

7.1 This chapter presents the Monitoring Programme for monitoring the significant environmental effects resulting from implementation of the proposed Longford Town LAP.

7.2 Article 17 of the SEA Regulations requires that the competent authority (in this case Longford County Council) monitors the significant environmental effects of implementing the Longford Town LAP in order to identify, at an early stage, any unforeseen adverse effects due to the implementation of the proposed Plan and to take remedial action. Monitoring can also demonstrate the positive effects facilitated by the LAP. Reference has been made to the EPA's Guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment Statements and Monitoring **[See reference** 63**]** in devising the monitoring programme.

7.3 The occurrence of significant adverse environmental effects not predicted and mitigated by this assessment, which are directly attributable to the implementation of the Longford Town LAP, would necessitate consideration of these effects in the context of the plan and potential remediation action(s) and/or review of part(s) of the LAP.

Monitoring Programme

7.4 Monitoring is based around indicators and targets which allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Environmental Protection Objectives identified in Chapter 2 and used in the evaluation. Given the position of the LAP in the land use planning hierarchy below the Longford

County Development Plan, the measures that are proposed in the Monitoring Programme for the Longford Town LAP are derived and modified, where necessary, from the Environmental Report of the Longford County Development Plan **[See reference** 64**]**. Monitoring indicators and targets are also derived from Chapter 16 of the Longford Town LAP which sets out the phased approach to residential and employment zoned lands.

7.5 Monitoring is an ongoing process, and the programme allows for flexibility and the further refinement of indicators and targets. The Monitoring Programme may be updated to deal with specific environmental issues – including unforeseen effects – as they arise.

7.6 Sources for indicators may include existing monitoring databases (including those maintained by planning authorities and national/regional government departments and agencies) and the output of lower-tier environmental assessment and decision making (including a review of project approvals granted and associated documents and the output of any EIA monitoring programmes).

7.7 The following sections outline the indicators and targets which have been selected for monitoring the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the LAP, as well as the remedial actions to be taken if targets are not met.

EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna

Table 7.1: Monitoring for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Condition of European sites identified in the Natura Impact Statement.	No deterioration in the condition of European sites identified in the NIS as a result of implementation of the objectives and development of the Strategic Sites within the LAP.	Where condition of a European site is found to be deteriorating this will be investigated with the Regional Assembly and the DHLGH to establish if the pressures are related to the LAP actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance.	DHLGH report of the implementation of the measures contained in the Habitats Directive (every 6 years). DHLGH National Birds Directive Monitoring Report for the under Article 12 (every 3 years).	DHLGH NPWS

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Area of green and blue infrastructure in urban areas (square metres) of Longford Town.	Increase in the overall provision of GBI within the built-up footprint of Longford Town.	Where there is a decrease in the extent of GBI in the built-up footprint of Longford Town, this will be investigated by the local authority to establish if this is related to the implementation of the LAP. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with any relevant stakeholders in such a circumstance.	CORINE Project updated every six years, including information about changes over the past six years.	European Commission CORINE Land Cover dataset Copernicus Land Monitoring Services
EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Status of water bodies as reported by the EPA Water Monitoring Programme for the WFD.	No deterioration in the status of any surface water body and not to affect the ability of any surface water achieving 'good status'.	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 LAP actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance.	EPA Monitoring Programme for WFD compliance.	EPA

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Compliance of planning permissions with LAP measures providing for the protection of Biodiversity and flora and fauna – see Chapter 11 “Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure”.	For planning permission to be granted when applications demonstrate that they comply with all LAP measures providing for the protection of biodiversity and flora and fauna – see Chapter 11 “Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure”.	Where planning applications are granted which do not comply with LAP measure on the protection of biodiversity, the Council will ensure that appropriate mitigation and management measures are in place.	Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission.	Longford County Council.

EPO 2: Population and human health

Table 7.2: Monitoring for EPO 2: Population and human health

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 2: Population and human health	Implementation of LAP measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by Chapter 7 “Economic Development”.	For review of progress on implementing LAP objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures relating to the promotion of economic growth as provided for by Chapter 7 “Economic Development”.	Where planning applications are being approved which do not comply with LAP measure on economic development, the Council will ensure that appropriate mitigation and management measures are in place.	Internal review of progress on implementing LAP objectives.	Longford County Council
EPO 2: Population and human health	Number of spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors resulting from development permitted under the LAP.	No spatial concentrations of health problems arising from environmental factors as a result of implementing the LAP.	Where there is an increase in health problems, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DECC, NTA and Health Service Executive to develop a tailored response.	Consultations with the Health Service Executive and EPA	Health Service Executive Longford County Council

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 2: Population and human health	Proportion of people in Longford Town reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures.	Increase in the proportion of people in Longford Town reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures.	Where the proportion of the population shows an increase in private car use above CSO 2016 figures, the Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, the DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response.	Census data (every five years or as Census data is released).	CSO
EPO 2: Population and human health	Area of green and blue infrastructure in urban areas (square metres) of Longford Town.	Increase in the overall provision of GBI within the built-up footprint of Longford Town.	Where there is a decrease in the extent of GBI in the built-up footprint of Longford Town, this will be investigated by the local authority to establish if this is related to the implementation of the LAP. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with any relevant stakeholders in such a circumstance.	CORINE Project updated every six years, including information about changes over the past six years.	European Commission CORINE Land Cover dataset Copernicus Land Monitoring Services

EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation

Table 7.3: Monitoring for EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation	Implementation of LAP measures relating to climate reduction targets as provided for by LAP provisions including those provided for and referenced in Chapter 15 “Climate Change”.	For review of progress on implementing LAP objectives to demonstrate successful implementation of measures climate reduction targets as provided for by LAP provisions including those provided for and referenced in Chapter 15 “Climate Change”.	Where planning applications are being granted which do not comply with LAP measures on climate change, the Council will ensure that appropriate mitigation and management measures are in place.	Internal review of progress on implementing LAP objectives.	Longford County Council
EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation	Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 levels.	Decrease in the proportion of journeys made by residents of the Longford Town using private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 levels.	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.	EPA Annual National Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory reporting	CSO data Climate Action Regional Office EPA

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
		Contribute towards the target of aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions of at least 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050 across the electricity generation, built environment and transport sectors.		Census data (every five years or as Census data is released).	
EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation	Proportion of people reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures.	Increase in the proportion of people resident in the Longford Town reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures. 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 2020.	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.	Census data (every five years or as Census data is released).	CSO Climate Action Regional Office

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation	Number of new developments granted permission which include renewable or low carbon energy	Increased uptake of renewable energy options and a move away from fossil fuels.	Where fewer renewable energy planning applications are being submitted and approved which reduces Longford Town's contribution to renewable energy targets, the Council will liaise with the Regional Assembly and the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office to establish reasons and develop solutions for the greater uptake of such technologies.	Internal monitoring of grants of permission.	Longford County Council

EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

Table 7.4: Monitoring for EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation	Number of incompatible developments permitted within flood risk areas.	Minimise developments granted permission on lands which pose - or are likely to pose in the future - a significant flood risk.	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	Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant)	Longford Town Council
EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation	Area of green and blue infrastructure in urban areas (square metres) of Longford Town.	Increase in the overall provision of GBI within the built-up footprint of Longford Town.	Where there is a decrease in the extent of GBI in the built-up footprint of Longford Town, this will be investigated by the local authority to establish if this is related to the implementation of the LAP. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with any relevant stakeholders in such a circumstance.	CORINE Project updated every six years, including information about changes over the past six years.	European Commission CORINE Land Cover dataset Copernicus Land Monitoring Services

EPO 5: Air

Table 7.5: Monitoring for EPO 5: Air

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 5: Air	Proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 Census for Longford Town.	Decrease in proportion of journeys made by private fossil fuel-based car compared to 2016 Census for Longford Town.	Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above CSO 2016 figures, Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response.	Census data (every five years or as Census data is released). Data from the National Travel Survey. Consultations with Department of Transport and DECC	CSO National Travel
EPO 5: Air	NOx, SOx, PM10 and PM2.5 as part of Ambient Air Quality Monitoring.	Improvement in Air Quality trends, particularly for transport related emissions of NOx and particulate matter.	Where proportion of population shows increase in private car use above CSO 2016 figures, Council will coordinate with the Regional Assembly, DHLGH, DECC and NTA to develop a tailored response.	EPA Air Quality Monitoring.	EPA

EPO 6: Soil

Table 7.6: Monitoring for EPO 6: Soil

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 6: Soil	Proportion of population growth occurring on infill and brownfield lands compared to greenfield.	Maintain built surface cover to below the EU average of 4% as per the NPF. Achieve the 40% target for growth on infill as per NPF.	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.	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Geoportal. Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission.	EPA
EPO 6: Soil	Number of AA determinations and environmental assessments undertaken to support applications for brownfield and infill development prior to planning permission	Increased number of AA determinations and environmental assessments which support brownfield and infill development.	Where there is an increase in the number of AA determinations for development of greenfield land, the Council will work with the Regional Assembly, the EPA and other stakeholders to address the pressures through additional mitigation.	Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission.	Longford County Council

EPO 7: Water

Table 7.7: Monitoring for EPO 7: Water

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 7: Water	Status of water bodies in Longford Town as reported by the EPA Water Monitoring Programme for the WFD.	No deterioration in the status of any surface water. Not to affect the ability of any surface water to achieve 'good status'. Not to cause any additional waterbodies to fail to achieve at least 'good status'.	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 LAP actions / activities. A tailored response will be developed in consultation with these stakeholders in such a circumstance.	EPA Monitoring Programme for WFD compliance.	EPA

EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

Table 7.8: Monitoring for EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage	Percentage of entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and their setting, which are protected from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the LAP.	Protect entries to the Record of Monuments and Places, and their setting, from adverse effects resulting from development which is granted permission under the LAP.	Where monitoring reveals visitor pressure is causing negative effects on key cultural tourist features, the Council will work with Regional Assembly, Fáilte Ireland and other stakeholders to address the pressures through additional mitigation.	Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant).	Longford County Council
EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage	Percentage of entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their setting, which are protected from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the LAP.	Protect entries to the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and their setting from significant adverse effects arising from new development granted permission under the LAP.	Where monitoring reveals visitor pressure is causing negative effects on key cultural tourist features, the Council will work with Regional Assembly, Fáilte Ireland and other stakeholders to address the pressures through additional mitigation.	Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission (grant by grant).	Longford County Council

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage	Proportion of vacant and derelict buildings/ properties within Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)	Reduction in number of vacant and derelict properties within ACAs.	Where the proportion of refurbishment of vacant and/or derelict properties for housing is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the Housing for All Plan, or there has not been a high uptake of vacant property grants, the local authority will liaise with the Regional Assembly to develop a tailored response.	Census data (every five years or as Census data is released).	CSO

EPO 9: Landscape

Table 7.9: Monitoring for EPO 9: Landscape

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 9: Landscape	Number of developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape resulting from development which is granted permission under the LAP.	No developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape resulting from development which is granted permission under the LAP.	Where monitoring reveals developments permitted which result in avoidable adverse visual impacts on the landscape, the Council will re-examine LAP provisions and the effectiveness of their implementation.	Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission.	Longford County Council
EPO 9: Landscape	Number of vacant properties being retrofitted.	Increase in the number of properties retrofitted for housing since Census 2022.	Where the proportion of refurbishment of vacant and/or derelict properties for housing is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the Housing for All Plan, or there has not been a high uptake of vacant property grants, the local authority will liaise with the Regional Assembly to develop a tailored response.	Census data (every five years or as Census data is released).	CSO

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 9: Landscape	Number of Vacant Property Refurbishment Grants awarded.	Increase in the number of Vacant Property Refurbishment Grants awarded since 2023.	Where the proportion of refurbishment of vacant and/or derelict properties for housing is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the Housing for All Plan, or there has not been a high uptake of vacant property grants, the local authority will liaise with the Regional Assembly to develop a tailored response.	Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant: Croí Cónaithe Towns Fund.	DHLGH

EPO 10: Material assets

Table 7.10: Monitoring for EPO 10: Material assets

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 10: Material assets	Programmed delivery of Uisce Éireann infrastructure for Longford Town in line with Uisce Éireann's Investment Plan to ensure sustainable growth can be accommodated.	All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the LAP.	Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in waste water treatment plants, 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.	Consultations with Uisce Éireann.	Uisce Éireann.
EPO 10: Material assets	Number of new developments granted permission which can be adequately and appropriately served with waste water treatment over the lifetime of the LAP.	All new developments granted permission to be connected to and adequately and appropriately served by waste water treatment over the lifetime of the LAP.	Where planning applications are rejected due to insufficient capacity in waste water treatment plants, 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.	Consultations with Uisce Éireann.	Uisce Éireann.

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 10: Material assets	Proportion of population who report regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures.	Increase in the proportion of people resident in the County reporting regular cycling / walking to school and work above 2016 CSO figures.	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.	CSO data Climate Action Regional Office	CSO CARO
EPO 10: Material assets	Proportion of population growth occurring on infill and brownfield lands compared to greenfield.	Maintain built surface cover nationally to below the EU average of 4% as per the NPF. Achieve the 40% target for growth on infill as per NPF.	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.	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Geoportal Internal monitoring of likely significant environmental effects of grants of permission.	EPA Longford County Council

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
EPO 10: Material assets	Number of properties retrofitted for housing	Increase in the number of properties retrofitted for housing since Census 2022.	Where the proportion of refurbishment of vacant and/or derelict properties for housing is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the Housing for All Plan, or there has not been a high uptake of vacant property grants, the local authority will liaise with the Regional Assembly to develop a tailored response.	Sustainability Energy Authority of Ireland grant schemes (annual reporting) Census data (every five years or as Census data is released). Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant: Croí Cónaithe Towns Fund.	Sustainability Energy Authority of Ireland Central Statistics Office DHLGH
EPO 10: Material assets	Proportion of vacant and derelict buildings/ properties within Longford Town.	Reduction in number of vacant and derelict properties within Longford Town.	Where the proportion of refurbishment of vacant and/or derelict properties for housing is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the Housing for All Plan, or there has not been a high uptake of vacant property	Sustainability Energy Authority of Ireland grant schemes (annual reporting)	Sustainability Energy Authority of Ireland Central Statistics Office

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
			grants, the local authority will liaise with the Regional Assembly to develop a tailored response.	Census data (every five years or as Census data is released). Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant: Croí Cónaithe Towns Fund.	DHLGH
EPO 10: Material assets	Number of Vacant Property Refurbishment Grants awarded.	Increase in the number of Vacant Property Refurbishment Grants awarded.	Where the proportion of refurbishment of vacant and/or derelict properties for housing is not keeping pace with the targets set in the NPF and the Housing for All Plan, or there has not been a high uptake of vacant property grants, the local authority will liaise with the Regional Assembly to develop a tailored response.	Sustainability Energy Authority of Ireland grant schemes (annual reporting) Census data (every five years or as Census data is released). Vacant Property	Sustainability Energy Authority of Ireland Central Statistics Office DHLGH

SEA Topic	Indicator	Target	Remedial Action	Data source and frequency data is released	Monitored by
				Refurbishment Grant: Croí Cónaithe Towns Fund.	

Chapter 8

Conclusion and next steps

8.1 This chapter provides a summary of the SEA findings and sets out the next stage of the SEA process.

Biodiversity, flora and fauna

8.2 The SEA has identified a mix of beneficial and adverse effects on biodiversity from the implementation of the LAP. For example, increased residential and employment development in Longford Town could lead to direct loss of habitat or both direct and indirect disturbance on species and habitats. In addition, the LAP supports increased tourism and associated development, which will also increase pressure on Longford Town's biodiversity. However, elements of the LAP such as the objectives relating to natural heritage and green infrastructure will have positive effects on biodiversity. These include those which support protecting, conserving and enhancing Longford Town's biodiversity and natural heritage; prohibiting development that would be harmful to habitats and species; promoting appropriate tree planting and pollinator friendly planting; supporting restoration and conservation works to protect and enhance water quality; enhancing and further developing the Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Network in Longford Town; and reducing fragmentation of the GBI network. The LAP also supports eco-tourism and measures which will aid in improving air quality and mitigating the negative effects of climate change, such as via the delivery of sustainable and active modes of transport.

Population and human health

8.3 The SEA has identified positive effects on health, wellbeing and equalities from the implementation of the LAP. This includes positive effects from supporting the development of sustainable neighbourhoods which provide appropriate numbers and types of housing; mitigating population decline, lack of investment and physical dereliction; and supporting the provision of social infrastructure to support existing and new communities in Longford Town. In addition, the LAP promotes increased

provision and access to services, facilities, employment and recreation including by promoting development in brownfield areas over greenfield land, and by supporting the delivery of sustainable transport. Increased active travel and access to recreation will also benefit the health of Longford Town's population by promoting healthy and active lifestyles. The LAP also includes objectives which will aid in mitigating climate change and associated emissions. Combined with a shift to more sustainable travel, this will improve air quality in Longford and positively impact the health and well-being of residents. The climate change objectives also support climate change adaptation in Longford Town, which will make the town and its residents more resilient to the effects of climate change. The LAP also supports objectives which make Longford Town a safer and more pleasant place to live in for all, including objectives which promote age friendly town principles. However, negative effects may occur as development of brownfield land may increase the urban population and increase pressure on urban services and facilities. In addition, the LAP supports increased tourism which may increase traffic and congestion in Longford, resulting in decreased air quality.

Energy and climate change mitigation

8.4 The SEA has identified that the LAP will have positive effects on energy and climate change mitigation via its climate change objectives which promote the economic, social and environmental benefits of low-carbon development; the creation of an integrated GBI network; and the prioritisation of sustainable mobility. Promoting sustainable forms of transport will result in decreased transport-related emissions. The LAP's objectives seeking to regenerate the town centre and promote the development of brownfield over greenfield land will further promote use of sustainable transport modes. In addition, the LAP contains objectives which support increased energy efficiency, including in buildings, as well as the development of renewable energy. A number of objectives also support the development of green infrastructure and protecting and enhancing habitats, including tree planting, which will aid in the sequestration of carbon from the atmosphere. However, negative effects may occur as a result of increased emissions during construction and operation of developments (unless new development replaces much less efficient buildings, outweighing the loss of embodied carbon). Objectives which support the development and maintenance of Longford Town's road networks support private car use. In addition, the LAP supports increased tourism which may increase traffic and congestion in Longford Town, resulting in increased emissions.

Flood risk and climate change adaptation

8.5 The SEA has identified that the LAP will have a beneficial effect on flood risk and climate change adaptation by supporting objectives to create an integrated GBI network which includes open spaces and habitats. This will help reduce flood risk by increasing flood attenuation, as well as contribute to climate change adaptation. In addition, the LAP supports prioritising developing brownfield land over greenfield land which will mitigate potential surface run-off in Longford Town. In addition, the surface water and flood risk management objectives support the resolution of surface water drainage issues; through surface water drainage facilities; surface water attenuation measures; and supporting the incorporation of Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).

Air

8.6 The SEA has identified that the LAP will have a overall positive effect on air, particularly by promoting the use and increased delivery of sustainable modes of transport within the town. This is supported by objectives which prioritise the development of brownfield land within the town centre over more peripheral greenfield land. Furthermore, objectives which support the protection and creation of green infrastructure may also lead to more active travel and reductions in vehicle-derived air pollution. In addition, the LAP supports the protection and enhancement of greenspace and habitats, and associated planting, such as trees. Increased vegetation will help improve air quality by filtering pollution. In addition, the LAP supports the development of renewable energy which will aid in decreasing emissions from energy generation. However, objectives which support the maintenance and expansion of Longford Town's road network will encourage increased use of private vehicles on the road which will subsequently increase greenhouse gas emissions. The LAPs support of tourism, as well as development in urban areas, may also increase traffic and congestion in Longford Town.

Soil

8.7 The SEA has identified that the LAP will have positive effects on soil, in particular because the LAP supports the prioritisation of developing brownfield over greenfield land and the reuse of existing buildings, which will aid in protecting Longford Town's soil resources. In addition, the LAP promotes the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, which will maintain and improve Longford Town's soil quality. Furthermore, objectives relating to climate change will aid in managing and improving soil resources. However, the LAP supports increased development, including the expansion of road networks, which may negatively impact the soil environment.

Water

8.8 The SEA has identified that the LAP will have both positive and negative effects on the water environment. Positive effects arise from supporting the prioritisation of developing brownfield over greenfield land, which will aid in reducing surface run-off. Furthermore, the LAP supports the protection and enhancement of habitats and green space, including green infrastructure in Longford Town, which will be beneficial to water quality, as vegetation can capture and filter pollutants carried in surface water runoff before it reaches a water course/body. In addition, objectives relating to water supply, wastewater services and surface water will directly benefit the water environment in Longford Town as they seek to protect both water quality and quantity, including waterbodies and groundwater sources. This includes avoiding adverse impacts from pollution and changes to drainage, and promoting the efficient use of water and SuDS. However, negative effects on the water environment may occur as, until the Longford Wastewater Treatment Plant is upgraded, there may be a need for new residential developments to install onsite treatment plants to treat wastewater (i.e. individual septic tanks) which increases the risk of water pollution.

Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

8.9 The SEA has identified that the LAP will have both positive and negative effects on cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage. For example, the

LAP supports regeneration and redevelopment of existing buildings, including protected structures, which provides opportunities for enhancing the setting of Longford Town's historic environment. In addition, the LAP supports the promotion of Longford Town's heritage assets to the public which will increase accessibility and appreciation of the historic environment. In particular, the built and cultural heritage objectives have positive effects on this EPO as they include actions which support the protection and preservation of all protected structures; the development of a Longford Town Heritage Centre and Museum; the redevelopment of the Camlin Quarter as an area where cultural heritage and visitor attractions can be clustered; and the safeguarding of archaeological heritage located within the boundary of the LAP. The LAP also supports the designation of, and adherence to the planning requirements of the Battery Road Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), which will aid in conserving and enhancing the significant qualities, fabric and setting of Longford Town's historic environment. The LAP also supports actions to mitigate the effects of climate change which will have positive effects for the historic environment, for example, by reducing transport-related emissions which can damage the fabric of protected structures. Secondary effects are expected for EPO 8: Cultural Heritage and EPO 9: Landscape as improvements to the public realm; the regeneration of areas; and adherence to high-quality design principles will have positive effects on the setting of heritage assets, townscape character, and visual amenity. However, the LAP supports increased development in Longford Town, which if done insensitively could harm its historic character. Furthermore, the LAP prioritises development of brownfield over greenfield land, which may increase the risk of harm to heritage assets and their settings as urban areas tend to contain the highest concentrations of heritage assets. Although the priority is to develop brownfield land, the LAP will also result in development of greenfield land which may result in disturbance to buried archaeology. In addition, the LAP supports increased access and tourism. Whilst this increases understanding and appreciation of the historic environment, tourism-related pressures can be harmful to heritage assets if visitor numbers are not properly managed.

Landscape

8.10 The SEA has identified that there will be both positive and negative effects on landscape from the implementation of the LAP. The LAP supports increased residential, employment and community development, including associated infrastructure, which could harm Longford Town's landscape/townscape if poorly designed. However, the LAP supports prioritising development on brownfield land

which regenerates derelict and degraded land, providing opportunities to improve townscape character and visual amenity. In addition, the LAP supports improvements to the public realm and the protection and enhancement of the natural environment which will help enhance townscape character and create a sense of place.

Material assets

8.11 The SEA has identified that there will be both positive and negative effects on material assets. The LAP directly supports this EPO by supporting the optimisation of existing buildings and supporting the regeneration of degraded and underused land in preference to the development of greenfield land which will protect natural resources. Promoting the regeneration of the town will result in more investment in new services, facilities and infrastructure. This will help improve the vitality and viability of the town. The LAP encourages the development of renewable energy and supports increased energy efficiency in buildings. This will encourage the efficient use of resources, mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, and minimising the consumption of non-renewable energy. The LAP also promotes the development of infrastructure for transport, waste, water and energy which meet the current and future needs of the people of Longford Town. However, the development of new infrastructure, such as the construction of new roads, will also require the significant use of resources.

8.12 Many of the adverse effects will be mitigated through good design and adherence to policies in the LAP. A Monitoring Programme is proposed to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementing the Longford Town LAP in order to identify, at an early stage, any unforeseen adverse effects due to the implementation of the proposed LAP and to take remedial action.

Next steps

8.13 The next stage of the SEA process is that an SEA Statement will be prepared identifying how each of the requirements in article 16 and 17 of the SEA Regulations have been met during the SEA process.

Appendices

Appendix A

Consultation submissions / observations received in response to the SEA Scoping Report

Environmental Protection Agency

Available guidance and resources

A.1 Our website contains various SEA resources and guidance, including:

- SEA process guidance and checklists.
- Inventory of spatial datasets relevant to SEA.
- Topic specific SEA guidance (including the Good Practice Note on Cumulative Effects Assessment (EPA, 2020), Guidance on SEA Statements and Monitoring (EPA, 2020), Integrating climatic factors into SEA (EPA, 2019), Developing and Assessing Alternatives in SEA (EPA, 2015), and Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment (EPA, 2012).

A.2 These guidance notes and other resources are available on the Environmental Protection Agency website.

Environmental Sensitivity Mapping (ESM) Webtool

A.3 The ESM Webtool is a decision support tool to assist SEA and planning processes in Ireland. The tool brings together over 100 datasets and allows

users to explore environmental considerations within a particular area and create plan-specific environmental sensitivity maps. These maps can help planners anticipate potential land use conflicts and help identify suitable development locations, while also protecting the environment. The ESM Webtool is available on the ESM website.

EPA SEA GIS Search and Reporting Webtool

A.4 Our SEA GIS Search and Reporting Webtool is publicly available through EPA Maps. It allows public authorities to produce an indicative report on key aspects of the environment in a specific geographic area. It is intended to assist public authorities in SEA screening and scoping exercises.

EPA WFD Application

A.5 Our WFD Application provides a single point of access to water quality and catchment data from the national WFD monitoring programme. The Application is available on the Catchments.ie website.

EPA AA Geotool

A.6 Our AA GeoTool application has been developed in partnership with the NPWS. It allows users to select a location, specify a search area and gather available information for each European Site within the area. It is also available on the EPA website.

State of the Environment Report – Ireland's Environment 2020

A.7 In preparing the Plan and SEA, the recommendations, key issues and challenges described within our State of the Environment Report Ireland's Environment – An Assessment 2020 (EPA, 2020) should be considered, as relevant and appropriate to the Plan. This should also be taken into account, in preparing the Plan and SEA.

LUC response

Noted with thanks. The guidance documents on the EPA website, tools available and the State of the Environment Report were be used during the overall SEA process and during preparation of the Scoping and Environmental Reports.

Transition to a low carbon climate resilient economy and society

A.8 The plan should ensure that it aligns with national commitments on climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as relevant sectoral, regional and local adaptation plans.

LUC response

Noted. The EPO framework contains EPOs which address climate change mitigation and adaptation which were used to assess the Local Area Plan,

including EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation and EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation.

Relevant sectoral, regional and local adaptation plans were included in the policy review, which were be used to inform the SEA process.

Environmental Authorities

A.9 Under the SEA Regulations, you should consult with:

- Environmental Protection Agency;
- Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
- Minster for Environment, Climate and Communications, and
- Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.
- any adjoining planning authority whose area is contiguous to the area of a planning authority which prepared a draft plan, proposed variation or local area plan.

LUC response

In accordance with the SEA Regulations, the report has been issued to the outlined statutory consultees as well as any adjoining planning authority whose area is contiguous to the area of the planning authority which is preparing the plan should also be notified of the SEA. Therefore, this report has also been issued to the adjoining local authorities of Cavan, Leitrim, Roscommon and Westmeath for their consideration. Environmental Authorities and adjoining planning authorities were also consulted as part of the public consultation on the Environmental Report.

Geological Survey Ireland

A.10 We provide independent geological information and advice and gather various data for that purpose. We recommend using these various data sets, when conducting the EIAR, SEA, planning and scoping processes. Use of our data or maps should be attributed correctly to 'Geological Survey Ireland'. Please see our website for data availability.

A.11 We are pleased to see use of our Geoheritage, Bedrock, Subsoils and Public Supply Source Protection Areas maps and datasets within the draft Longford LAP SEA Draft Report.

Geoheritage

A.12 We welcome the inclusion of the St Mel's Cathedral County Geological Site in Environmental Protection Objective 'EPO 6: Soil', to 'Conserve and enhance Longford's soil resources and geological sites'.

Groundwater

A.13 We are pleased to see the inclusion of groundwater in Environmental Protection Objective 'EPO 7: Water', to 'Preserve and enhance the quality and quantity of waterbodies and groundwater'.

LUC response

Noted with thanks. The datasets were used when conducting the SEA of the Longford LAP.

Consultation submissions / observations received in response to the Draft Environmental Report

Submission LLAP1 (Environmental Protection Agency)

Assessment of Alternatives

A.14 Requested description of the alternatives considered and how the selection and assessment of these has led to the selection of the preferred alternative. Requested assessment of the alternatives against the 'Strategic Environmental Objectives' identified in the SEA ER.

Assessment of Environmental Effects

A.15 Requested assessment and documentation of the full range of likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan, including the potential for cumulative effects in combination with other relevant Plans/ Programmes and Projects.

Mitigation Measures

A.16 Requested that where the potential for likely significant effects is identified there should also be appropriate mitigation measures to avoid or minimise these. The SEA should ensure the Plan includes clear commitments to implement the mitigation measures.

Monitoring

A.17 The Monitoring Programme should be flexible to take account of specific environmental issues and unforeseen adverse impacts should they arise. It should consider and deal with the possibility of cumulative effects. Monitoring of both positive and negative effects should be considered. The monitoring programme should set out the various data sources, monitoring frequencies and responsibilities.

A.18 If the monitoring identifies adverse impacts during the implementation of the Plan, Longford County Council should ensure that suitable and effective remedial action is taken.

A.19 Guidance on SEA-related monitoring is available on the EPA website.

State of the Environment Report – Ireland's Environment 2024

A.20 The EPA will be publishing the next iteration of the State of the Environment Report in October 2024. Once published, this report should be considered and integrated as appropriate, in implementing the plan or programme over its lifetime.

Future Amendments to the Plan

A.21 Any future amendments to the Plan for likely significant effects should be screened, using the same method of assessment applied in the "environmental assessment" of the Plan.

SEA Statement – “Information on the Decision”

A.22 Once the Plan is adopted, the SEA Statement should be prepared that summarises:

- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the Plan;
- How the Environmental Report, submissions, observations and consultations have been taken into account during the preparation of the Plan;
- The reasons for choosing the Plan adopted in the light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and,
- The measures decided upon to monitor the significant environmental effects of implementation of the Plan.

A.23 Guidance on preparing SEA Statements is available on the EPA website.

Response

The Draft SEA of the Longford Town LAP includes the content outlined by the EPA. The Environmental Report continued to follow the guidance in the following iterations of the SEA (final Environmental Report). This Environmental Reports considers and includes reference to the State of the Environment Report 2024.

The future amendments to the Draft Longford Town LAP were screened to determine their likely significant effects. Where likely significant effects were identified, these have been assessed accordingly in this iteration of the SEA Environmental Report.

Once the Longford Town LAP is adopted and the Environmental Report has been finalised, an SEA Statement will be produced in line with EPA guidance.

Submission LLAP6 (Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly)

SEA

A.24 Mitigation measures and recommendations are set out in Chapter 6 of the SEA Environmental Report, with a monitoring programme included in Chapter 7. Whilst the Assembly notes the various measures contained within, it is considered that the SEA Environmental Report would benefit from having a clear conclusion statement on the outcome of the overall SEA process as part of this report which does not appear to be provided.

A.25 It is considered that the SEA Environmental Report would be improved upon by including a clear conclusion statement on the outcome of the overall SEA process as part of this report. Reason: In the interest of clarity and best practice.

Response

The Draft SEA Environmental Report has assessed the environmental effects arising from the draft LAP and sets out a series of recommendations within chapter 6. Any updates to the LAP in light of these recommendations has been assessed in this SEA Environmental Report. This SEA Environmental Report and its accompanying Non-Technical Summary provide a summary as to how the SEA process has influenced the

development of the LAP. The SEA Statement, to accompany the finalised SEA Environmental Report will report on how the findings of the SEA and the results of the associated consultation have been integrated into the LAP.

Submission LLAP19 (Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications)

Geoscience Data

A.26 A list of Geological Survey Ireland's (GSI) publicly available datasets relevant to planning, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) processes, was provided alongside the response submission.

A.27 The list provides the datasets available for the following areas:

- Land & Soil
- Water
- Landscape
- Air and
- Climate

A.28 The maps and data listed are available on the GSI map viewer.

Geological Survey Ireland

A.29 Recommend using the various Geological Survey Ireland data sets when conducting the EIAR, SEA, planning and scoping processes for developments, plans and policies. For more detailed information on how to access this data please access 'Data and Maps' Data & Maps (gsi.ie) on the 'Geoscience for planning' webpage. Use of these data or maps should be attributed correctly (refer to each individual dataset's metadata for correct attribution).

A.30 For specific data available for Environmental Assessment and Planning topics please follow this link [Data by Environmental Assessment and Planning Topic (gsi.ie)], where data is arranged by environmental assessment topic [including in relation to land and soils, water, climate change, cultural heritage, material assets, the landscape and other relevant data].

A.31 Refer to Geological Survey Ireland flood risk maps useful for flood risk assessment, these include both historic and predictive maps.

GSI - Specific Comments/Observations

A.32 Note reference to previous submission (2023, ref 23/82) in relation to the SEA scoping report in the current SEA report. Note inclusion of previous comments as Environmental Protection Observations (EPOs) in the SEA report and the Draft LAP.

A.33 Encourage use of any other data sets referenced above in the Local area plan and associated environmental assessments.

Response

Relevant data from the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications had been used to inform the Longford Town LAP and has informed the final Environmental Report and SFRA.

Submission LLAP23 (Office of Public Works)

SEA

A.34 Part 3 of the Plan Making Justification Test as set out in the Guidelines is that "A flood risk assessment to an appropriate level of detail has been carried out as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment as part of the development plan preparation process, which demonstrates that flood risk to the development can be adequately managed, and the use or development of the lands will not cause unacceptable adverse impacts elsewhere". This is a requirement that in order to satisfy the Justification Test, it must be demonstrated that it is feasible to develop the lands in question safely. Any requirements, mitigations or limitations required to ensure the lands can be safely developed should be included and transposed into the draft plan as policy objectives, and this should **not** be passed on to development management.

Response

Any updates or alterations to the policy objectives within the final LAP were screened to determine their likely significant effects. Where likely significant effects are identified, these have been assessed accordingly in this SEA Environmental Report.

Submission LLAP26 (The Heritage Council)

Strategic Environmental Assessment/ Appropriate Assessment

A.35 There is a need to ensure that all future policies drafted are individually assessed against the SEA objectives. The Heritage Council recommends that the SEA/AA guidance prepared by the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) be consulted when preparing the SEA/AA for the LAP.

Response

The Appropriate Assessment and Natura Impact Statement to accompany the Longford Town Local Area Plan was prepared with regard to the Guidance on Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (2021) produced by the Office of the Planning Regulator.

Chapter 5 of the SEA of the Longford Town LAP presents a summary of the SEA findings for the appraisal of the LAP's Vision, 12 strategic aims and associated objectives relating to core strategy compliance, residential development, economic development, tourism, regeneration and placemaking, social infrastructure, natural heritage and green infrastructure, built and cultural heritage, energy and communications, sustainable transport, climate change, and implementation and monitoring.

Any updates or alterations to the objectives within the final LAP were screened to determine their likely significant effects. Where likely significant effects are identified, these assessments were updated in this final SEA

Environmental Report in accordance with the updated Longford Town LAP. Any new objectives were assessed in this final SEA Environmental Report.

Consultation submissions / observations received in response to the SEA Addendum of the Proposed Material Alterations

Submission LD-C5-10 (Office of the Planning Regulator)

Abbeycartron Access arrangements

A.36 The Office welcomes the proposed material alterations to address the Abbeycartron access arrangements. However, the material alterations include a new objective ST 27 (MA 66) and supporting text at section 14.4.9.2 Abbeycartron Sustainable Transport Proposal (MA 51) which reiterates Objective ST 27, which facilitate a reversal of this position. The office recommends omitting the last line of ST 27 of MA 51 and MA 66, having regard to Recommendation 4 (ii) of their submission on the draft Local Area Plan, and to avoid conflict between the material alterations.

A.37 The Office also has concerns regarding the new map proposed under MA 51 for the Abbeycartron Sustainable Transport Proposal (section 14.4.9.2). The new map proposes a ‘road with designated footway and cycleway’. The Office states at draft Local Area Plan stage this was a ‘ped/cycle only route’, therefore this proposal will undermine Ireland’s commitment to achieving its mandatory climate action targets. It is noted that the Local Transport Plan (LTP) did not

consider this route / crossing and its proposed inclusion will undermine RPO 8.6 of the RSES and Policy Objective CPO 5.9 of the County Development Plan requiring preparation of a LTP for Longford Town. It also conflicts with objective ST 30 which supports the 'priority schemes' of the LTP. The office recommends removal of the new map proposed under MA 51 and replacing it with the previous map from the draft Local Area Plan, entitled Alternative Sustainable Proposal (Figure 5.9 of LTP).

Response: Any updates to the wording LAP in light of these recommendations was assessed in the final SEA, AA and SFRA.

Development Strategy

A.38 Arising from the Planning Authority's response Recommendations of the Office's submission to the draft Longford Town Local Area Plan 2025-2031, the office makes the following observations;

- Make the Local Area Plan with minor modifications to MA 73 to ensure any infrastructural deficiencies are highlighted (for example the Athlone Road lands) and to provide more detail on the infrastructural requirements for both the New Residential and Industrial/Commercial/Warehousing lands in the new phasing table. The Office states that table 11.5 in the draft Maynooth and Environs Joint Local Area Plan 2025-2031 provides a good example of this.

Regeneration Strategy

- Make the Local Area Plan with minor modifications to:
  - Include the measures set out in the Chief Executive's Report to address vacancy, such as the Vacant Homes tracker and the functions of the Vacant Homes Office, in the Local Area Plan, including in the Implementation and Monitoring Chapter;

- MA 17, to include additional background detail on Longford 2040: A Town Centre First Strategy regarding its publication and aims;
- MA 23, to strengthen this objective further by linking it to the Local Transport Plan and/or transport measures set down in the Transport Chapter of the Local Area Plan.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

- Make the Local Area Plan with minor modifications to:
  - Make the Local Area Plan with a minor modification to MA 45 to strengthen this objective further by referring to both existing and new developments.

Response: Any updates to the wording LAP in light of these recommendations was assessed in the final iteration of the SEA, AA and SFRA.

Submission LD-C5-9 (Office of Public Works)

A.39 The submission specifically concerns flood risk management and the SFRA. The OPW note that that no document has been included for the Material Alteration consultation to reflect the following Chief Executive Report responses to their submission at draft plan stage:

- **Errata:** all website links would be checked to ensure they were still in operation, and updated links would replace superseded if required.

Response: All website links in the SEA, AA and SFRA have been updated to the most recent versions

A.40 Longford Town Flood Relief Scheme: The OPW commentary at draft plan stage highlighted that it would be beneficial if a specific objective were included to ensure that zoning or development proposals support and do not impede the progression of the Longford Town Flood Relief Scheme. Proposed Material Alteration number 49 does add objective FR05 which ensures the protection of environmentally sensitive sites and habitats, including where flood risk management measures are planned, however no additional measures or policies which address the OPW draft plan commentary have been included.

A.41 The following OPW commentary at draft plan stage has not been referenced in the Chief Executive's Report and has not been addressed at Material Alteration stage:

- **Construction, Replacement or Alteration of Bridges and Culverts over Watercourses:** highlighted that there are restrictions on the construction, replacement or alteration of bridges and culverts over any watercourse, and that appropriate consent from the Commissioners is required under Section 50 of the Arterial Drainage Act 1945.
- **Consideration of Climate Change Impacts:** highlighted that while Flood Zones are defined on the basis of current flood risk, planning authorities need to consider such impacts in the preparation of plans, such as by avoiding development in areas potentially prone to flooding in the future, providing space for future flood defences, specifying minimum floor levels and setting specific development management objectives.
- **Drainage Districts:** highlighted text in the SFRA regarding council policy to consult with the OPW in relation to proposed developments in the vicinity of drainage channels and rivers for which the OPW are responsible, noting that the statutory maintenance of the drainage district channels within the plan area lies with the local authority, not the OPW.
- **Justification Test:** highlighted that in order to satisfy the Justification Test, vulnerable development in flood risk areas must be demonstrated that it is feasible to develop the lands in question safely, with any requirements, mitigations or limitations required to ensure the lands can be safely developed included and transposed into the draft plan as policy objectives and not be passed on to development management.

Response: Any updates to the wording LAP in light of these recommendations were assessed in the final iteration of the SEA and AA.

Submission LD-C5-8 (Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications)

A.42 There is no specific reference to the SEA, AA or SFRA process in the response. The Department welcomes the following Proposed Material Alterations:

- Proposed Material Alteration 70, which states the draft LAP supports the implementation the Climate Action Plan 2024 (CAP24) and the National Adaptation Framework (NAF) 2024.
- Proposed Material Alteration 71, which includes an objective to examine the potential of district heating including district heating derived from waste heat, where available, and commit to carrying out a feasibility using heat mapping in support of same when opportunities arise.
- Proposed Material Alteration 72, which includes an objective for all proposed developments to support the circular economy principles by taking account of the EPA's Best practice guidelines for the preparation of resource & waste management plans for construction & demolition projects (2021).

Response: The final iteration of the SEA, AA and SFRA was updated with the most up-to-date LAP policies. This included any re-wording of some existing policies and the addition of any new policies.

Submission LD-C5-6 (Department of Education)

A.43 There is no specific reference to the SEA, AA or SFRA process in the response. The submission refers to Material Alterations 25 and 26. Regarding the Proposed Material Alteration 25, the department notes that the table does not identify the levels of enrolment at these schools. This extra data impacts on the following statement within the table which is not accurate in relation to post-primary provision:

This would suggest that the town is sufficient in terms of post-primary schools. However, there is a deficiency in terms of primary school provision.

A.44 The Department identified a small potential increase in primary school place demand, which most likely could be dealt through extra capacity in current schools or the expansion thereof. There is little spare capacity identified currently at post-primary level, which has wider school catchment areas.

A.45 The Department requests that the School Places Assessment table be further adjusted to reflect a more accurate school place requirement position.

A.46 Regarding Proposed Material Alteration 26 the Department notes the proposed amendment of all references in the Draft Local Area Plan from the Department of Education and Skills to the Department of Education.

Response: Any updates to the LAP in light of these recommendations were assessed in the final iteration of the SEA Environmental Report. There is no impact on the AA or SFRA.

Submission LD-C5-5 (National Transport Authority)

A.47 There is no specific reference to the SEA, AA or SFRA process in the response. The submission provides observations and recommendations on Material Alterations 51, 66, 54 and 68. Regarding MA 51 and MA 66, the NTA welcomes the proposed inclusion of an objective for the implementation of the Abbeycartron Sustainable Transport Proposal. The NTA also has the following recommendations:

- Remove reference to the Northern Environs Local Area Plan 2008-2014 infrastructural arrangement as part of the finalised Longford LAP;
- Replace the new map with the previous Sustainable Transport Proposal map; and
- Include reference to the Abbeycartron Sustainable Transport Proposal being progressed through consultation with the NTA, as well as TII.

A.48 The NTA welcomes the inclusion of the objective for MA 54 and would recommend that it is altered to include reference to the Cycle Design Manual (2023) which has now replaced the National Cycle Manual.

A.49 Regarding MA 68, the NTA welcomes the inclusion of ST 33 and recommends that the modal share targets detailed in the LTP are specifically referenced in the LAP.

Response: Any updates to the wording LAP in light of these recommendations were assessed in the final iteration of the SEA. Any updates or alterations to the policy objectives within the final iteration of the LAP were screened to determine their likely significant effects. Where likely significant effects were identified, these were assessed accordingly in the final iteration of the SEA and AA Environmental Report.

Submission LD-C5-4 (Electricity Supply Board (ESB))

A.50 ESB welcomes Proposed Material Alteration 35 for Section 13.2.1 Electricity, which recognises the importance of electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure.

A.51 ESB notes the inclusion of amended wording to Section '14.6 Sustainable Transport Objectives' to include reference to the standards set out in the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive for Electric Vehicle Parking space provision.

Response: The consultation comments support the Proposed Material Alterations, and the final iteration of the SEA was updated to reflect the most up to date LAP policies.

Submission LD-C5-3 (Uisce Éireann)

A.52 There is no specific reference to the SEA, AA or SFRA process in the response. UÉ welcomes the inclusion of their previous comments and recommendations in the proposed material alterations No. 36-48.

A.53 UÉ recommend that the wording for MAs 45, 47 & 48 relating to Nature Based Solutions & SuDs could be strengthened to demonstrate the importance of changing the urban landscape to a more sustainable one that seeks to mimic the natural water balance. This would apply to both existing and new developments.

Response: Any updates to the wording of the LAP in light of these recommendations was assessed in the final iteration of the SEA.

Submission LD-C5-7 (Transport Infrastructure Ireland)

A.54 There is no specific reference to the SEA, AA or SFRA process in the response. TII provides comments on proposed material Alterations 50, 51, 52, 59, 61 and 63 – 68.

A.55 TII advises that the material alterations 50 and 51 presented for Section 14.4.9 Abbeycartron Access Strategy are confusing rather than clarifying access and transport arrangements. TII advises that the proposed material alteration requires revision to a single "sustainable transport proposal" that maintains existing commitment to further detailed traffic analysis for the maintenance of the protection of the strategic transport function of the national road network in accordance with higher order extant Plans and Policies. TII suggests and reiterates that an identification of the development access requirements and limitations of Abbeycartron would be useful to frame any preference.

A.56 In addition, by the deletion of the map and description of the former subsection "14.4.9.1 Longford Northern Environs Local Area Plan 2008-2014 Option", the proposed text has the effect of directing plan implementers and developers to revert on option that will no longer forms part of the statutory LAP.

A.57 TII suggests the following revision of the proposed text of material alteration no. 51 would be appropriate for clarity purposes:

A.58 "Implementation of the Abbeycartron Sustainable Transport Proposal is dependent on prior 'traffic and transport' and permeability assessment, to the satisfactory standard and detail of Longford County Council and in consultation

with TII. ~~and it's determined alignment with Section 2.4 'Design Standards and Guidelines' of the current LTP. In the absence of said prerequisites, all development within the defined site of LTP's Fig. 5.8 shall revert to its Northern Environs Local Area Plan 2008- 2014 infrastructural arrangement~~."

A.59 TII notes that the above text refers to "LTP's Fig. 5.8" yet presented (for deletion a part of material alteration no. 51) Figure 5.9 of the LTP.

A.60 Editorial review of the proposed Figure (unnumbered) entitled Abbeycartron Sustainable Transport Proposal proposed as part of material alteration no. 50 is recommended to ensure its accuracy and consistency with legend.

A.61 TII notes that the proposed replacement map / figure does not appear to include a legend and is difficult for a reader to interpret. In addition, having regard to the existence of the LTP, it is suggested that proposed material alteration be revised to remove any map /figure where the reader is directed to the LTP.

A.62 TII consider that Sustainable Transport Objective nos. ST26, ST27, ST28 and ST29 which appear to relate to either or both Abbeycartron Access Strategies, need to be reviewed for consistency with material alterations no. 50 and 51.

A.63 TII recommends the revision of the following material alterations:

- **MA 59:** "**ST22: Longford County Council in consultation** ~~in conjunction~~ with TII, **will** carry out detailed traffic and transport assessments for development proposed to the north of the N4 Longford By-Pass and the sequential provision of a local roads network ~~provisions as an alternative to the N4/N5 bypass~~ to service the effective and sustainable development of these lands."
- **MA 61: ''**ST24: Ensure any proposed development shall **have regard to National policy concerning the preservation of the N4 national primary road for National** ~~/ Regional traffic~~ and demonstrates compliance

with TII **P**ublications, ~~DMURS~~ and other **appropriate** applicable standards/guidance.''

- **MA 67:** "ST 31: Require that any transport measures which interact with the national road network must observe relevant national policy contained in the 'Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG, 2012); ~~require~~ **undertake** prior consultation with TII **via Longford County Council** and **demonstrate** compliance with the County Development Plan and ~~all relevant~~ TII **Publications** ~~standards~~."

A.64 TII states that Material Alteration no. 66 proposes a new or revised ST27 that repeats the proposed text at material alteration no. 51. As above in relation to proposed material alteration no. 51, TII strongly recommends the following revision of material alteration no. 66.

Response: Any updates to the wording LAP in light of these recommendations were assessed in the final iteration of the SEA. This reflects any re-wording of existing policies and the addition of any new policies.

Submission LD-C5-2 (Michael Keenan)

A.65 There is no specific reference to the SEA, AA or SFRA process in the response. The individual notes that the hedge between Mall grounds and Abbeycartron is probably in place over 100 years and is a rich source of biodiversity, which should be protected to the maximum extent possible. The individual recommends for this to be included in Alteration 30.

A.66 The individual recommends Alteration 45 is amended to state a commitment by LCC in all aspects of its work in Longford Town, not just in relation to new drainage works.

Response: Any updates to the wording LAP in light of these recommendations were assessed in the final iteration of the SEA.

Appendix B

Review of relevant plans

International – relevant policy and legislation

IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report on Climate Change (2022)

B.1 To limit and/or reduce all greenhouse gas emissions which contribute to climate change **[See reference 65]**.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to support reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015)

B.2 The 2030 Agenda **[See reference 66]** is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom and eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions. It sets out the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets; a collection of interlinked global goals designed to be a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They were developed as the future global development framework to succeed the Millennium Development Goals which ended in 2015 and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to **promote sustainable development.**

UN Paris Climate Change Agreement (2015)

B.3 The main aim of the Paris Agreement **[See reference 67]** centres on keeping global temperature rise this century below 2°C above preindustrial levels. Frameworks are to be put in place to help achieve these goals.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to **adapt and mitigate climate change.**

The Cancun Agreement (2010)

B.4 Shared vision **[See reference 68]** to keep global temperature rise to below two degrees Celsius, with objectives to be reviewed as to whether it needs to be strengthened in future on the basis of the best scientific knowledge available.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives support the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and mitigation to climate change.

Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development (2002)

B.5 Commitment to building a humane, equitable and caring global society aware of the need for human dignity for all **[See reference 69]**. Ares of focus include:

- Sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- Accelerate shift towards sustainable consumption and production – 10-year framework of programmed of action.
- Reverse trend in loss of natural resources.
- Renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- Urgently and substantially increase Global share of renewable energy.

- Significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to enhance the natural environment and promote renewable energy and energy/resource efficiency.

Florence (European Landscape) Convention (2000)

B.6 The European Landscape Convention **[See reference 70]** is part of the Council of Europe's work on natural and cultural heritage, spatial planning and the environment. The Convention states that:

- The landscape contributes to the formation of local cultures and that it is a basic component of the European natural and cultural heritage, contributing to human well-being and consolidation of the European identity; and

- That developments in agriculture, forestry, industrial and mineral production techniques and in regional planning, town planning, transport, infrastructure, tourism and recreation and, at a more general level, changes in the world economy are in many cases accelerating the transformation of landscapes.

B.7 The aims of this Convention are to promote landscape protection, management and planning and to organise European co-operation on landscape issues.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to protect, manage and enhance the landscape.

World Health Organisation (WHO) Air Quality Guidelines (1999) and Guidelines for Europe (1987)

B.8 A comprehensive set of guidelines for air quality **[See reference 71]**. Develops consistent rules for assessing 28 chemical air contaminants. Its primary aim is to provide a basis for protecting public health from adverse effects of air pollution and for eliminating, or reducing to a minimum, those contaminants of air that are known or likely to be hazardous to human health and wellbeing. The guidelines are intended to provide background information and guidance to governments in making risk management decisions, particularly in setting standards, but their use is not restricted to this.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to **protect air quality.**

Aarhus Convention (1998)

B.9 Established a number of rights of the public with regard to the environment **[See reference 72]**. Local authorities should provide for:

- The right of everyone to receive environmental information.
- The right to participate from an early stage in environmental decision making.
- The right to challenge in a court of law public decisions that have been made without respecting the two rights above or environmental law in general.
- The Council should ensure that **the public are involved and consulted** at all relevant stages of SEA production.

Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC (1997)

B.10 The Kyoto Protocol **[See reference 73]** to the UNFCCC established the first policy that actively aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by industrialised countries.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote sustainable development.

UN Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)

B.11 The Convention on Biological Diversity **[See reference 74]** is a multilateral treaty dedicated to promoting sustainable development signed by 150 government leaders at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. The convention has three main goals: the conservation of biological diversity (or biodiversity); the sustainable use of its components; and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources. Its objective is to develop national strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and it is often seen as the key document regarding sustainable development.

- The SEA reflects objectives to protect biodiversity and the sustainable use of its components.

European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta) (1992)

B.12 Revision of the 1985 Granada Convention. Protection of the archaeological heritage, including any physical evidence of the human past that can be investigated archaeologically both on land and underwater. **See reference 75]**.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to **protect archaeological heritage.**

Grenada Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985)

B.13 The main purpose of the Convention **[See reference 76]** is to reinforce and promote policies for the conservation and enhancement of Europe's heritage. It also affirms the need for European solidarity with regard to heritage conservation and is designed to foster practical co-operation among the Parties.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to **protect archaeological heritage.**

Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1979)

B.14 The Convention **[See reference 77]** is an intergovernmental treaty under the United Nations Environment Programme. The aim is for contracting parties to work together to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species and their habitats (on a global scale) by providing strict protection for endangered migratory species. The overarching objectives set for the Parties are:

  - Promote, co-operate in and support research relating to migratory species.
  - Endeavour to provide immediate protection for migratory species included in Appendix I.
  - Endeavour to conclude Agreements covering the conservation and management of migratory species included in Appendix II.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives **to protect and enhance biodiversity.**

Bern Convention on European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979)

B.15 The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Bern Convention) **[See reference 78]** was adopted in Bern, Switzerland in 1979, and came into force in 1982. The principal aims of the Convention are to ensure conservation and protection of wild plant and animal species and their natural habitats (listed in Appendices I and II of the Convention), to increase cooperation between contracting parties, and to regulate the exploitation of those species (including migratory species) listed in Appendix III. To this end the Convention imposes legal obligations on contracting parties, protecting over 500 wild plant species and more than 1,000 wild animal species.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives **to protect and enhance biodiversity.**

Geneva Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (1979)

B.16 The 1979 Convention **[See reference 79]** on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution was the first multilateral agreement addressing transboundary pollution. It created a regional framework applicable to Europe, north America, Russia and former Eastern Bloc countries for reducing transboundary air pollution and better understanding air pollution science.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to **protect air quality.**

UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972)

B.17 The 1972 World Heritage Convention **[See reference 80]** links together in a single document the concepts of nature conservation and the preservation of

cultural properties. The Convention recognizes the way in which people interact with nature, and the fundamental need to preserve the balance between the two.

B.18 The Convention defines the kind of natural or cultural sites which can be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List. It also sets out the duties of States Parties in identifying potential sites and their role in protecting and preserving them. By signing the Convention, each country pledged to conserve not only the World Heritage sites situated on its territory, but also to protect its national heritage.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives relating to the conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage and natural heritage.

Ramsar Convention – Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (1971)

B.19 To promote the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international co-operation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world **[See reference 81]**.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives which aim to promote conservation and wise use of wetland areas.

European – relevant policy and legislation

SEA Directive 2001

B.20 Provide for a high level of protection of the environment and contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development **[See reference 82]**.

- Requirements of the SEA Directive will be met.

European Climate Law (2021)

B.21 The European Climate Law **[See reference 83]** writes into law the goal set out in the European Green Deal for Europe to become climate neutral by 2050. The law also sets the intermediate target of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to reduce GHG emissions and enhance renewable energy production and energy efficiency.

Renewable Energy Directive (2009, as amended in 2018)

B.22 Directive EU 2009/28/EC (as amended by 2018/2001) **[See reference 84]** on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources.

B.23 The Renewable Energy Directive establishes an overall policy for the production and promotion of energy from renewable sources in the EU. It

requires the EU to fulfil at least 32% of its total energy needs with renewable energy by 2030 and builds on the already achieved progress.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives supporting the provision of renewable energy as part of new developments.

Effort Sharing Regulation (2018)

B.24 Regulation (EU) 2018/842 **[See reference 85]** on binding annual greenhouse gas emissions reductions by Member States from 2021 to 2030 contributing to climate action to meet commitments under the Paris Agreement and amending Regulation (EU) No 525/2013. The Effort Sharing Regulation establishes emissions reduction targets for the EU and for Member States for sectors not included in the EU ETS (such as transport, buildings, agriculture, waste).

- The EPO Framework includes objectives relating to **energy efficiency and emissions reduction.**

National Emission Reduction Commitments Directive (2016)

B.25 Directive 2016/2284/EU **[See reference 86]**. The NEC Directive sets 2020 and 2030 emission reduction commitments for five main air pollutants (NOx, NMVOCs, SO2, NH3 and PM2.5 as well as carbon monoxide (CO)): Ceilings from 2020-2029 - SO2 (65%); NOx (49%); NMVOCs (25%); NH3 (1%); and PM2.5 (18%). It also mandates the development of a National Air Pollution Control Programme (NAPCP) for each Member State.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives relating to **energy efficiency and emissions reduction.**

Birds Directive (2009)

B.26 Directive 2009/147/EC **[See reference 87]** is a codified version of Directive 79/409/EEC as amended. The preservation, maintenance, and re-establishment of biotopes and habitats shall include the following measures:

- Creation of protected areas.
- Upkeep and management in accordance with the ecological needs of habitats inside and outside the protected zones.
- Re-establishment of destroyed biotopes.
- Creation of biotopes.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives relating to the protection and enhancement of habitats for protected bird species.

Air Quality Directive (2008)

B.27 Directive 2008/50/EC **[See reference 88]** on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe. Avoid, prevent and reduce harmful effects of ambient noise pollution on human health and the environment.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to **maintain and enhance air quality.**

Floods Directive (2007)

B.28 Directive 2007/60/EC **[See reference 89]** on the assessment and management of flood risks. Establish a framework for the assessment and management of flood risks, aiming at the reduction of the adverse consequences for human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity associated with floods.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives that relate to **flood management and reduction of risk.**

Water Framework Directive (2000)

B.29 Directive 2000/60/EC **[See reference 90]** establishing a framework for community action in the field of water policy. Protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to protect and minimise the impact on water quality.

Drinking Water Directive (1998)

B.30 Directive 98/83/EC **[See reference 91]**on the quality of water intended for human consumption. Protect human health from the adverse effects of any contamination of water intended for human consumption by ensuring that it is wholesome and clean.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to **protect and enhance water quality.**

Habitats Directive (1992)

B.31 Directive 92/43/EEC **[See reference 92]** on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. Promote the maintenance of biodiversity taking account of economic, social, cultural and regional requirements. Conservation of natural habitats and maintain landscape features of importance to wildlife and fauna.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to protect and maintain the natural environment and important landscape features.

European – relevant plans and programmes

EU Eighth Environmental Action Programme (2020)

B.32 The 8th Environment Action Programme **[See reference 93]** will guide European environmental policy until 2030. It aims to accelerate the transition to a climate-neutral, resource-efficient and regenerative economy. It recognises that human wellbeing and prosperity depend on the healthy ecosystems within which we operate. The EAP has six priority objectives:

- achieving the 2030 greenhouse gas emission reduction target and climate neutrality by 2050;
- enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change;
- advancing towards a regenerative growth model, decoupling economic growth from resource use and environmental degradation, and accelerating the transition to a circular economy;
- pursuing a zero-pollution ambition, including for air, water and soil and protecting the health and well-being of Europeans;
- protecting, preserving and restoring biodiversity, and enhancing natural capital (notably air, water, soil, and forest, freshwater, wetland and marine ecosystems); and
- reducing environmental and climate pressures related to production and consumption (particularly in the areas of energy, industrial development, buildings and infrastructure, mobility and the food system).

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to protect and enhance the natural environment and promote energy efficiency.

2030 Climate Target Plan (2020)

B.33 This assessment **[See reference 94]** shows how all sectors of the economy and society can contribute to the EUs ambition of reducing greenhouse gases for the next 10 years and sets out policy actions required to achieve this. Its objectives include:

- Set a more ambitious and cost-effective path to achieving climate neutrality by 2050.
- Stimulate the creation of green jobs and continue the EU's track record of cutting greenhouse gas emissions whilst growing its economy.
- Encourage international partners to increase their ambition to limit the rise in global temperature to 1.5°C and avoid the most severe consequences of climate change.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to **reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**

2050 Long-Term Strategy (2020)

B.34 The EU aims to be climate-neutral by 2050 – an economy with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions **[See reference 95]**. This objective is at the heart of the European Green Deal and in line with the EU's commitment to global climate action under the Paris Agreement. EU Member States are required to develop national long-term strategies on how they plan to achieve the greenhouse gas emissions reductions needed to meet their commitments under the Paris Agreement and EU objectives.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to **reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**

EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 (2020)

B.35 The European Commission has adopted an ambitious new strategy to halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU by 2020 **[See reference 96]**. The six targets cover:

- Full implementation of EU nature legislation to protect biodiversity
- Better protection for ecosystems, and more use of green infrastructure
- More sustainable agriculture and forestry
- Better management of fish stocks
- Tighter controls on invasive alien species
- A bigger EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to value, protect and enhance biodiversity.

Fit for 55 Package (2021) and European Green Deal (2019)

B.36 The Fit for 55 Package **[See reference 97]**, published as part of the European Green Deal **[See reference 98]** in 2021, sets out a suite of legislative initiatives across various sections, including energy, transport and buildings, which are intended to keep Europe on track to deliver on its climate targets.

B.37 The European Green Deal provides an action plan to:

- Boost the efficient use of resources by moving to a clean, circular economy;
- Restore biodiversity and cut pollution.

B.38 The Deal aims to ensure:

- No net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050;
- Economic growth decoupled from resource use; and
- No person and no place left behind.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to promote efficient use of resources and protect and enhance the natural environment.

European Spatial Development Perspective (1999)

B.39 Economic and social cohesion across the community. Conservation of natural resources and cultural heritage. Balanced competitiveness between different tiers of government **[See reference 99]**.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to conserve natural resources and cultural heritage.

National – relevant policy and legislation

European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I No. 435 of 2004) and European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes)

(Amendment) Regulations 2011) (S.I. No. 200 of 2011)

B.40 These Regulations carry into effect in Ireland Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment insofar as the Directive relates to plans and programmes in all of the sectors listed in article 3(2) of the Directive except land-use planning **[See reference 100] [See reference 101]**.

- They concern the consideration of the likely significant effects on the environment of such plans and programmes.
- They prescribe procedures and contents of environmental reporting, monitoring and assessment for all plans and programmes which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications and tourism.
- Aims to set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive.
- Considers transboundary environmental effects in specified cases.

- Requirements of the SEA Regulations will be met.

The Wildlife Act 1976 and Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000

B.41 The main objectives of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000 **[See reference 102]** are to:

- provide a mechanism to give statutory protection to NHAs;
- provide for statutory protection for important geological and geomorphological sites, including fossil sites by designation as NHAs;

- improve some existing measures, and introduce new ones, to enhance the conservation of wildlife species and their habitats;
- enhance a number of existing controls in respect of hunting, which are designed to serve the interests of wildlife conservation;
- broaden the scope of the Wildlife Acts to include most species, including the majority of fish and aquatic invertebrate species which were excluded from the 1976 Act;
- introduce new provisions to enable regulation of the business of commercial shoot operators;
- ensure or strengthen compliance with international agreements and, in particular, enable Ireland to ratify the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds Agreement (AEWA).
- increase substantially the level of fines for contravention of the Wildlife Acts and to allow for the imposition of prison sentences;
- provide mechanisms to allow the Minister to act independently of forestry legislation, for example, for the acquisition of land by agreement;
- strengthen the provisions relating to the cutting of hedgerows during the critical bird-nesting period and include a requirement that hedgerows may only be cut during that period by public bodies, including local authorities, for reasons of public health or safety;
- strengthen the protective regime for Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) by removing any doubt that protection will in all cases apply from the time of notification of proposed sites;
- and give specific statutory recognition to the Minister's responsibilities in regard to promoting the conservation of biological diversity, in light of Ireland's commitment to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives relating to the **protection of wildlife.**

European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011 as amended)

B.42 The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 (S. I. No. 477 of 2011) **[See reference 103]** transpose the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive. Previously, the Birds and Habitats Directives had been transposed into Irish law through inter alia the Wildlife Act 1976 and the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997. However, two judgments of the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) – notably cases C-418/04 and C-183/05 - found that Ireland had not adequately transposed the two Directives. Therefore, the 2011 Regulations consolidate the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 to 2005 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Control of Recreational Activities) Regulations 2010, as well as addressing transposition failures identified in CJEU judgments.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives relating to the **protection of birds and natural habitats.**

Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021

B.43 The Act **[See reference 104]** commits the Government to transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich and climate neutral economy by 2050 and to thereby promote climate justice. The Act set targets for Ireland to deliver up to 80% of electricity from renewables and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 and reach net-zero no later than 2050. The Act also introduces the following requirements:

- To make certain changes to the Climate Change Advisory Council.
- To provide for carbon budgets and a sectoral emissions ceiling to apply to different sectors of the economy.

- To provide for reporting by Ministers of the Government to a joint committee of the Houses of the Oireachtas.
- To provide for local authority climate action plans.
- To amend the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015.
- To provide that local authorities shall, when making development plans, take account of their climate action plans and, for that purpose to amend the Planning and Development Act 2000.
- To extend the purposes for which moneys may be paid out of the Climate Action Fund and, for that purpose to amend the National Oil Reserves Agency Act 2007.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives relating to climate action including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting renewable and low carbon development.

Town Centre First Policy (2022)

B.44 The Town Centre First Policy **[See reference** 105**]** seeks to target resources towards towns. It sets out a range of actions which collectively will create the framework required to help build sustainable vibrant town centres. The Town Centre First Policy supports providing *"a mix of housing typologies and tenures to cater for diverse communities in terms of age, income and mobility".* Investment programmes, including the Croí Cónaithe Fund and Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, support a proactive approach to rejuvenating towns and villages in Ireland.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives reflecting the objectives of the Town Centre First Policy.

National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022)

B.45 The National Sustainable Mobility Policy **[See reference** 106**]** sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport journeys to help Ireland meet its climate obligations. It is accompanied by an action plan to 2025 which contains actions to improve and expand sustainable mobility options across the country by providing safe, green, accessible and efficient alternatives to car journeys. It also includes demand management and behavioural change measures to manage daily travel demand more efficiently and to reduce the journeys taken by private car.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives relating to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and encouraging a modal shift to sustainable modes of transport.

Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework (2018)

B.46 National Planning Framework **[See reference 107]** guides high-level strategic planning and development for the country over the next 20+ years. The key objectives of the Framework are to:

- Guide the future development of Ireland, taking into account a projected 1 million increase in our population, the need to create 660,000 additional jobs to achieve full employment and a need for 550,000 more homes by 2040;
- Enable people to live closer to where they work, moving away from the current unsustainable trends of increased commuting;
- Regenerate rural Ireland by promoting environmentally sustainable growth patterns;
- Plan for and implement a better distribution of regional growth, in terms of jobs and prosperity;

- Transform settlements of all sizes through imaginative urban regeneration and bring life / jobs back into cities, towns and villages;
- Co-ordinate delivery of infrastructure and services in tandem with growth, through joined-up NPF/National Investment Plan and consistent sectoral plans, which will help to manage this growth and tackle congestion and quality of life issues in Dublin and elsewhere.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to **sustainably guide development.**

Programme for Government: Our Shared Future (2020)

B.47 The Programme for Government **[See reference 108]** sets out actions over the next five years with an objective to positively contribute towards a wider global response to the post-COVID recovery is shaped and become an exemplar in decarbonising of the economy.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives reflecting the objectives of the Programme for Government.

National Adaptation Framework (2018) and Sectoral Adaptation Plans (various years)

B.48 National Adaptation Framework **[See reference 109]** was published in 2018 and it 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.

B.49 Building on the measures outlined in the National Adaptation Framework, the Government has prepared 12 Sectoral Adaptation Plans, including one for Transport Infrastructure.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives relating to **climate adaptation.**

National – relevant plans

Housing for All Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022-2026 (2022)

B.50 Housing for All – a New Housing Plan for Ireland **[See reference** 110**]** requires each Local Authority to prepare a plan on how it will deliver on its social housing targets for the period 2022 to 2026. Longford's Housing for All Housing Delivery Action Plan **[See reference** 111**]** sets out details of both social and affordable housing delivery as appropriate over the period 2022-2026, in line with targets set under Housing for All, and has been developed having regard to the National Planning Framework (NPF), the County Development Plan (CDP) 2022 – 2028, the Longford Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 – 2024, the Longford Strategic Plan for Housing Disabled People, and the Annual Social Housing Needs Assessment (SHNA).

- The EPO Framework includes objectives that support the provision of new and affordable housing to meet the identified needs of the whole community and provide housing of a suitable mix and type.

Climate Action Plan 2025

B.51 The **Climate Action Plan 2025 [See reference 112]** charts a course to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to meet our commitments to a 51% reduction in emissions by 2030 and to reach net zero no later than 2050. There are numerous actions in the Climate Action Plan, classified into several topic areas: governance, a just transition, citizen engagement, the public sector, carbon prices, electricity, industry, the built environment, transport, agriculture, land use / land use change / forestry, the marine environment, local government, the

circular economy, international climate action, Sustainable Development Goals and adaptation.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives relating to **mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.**

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023–2030

B.52 Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) **[See reference** 113**]** sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030. The plan, which details evidence of accelerating biodiversity loss in Ireland, sets out 194 actions to counter widespread decline of nature. All Government departments, State agencies and local authorities are now required to integrate biodiversity into plans and policies.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives relating to the **protection and restoration of biodiversity.**

Draft River Basin Management Plan for Ireland (RBMP) 2022-2027 (2022)

B.53 The **Draft RBMP [See reference** 114**]** sets out a programme of measures, to protect and where necessary restore bodies of water in Ireland, building on progress under the previous plan. It sets out the environmental improvements to be delivered during a river basin planning cycle, including water quality objectives and a programme of measures to achieve those objectives. The Draft Plan is currently undergoing consultation.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to protect and minimise the impact on water quality.

Housing for All – a New Housing Plan for Ireland (2021)

B.54 The **Housing for All – a New Housing Plan for Ireland [See reference 115]** is the Government's housing plan to 2030. The Government's vision for the housing system over the longer term is to achieve a steady supply of housing in the right locations with economic, social and environmental sustainability built into the system. It is estimated that Ireland will need an average of 33,000 new homes to be provided each year from 2021 to 2030. It outlines the following initiatives to support housing in towns and villages:

  - New guidance on the preparation of County Development Plans to ensure appropriate zoning and density levels.
  - A new Croí Cónaithe Fund to service sites and refurbish vacant properties in regional towns and villages.
  - A new Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) Programme to tackle vacancy levels in towns and villages.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives that reflect the objectives of the Housing Plan for Ireland.

Heritage Ireland 2030 (2021)

B.55 Heritage Ireland 2030 [See reference 116] is Ireland's new national heritage plan. It sets out values, principles, strategic priorities to guide and inform the heritage sector over the next decade.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to protect cultural and natural heritage assets.

National Clean Air Strategy (in preparation) and Cleaning our Air: Public Consultation to inform the development of a National Clean Air Strategy (2017)

B.56 This consultation document **[See reference 117]** aims to inform the development of a national clean air strategy in order to address the challenges and impacts of air pollution. It provides a background to the national, EU and international approaches to improving air quality and seeks to set out the main sectoral issues for air quality which are of relevance, and for which further actions could be considered in a national clean air strategy. The main issues are identified, based on the overall importance of the emission sources, the consequential public exposure to air pollution, and the resulting health and environment impacts.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to **maintain and enhance air quality.**

National Landscape Strategy 2015-2020 (2015)

B.57 The **National Landscape Strategy** **[See reference 118]** was introduced in 2020 and it is used to ensure compliance with the European Landscape Convention and to establish principles for protecting and enhancing it while positively managing its change. It is a high-level policy framework to achieve balance between the protection, management and planning of the landscape by way of supporting actions. The key objectives of the Strategy include:

- implement the European Landscape Convention by integrating landscape into our approach to sustainable development;
- establish and embed a public process of gathering, sharing and interpreting scientific, technical and cultural information in order to carry out evidence-based identification and description of the character, resources and processes of the landscape;

- provide a policy framework, which will put in place measures at national, sectoral - including agriculture, tourism, energy, transport and marine - and local level, together with civil society, to protect, manage and properly plan through high quality design for the sustainable stewardship of our landscape;
- ensure that we take advantage of opportunities to implement policies relating to landscape use that are complementary and mutually reinforcing and that conflicting policy objectives are avoided in as far as possible.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives relating to **landscape management and protection.**

Healthy Ireland Framework (2013)

B.58 Healthy Ireland Framework [See reference 119**]** was launched in 2013 as a strategic framework to improve the health and well-being of the nation. The Framework and associated **Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025 [See reference** 120**]** supports reduction of health inequalities, improved access to services and the development of healthy living environments.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives that relate to creating a healthy living environment and encouraging healthy lifestyles.

Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities

B.59 The **Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities [See reference** 121**]** set national planning policy and guidance for the planning and development of urban and rural settlements, with a focus on sustainable residential development and the creation of compact settlements. They build on and update previous guidance

to take account of current Government policy and economic, social and environmental considerations. The Guidelines expand on higher-level policies of the National Planning Framework, setting policy and guidance for the growth priorities for settlements, residential density, urban design and placemaking and introduce development standards for housing.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives that reflect the guidance of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

Regional and local – relevant plans

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midlands Region 2019-2031 (2019)

B.60 The **RSES** **[See reference 122]** sets out the framework to direct future growth in the Eastern and Midlands Region over a decade. Its aim is "to create a sustainable and competitive Region that supports the health and wellbeing of our people and places, from urban to rural, with access to quality housing, travel and employment for all" (p.6). It is underpinned by three principles, which are:

- Healthy placemaking: to promote people's quality of life through the creation of healthy and attractive places to live, work, visit, invest and study in.
- Climate action: the need to enhance climate resilience and to accelerate a transition to a low carbon society recognising the role of natural capital and ecosystem services in achieving this; and
- Economic opportunity: to create the right conditions and opportunities for the Region to realise sustainable economic growth and quality jobs that ensure a good living standard for all.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives that align with the RSES for the Eastern and Midlands Region.

Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 (2021)

B.61 The **Longford County Development Plan** **[See reference 123]** sets out the planning policies and objective for the sustainable development of the County. The County Development Plan sets out a number of County Policy Objectives (CPOs) relating to climate change, settlement strategies, transport, infrastructure, energy and communications, regeneration, placemaking, economic development, the rural economy, tourism, cultural heritage, the natural environment, green infrastructure, landscape character and development management standards. Many CPOs are relevant to Longford Town however CPOs which are specific to Longford Town are set out below:

- Support the role and function of Longford Town as the principal economic driver and focus of investment for the county (i.e. a 'Key Town' as identified by the RSES) (CPO 4.7 – 4.9).
- Support and prioritise regeneration opportunities in Longford Town including enhanced accessibility and sustainable mobility; town centre improvements; developing the town as a tourism hub; regeneration at the River Camlin, the Camlin Quarter, the Ballyminion area; improved linkages; and wider regeneration (CPOs 6.62 – 6.80).
- Promote regional-scale employment in the Primary Economic Growth Centre of Longford Town and promote the town's role as a key hub for employment, enterprise, tourism and innovation (CPOs 8.26 – 8.33).
- Improve the retail and high-street environment of Longford Town (CPOs 8.76 – 8.79).
- Protect the character of the Architectural Conservation Area in Longford Town (CPOs 11.27 – 11.29).

  - Encourage a residential density of 35-40 units/ha in Longford town centre (CPO 16.17).

- The EPO Framework includes objectives that **align with the Longford CDP.**

Longford Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

B.62 The current **Longford Local Economic and Community Plan [See reference** 124**]** sets out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support both the economic and community development of County Longford. The vision for the County Longford is for a 'regenerated economically sustainable County which values equality of opportunity, excellent quality of life, collaborative community and rural development, sense of place and where the wellbeing of all residents and future generations is central to everything we do'. Longford Council and the Longford Local Community Development Committee are currently preparing the **Longford Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2023-2029**, which will set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support both the economic and community development of the County Longford.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives that **align with the Longford LECP.**

Draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

B.63 The **Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 [See reference** 125**]** aims to create a low carbon and climate resilient Longford. The Draft Plan sets a pathway for Longford County Council to translate national climate policy to local circumstances including through the identification of a Decarbonisation Zone within Longford Town.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives relating to **mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.**

Longford Climate Adaptation Strategy (2019)

B.64 This Strategy **[See reference 126]** sets out the main challenges for Ireland and for Longford for climate change. It sets out the adaptation goals, objectives and actions for the County and a number of actions to meet these objectives.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives relating to **climate adaptation.**

Longford Town Local Transport Plan

B.65 The **Longford Town LTP [See reference** 127**]** aims to establish a strategic framework for the future development of transport infrastructure within Longford Town and its environs.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives that align with the objectives of the Longford Town LTP and encourage a modal shift to sustainable modes of transport.

Active Travel Strategy for County Longford (2023)

B.66 The aim of the **Active Travel Strategy for County Longford [See reference** 128**]** is to establish a strategic framework for the future development of active travel in County Longford and to support Longford County Council's ambition to "establish Longford as a pioneering county for active travel" by "making active travel an attractive and realistic choice for short journeys".

- The EPO Framework includes objectives to encourage a modal shift to sustainable modes of transport.

Camlin Quarter Urban Design Framework (2019)

B.67 The **Camlin Quarter Urban Design Framework** **[See reference** 129**]** provides a guide to the enhancements and development of the Camlin Quarter as a 'connected, competitive, creative and caring environment in the historical heartland of Longford Town'. It sets out the vision, context and considerations, key objectives and urban design response for the regeneration of the area which has been identified by the County Longford Development Plan as a strategic regeneration site.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives that align with the Camlin Quarter Urban Design Framework.

Longford Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 – 2024 (2019)

B.68 Longford County Council, under the provisions of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998, is required to prepare and the next 5-year Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) 2025-2029 **[See reference** 130**]**. The assessment of Traveller accommodation need / projected need identifies that there is a need of 110units of accommodation to be provided over the five-year programme to cater for the existing demand and projected demand.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives that support the provision of housing that meets the identified needs of the whole community.

Longford Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability (2018)

B.69 Longford County Council's **Housing Disability Strategy [See reference** 131**]** core goal is to meet the identified housing needs of people with disabilities locally. It addresses the needs of those with a disability through direct provision of Local Authority Housing, works in collaboration with Approved Housing Bodies and the provision of adaptation grants. The vision of the Strategy is to facilitate access, for people with disabilities, to the appropriate range of housing and related support services, delivered in an integrated and sustainable manner, which promotes equality of opportunity, individual choice, and independent living.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives that support the provision of housing that meets the identified needs of the whole community.

Longford Noise Action Plan 2018 – 2023 (2018)

B.70 The **Longford Noise Action Plan [See reference** 132**]** has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the EU Directive 2002/49/EC – Environmental Noise Directive, transposed into Irish Law by the Environmental Noise Regulations. The plan has been prepared to address environmental noise from major roads within County Longford. It sets out related legislation and guidance, a description of the area and noise mapping, mitigation and protection measures, and a plan of key actions.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives relating to **preventing and reducing noise pollution**.

County Longford Tourism Strategy 2023-2027

B.71 The **County Longford Tourism Strategy [See reference** 133**]** sets out a strategy for sustainable tourism in the county based around culture, heritage,

landscape, outdoor recreation and adventure. It sets the vision for Longford to become “a year-round sustainable tourism destination providing authentic community and eco-tourism experiences, encouraging visitors to embrace slow tourism and grounded in respect for its natural and heritage assets that are protected for future generations”.

- The EPO Framework includes objectives that align with the County Longford Tourism Strategy.

Appendix C

Baseline information

Biodiversity, flora and fauna

Current baseline information

C.1 Figure C.1 illustrates the location and extent of biodiversity sites in and around Longford Town. There is a large diversity of species and habitats within the town that form part of the ecological network, ranging from hedgerows to grassland areas, and riparian habitats along the river and canal corridors. This ecological network provides valuable links for the movement and dispersal of species.

C.2 Within Longford Town there is one proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA), the Royal Canal. The Royal Canal pNHA begins approximately 200m from Longford train station and follows the canal south towards Ballymacormick. The pNHA forms a link between Longford and Dublin, connecting designated and undesignated sites across the country. The canal supports important habitats and a diverse range of species. There are no other protected sites within Longford Town.

C.3 The Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Network in Longford Town comprises a network of nature conservation areas, open spaces, recreational trails, waterways, and the Albert Reynolds Peace Park which support biodiversity and provide corridors for the movement of species. The GBI Network also fulfils a number of other functions including providing amenity and recreational spaces for communities, improving air and water quality, and increasing climate resilience, etc. **Figure C.2** illustrates the GBI Network in Longford Town.

C.4 Beyond the boundaries of the Longford Town LAP study area, there are several sites that are designated for their biodiversity importance at a national and European level. The following Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are within 15km of the LAP study area:

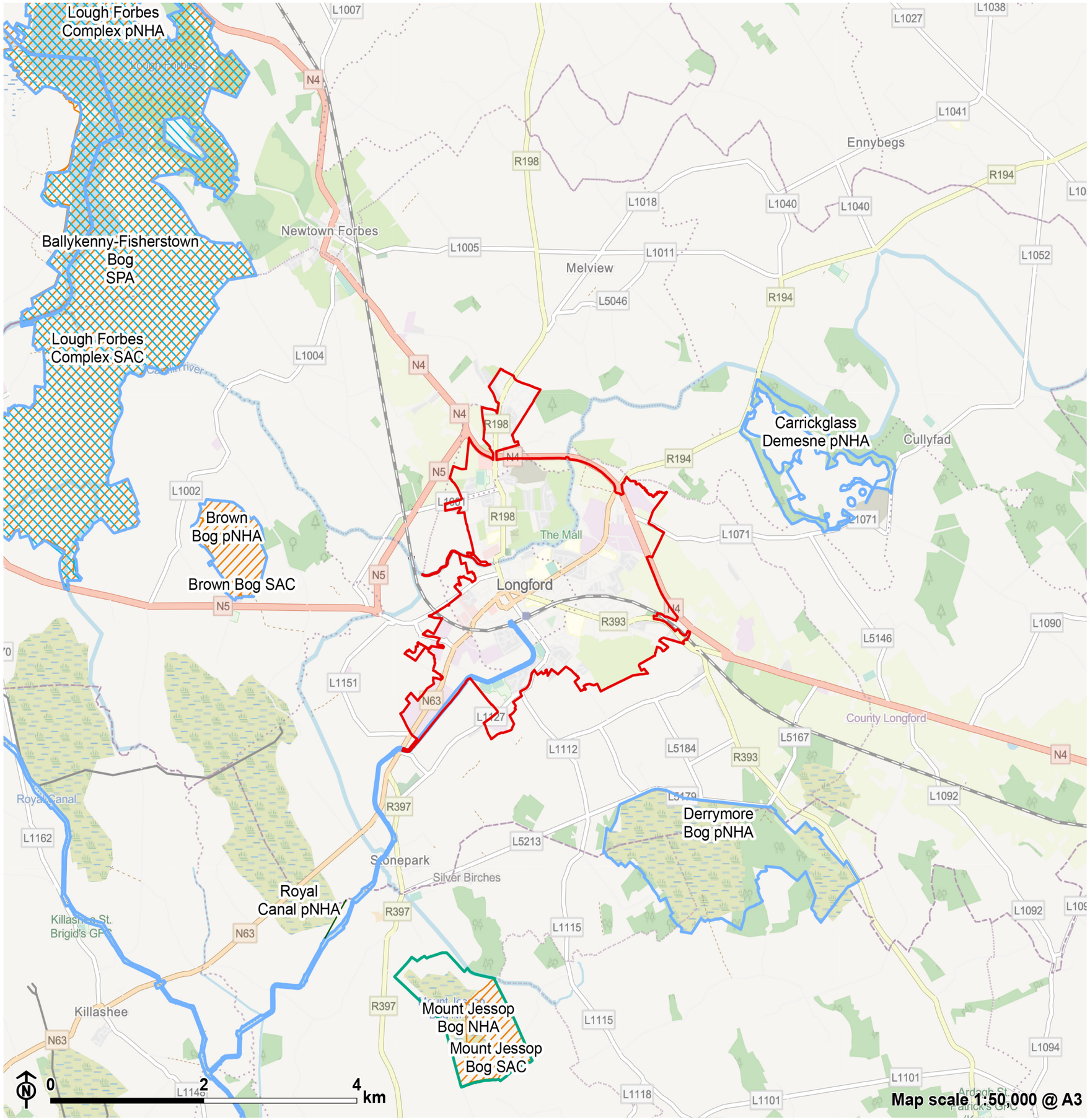
- Brown Bog SAC (2km)
- Mount Jessop Bog SAC (2.9km)
- Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (3km)
- Lough Forbes Complex SAC (3.4km)
- Clooneen Bog SAC (7.4km)
- Lough Ree SPA (12km)
- Lough Ree SAC (12km)
- Glen Lough SPA (14km)
- Fortwilliam Turlough SAC (14km)
- Argagullion Bog SAC (15km).

C.5 Further detail regarding the qualifying features and key sensitivities of European designated sites and others within 15km of the study area (and those that are hydrologically linked to the study area) are detailed in the Appropriate Assessment of the Longford Town LAP.

SEA of the Longford Town Local Area Plan
Longford County Council

LUC

Figure C.1: Biodiversity sites



- Longford Town LAP Study Area
- Natural Heritage Area (NHA)
- Proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA)
- Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

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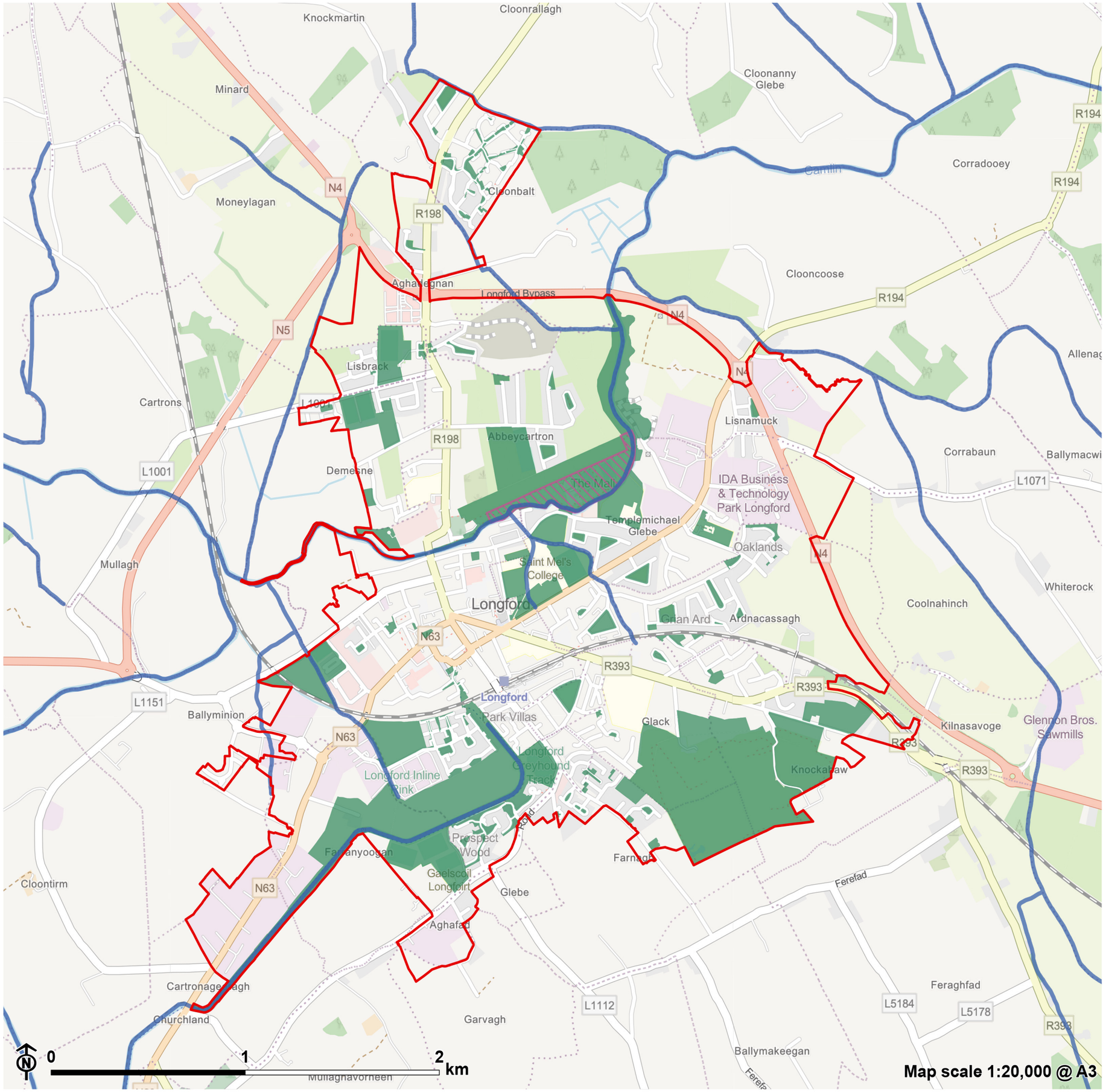
Figure C.2: Green and blue infrastructure in Longford Town



- Longford Town LAP Study Area
- Blue infrastructure
- Green infrastructure
- Albert Reynolds Peace Park

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Projected baseline information

C.7 At national level, assessment of Ireland's biodiversity shows that a significant portion of the country's biodiversity is in a vulnerable state. Without substantial change to existing trends there is unlikely to be significant increase in the pressures on biodiversity in coming decades from agricultural practices, forestry and fisheries, natural system modifications, mining and quarrying, climate change, pollution and invasive and problematic species **[See reference 134]**. It is difficult to predict future changes in the baseline for biodiversity, flora and fauna. However, previous trends have shown that development can have both direct and indirect effects (e.g. lighting, noise, etc.) and adverse and beneficial impacts on biodiversity, flora and fauna. Development can cause loss and damage to habitats, but innovative design and the creation of green corridors can help offset such impacts and even enhance biodiversity at local level.

C.8 Within Longford, the proposed Mid Shannon Wilderness Park will include Lough Ree, the rivers Shannon, Inny and Camlin, the Royal Canal, Newcastle Wood and other forests and the future rehabilitated Bord na Móna bogs. The project aims to strengthen the integration of tourism and natural heritage, and to reconcile tourism development with conservation of biodiversity. It is also proposed to create a dedicated Lough Ree Biosphere Reserve, due to rich natural heritage of the lake, raised bogs and wetlands. The proposed Biosphere Reserve project is a collaboration between the relevant local authorities including Longford County Council, Bord na Móna and the National Parks and Wildlife Services, Waterways Ireland and Fáilte Ireland. Whilst encouraging recreation and tourism in the area, the Wilderness Park also aims to enhance local biodiversity though management of rehabilitated bogs and maintenance of biodiversity corridors across much of the south of County Longford. The Mid Shannon Wilderness Park Plan **[See reference 135]** suggests that the park will form biodiversity and recreational connections across much of the south-west of County Longford, all the way to Longford Town via the Royal Canal. The Royal Canal is receiving significant resources for blueway/greenway development at a national level. The Royal Canal Greenway project is planned to be the longest greenway in Ireland (144km in length). There is potential for the

blueway/greenway to be utilised as a wildlife corridor to prevent fragmentation of habitats and allow migration of species under climate change pressure. The Longford Town LAP also seeks to enhance the wider Green and Blue Infrastructure Network in Longford Town by enhancing the green links and ecological connectivity between open spaces throughout Longford Town.

Population and human health

Population

Current baseline information

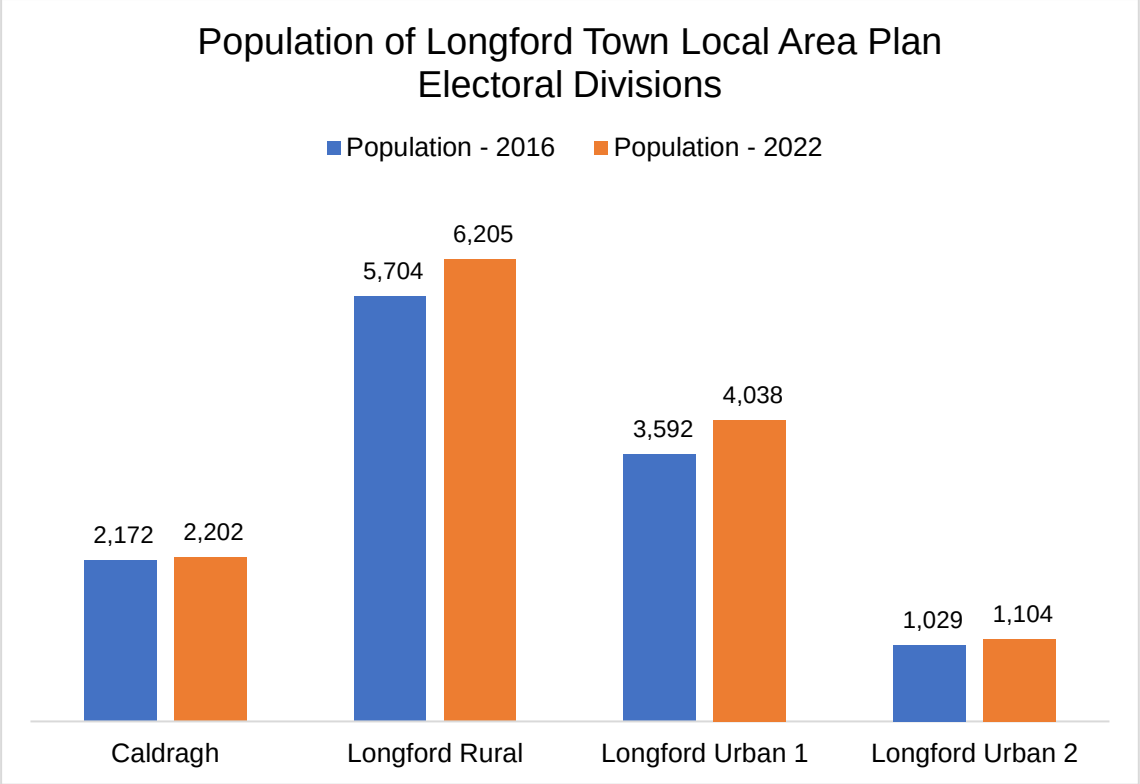
C.9 Longford Town is the largest settlement in County Longford in terms of population, economic activity, level of infrastructure and service and connectivity. The Longford Town Local Area Plan comprises the following Electoral Divisions (EDs) in the 2022 Census – Longford Urban 1, Longford Urban 2, Longford Rural and Caldragh **[See reference 136]**. The population of these EDs in 2022 was 13,549 people, compared to 12,497 people in the 2016 Census. However, it should be noted that the EDs cover a larger area than the Longford Town LAP area, therefore population estimates are higher than within the actual LAP area (discussed below).

C.10 As illustrated in **Figure C.3**, the population for each ED in the LAP study area has increased since the 2016 Census. The highest percentage increase has been in the Longford Urban 1 area with a 12.4% increase in population since the previous census, followed by Longford Rural at 8.8%, Longford Urban 2 at 7.3% and Caldragh with a 1.4% increase in population. The most densely populated areas being:

- Annaly Park / St. Michael's Road.
- Ardnacassa.
- McEoin Park.

- Park Road and adjoining estates.
- Templemichael.

Figure C.3: Population of Longford Town Local Area Plan Electoral Divisions



C.11 County Longford has seen a significant increase in population in recent years. The county saw the highest population growth in Ireland between 2016 Census and 2022 Census (+14.38%), above the national average (+8%) to 46,751 people. However, during this time, Longford Town experienced a rate of growth of 9.43% (10,952 people), which is significantly below the county average growth rate during that time.

C.12 According to the 2022 Census, the total population of Longford Town (10,952 persons) is made up of 5,345 males and 5,607 females.

C.13 The average age in County Longford (38.8 years) is in line with the national average (38.8 years), while the average age in Longford Town is lower at 35.2 years.

C.14 In County Longford, approximately 63.5% of the population are of working age (i.e. 15 to 64 years) compared to 63.3% of the population in Longford Town which is of working age. Longford Town has a greater youth demographic compared to the County level, with 29.2% of the population aged between 0-19 years old. In Longford Town, 14.2% of the population were aged 65 years and over in Census 2022, which represents a lower proportion of the population in this older age category than at a county and national level.

C.15 Longford Town is a diverse settlement with many nationalities living in the local area which contribute to the local population and vibrant community. 34.65% of the town's population were born overseas and 31.88% are not of Irish nationality. In terms of non-national population in Longford Town there are high concentrations of 'Other EU'; Polish and 'Rest of World' evident according to the 2022 Census.

C.16 In 2016, of the towns with a population of 1,500 or more persons, Longford Town had the second highest number of Irish Travellers with 730 persons. The 2022 Census recorded a reduction in Irish Traveller numbers since the 2016 Census, with 657 persons identified as 'White Irish Traveller'. County Longford has the second highest number of Travellers per head of population, with 20 Travellers for every thousand people. The assessment of Traveller accommodation need / projected need identifies that there is a need of 110 units of accommodation to be provided over the five-year programme from 2025 to 2029 to cater for the existing demand and projected demand **[See reference 137]**.

Projected baseline information

C.17 The Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework **[See reference 138]** predicted that County Longford would grow to 45,500 by 2026

and to 47,000 people by 2031 (based on population projection estimates from 2016 Census) **[See reference 139]**. The 2022 Census figures demonstrate that the county has already reached these figures with 46,751 inhabitants as of 2022**.** A higher proportion of people in the county than predicted is likely to increase pressure on services and facilities including housing, healthcare services, school places, etc.

C.18 The statistics from the 2022 Census indicate a strong current working age population within Longford, with a substantial young population which is significant in terms of sustaining future economic activity in the county. In line with national trends, the older population in Longford is projected to grow significantly, placing additional pressures on housing and social care services, as well as public transport services.

Housing

Current baseline information

C.19 As outlined in the previous section, the county saw the highest population growth in Ireland between 2016 Census and 2022 Census (+14.4%), above the national average (+8%), however, there was only a 3.25% increase in housing stock in the county between 2016 and 2022 **[See reference** 140**]**.

C.20 The Census 2022 recorded 4,043 private households in Longford Town, with 646 vacant dwellings identified (13.76%), of which 14 units were unoccupied holiday homes; 578 units were classed as ‘other vacant dwellings’ and 54 units were ‘temporarily absent’. The proportion of vacant dwellings in Longford Town is significantly higher than the national average of 2%.

C.21 In 2022, 38% of households in Longford Town owned their home, which is considerably lower than the averages for home ownership in County Longford at 61% and the national average of 66%. The rental sector dominates household tenure in Longford Town with 29.5% of people renting privately and

22.4% of people in social housing. The 2022 Census recorded that 88% of people resided in a house/bungalow with 11.55% of the population residing in flats / apartments.

C.22 In accordance with the requirements in the Housing for All – a New Housing Plan for Ireland **[See reference 141]**, the Council prepared the Housing Delivery Action Plan **[See reference 142]** which sets out its approach to social and affordable housing delivery for the period 2022 to 2026. Within the period 2022-2026, the Council proposes to build 391 new social houses in the county. Within the same period, the Council proposes to build 36 new homes for people with a disability. The majority of new houses will be delivered in Longford Town (144 houses). It is estimated in the Action Plan that 60% of delivery will be by the Council and 40% by Approved Housing Bodies. However, as the level of activity by Approved Housing Bodies is relatively low, Longford County Council may well exceed the 60% delivery target. The type of homes to be delivered will be a mix of one, two, three and four bed houses. The current demand for two-bed homes is highest in the county at 45%, followed by three-bed homes at 38%, one-bed homes at 13% and four-bed homes at 4%.

C.23 The Council proposes to use a combination of brownfield and greenfield sites to deliver its social housing programme. Currently, of the 95 units approved, 28% will be delivered on brownfield sites.

C.24 The level of affordable housing need is identified in an area using the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) tool **[See reference 143]**. A high level of need is indicated where, of the total projected housing need in the county, over 5% of new households will not qualify for social housing but will also be constrained in accessing housing by their ability to rent or buy. Longford has a HNDA of less than 5% based on the assumptions of the current model. Over the period 2020 to 2021, a total of 178 applications for social housing support were refused based on income grounds (91 in 2020 and 87 in 2021). In total over that period 806 families were refused support for a variety of reasons. This demonstrates that a cohort of families need housing support.

C.25 In 2021 €1,609,668 of loans were made to 19 families under the Local Authority Home Loan scheme, with €862,240 drawn down to-date. In 2020 loans totalling €2,429,260 were refused.

C.26 According to the Pobal HP Deprivation Index, County Longford is the most deprived local authority area within the Midlands Region. In the absolute HP Deprivation scores only four Electoral District's (ED's) categorised as marginally above average. The more affluent areas are situated in the wider environs of Longford Town and in the northwest of the County, while the east of the County in general is below the national average. The disposable income of County Longford residents in 2022 from the CSO was €18,754 per capita, the second lowest in the State.

Anecdotally there appears to be a strong demand for affordable housing in Longford.

C.27 During the week of 24th – 30th March 2025, 22 adults in County Longford accessed local authority emergency accommodation. Across the Midlands the total number of adults accessing emergency accommodation was 230 (making up 2% of the national total). Compared to other counties in the Midlands, Longford reported the lowest figure for those seeking emergency accommodation in the Midlands, with the highest number of people reported in Westmeath and Offaly **[See reference 144]**.

Projected baseline information

C.28 County Longford aims to accommodate a substantial number of additional new homes with a total housing supply target of 2,568 units over the plan period from Q1 2022 to Q4 2027 inclusive. The Housing Supply Target (HST) for Longford Town from 2021 to 2027 is 1,304 residential units, with 100% able to be delivered within the existing settlement footprint of the town (35ha of brownfield infill) **[See reference 145]**. The settlement hierarchy set out in the RSES for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly Region **[See reference**

146] identifies Longford Town as a 'Key Town' i.e. a large economically active service and/or county town that provides employment for the surrounding areas and high-quality transport links and has the capacity to act as growth drivers to complement the Regional Growth Centres (RCG) (there are no RCGs in County Longford however Athlone is the nearest in neighbouring County Westmeath). Longford Town will therefore have a higher residential density than other towns and the CDP identifies that there is sufficient capacity within the town to accommodate additional growth and maintain the approximately 25% share of County Longford's residents over the plan period. It is identified as the settlement targeted for most residential growth in the County.

C.29 Longford Town currently has a high proportion of housing stock that is vacant (13%) compared to the national average of 2%. However, the Croí Cónaithe Fund aims to support people by providing grants to refurbish vacant and derelict properties (the fund was previously applicable only to towns and villages, however, it has recently been extended to include all areas). The total grant available for bringing properties back into use is €70,000 for derelict properties and €50,000 for vacant properties which is likely to encourage the regeneration of vacant and derelict properties in Longford.

C.30 In line with the national trend, there will be a need in the future to provide for more housing to meet the needs of the aging population, such as Age Friendly Homes, adaptable dwellings and supported living. Similarly, there will be a need to provide accommodation that meets the needs of everyone in the community, including members of the Travelling Community and people with disabilities.

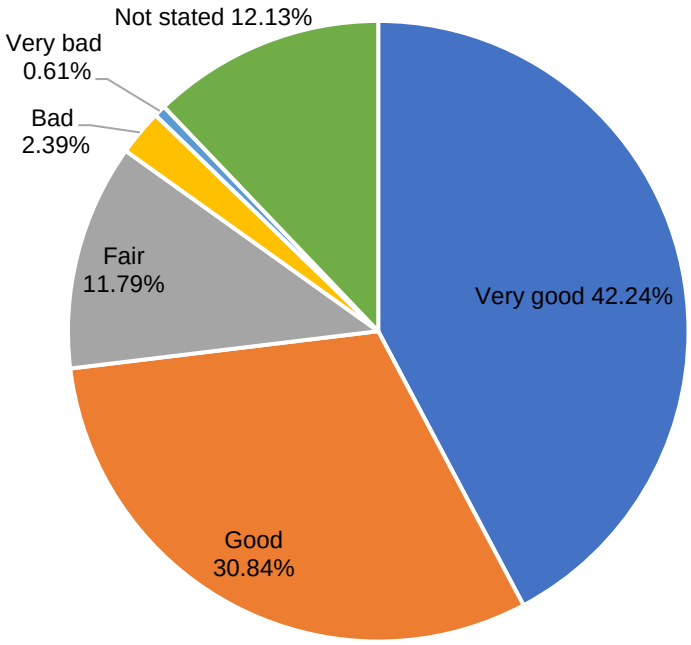
Health

Current baseline information

C.31 In the 2022 Census, Longford Town recorded the lowest number of people in 'very good' health (4,626 people; 42.24%) and the highest number of people

in Ireland who stated that their health was 'bad' (262 people; 2.4%) or 'very bad' (67 people; 0.61%) **[See reference 147]** (see **Figure C.4**). There is often a strong correlation between people reporting poor health and less affluent areas **[See reference 148]**.

Figure C.4: Health of residents in Longford Town (2022 Census)



C.32 A recent report from the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimated that by 2025, obesity prevalence would increase in 44 out of 53 countries in the WHO European region. Of these, Ireland is estimated to have the highest prevalence of obesity, with 43% of the population projected to be obese by 2025. Being overweight or obese carries numerous health risks, including increased likelihood of type 2 diabetes, cancer, heart and liver disease, stroke and related mental health conditions **[See reference 149]**. It is estimated this health issue places a cost of at least €1.13 billion on the HSE every year **[See reference 150]**. A breakdown of the proportion of the population of Longford who are overweight or obese is not available, however, it is assumed that the county experiences rates of obesity in line with the national average.

C.33 Only 31% of Irish adults report to undertake at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week, while only 19% of primary aged children and 12% of post-primary aged children report to take part in at least 60 minutes of moderate exercise per day **[See reference 151]**. A breakdown of the proportion of the population of Longford who are inactive is not available, however, it is assumed that the county experiences rates of inactivity in line with the national average.

C.34 Ireland has one of the highest rates of mental health illness in Europe with 18.5% of the population recorded as having a mental health illness such as anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, or alcohol / drug use **[See reference 152]**. A breakdown of the proportion of the population of Longford who experience mental health issues is not available, however, it is assumed that rates of mental health issues in the county are in line with the national average.

C.35 The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted health inequalities nationally, including the differences in people's health and well-being that result from the conditions in which they are born, grow, live, work and age. For example, the pandemic impacted social and community networks, showing that lack of social contact has a detrimental impact on mental health (causing or facilitating anxiety and depression). It also had a negative impact on individual lifestyle factors such as lack of exercise and unhealthy diet, causing other health issues.

C.36 Active travel helps to improve physical fitness and health, as well as mental health and wellbeing. As well as the health benefits from active travel, when more people walk or cycle and fewer journeys involve the car, community vibrancy, sociability, and cohesion are improved. Mental Health Ireland report that 39% of people exercise to improve their mental health and wellbeing **[See reference 153]**. A recent report by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland found that a lack of safe, active travel routes was a key factor in obesity and levels of inactivity, particularly in children **[See reference 154]**.

C.37 Longford generally experiences good air quality. However, increased vehicle usage, burning of fossil fuels including peat for domestic purposes, and emissions from industry and agricultural practices are a threat to air quality in

the county. The most pronounced areas for air pollution are built-up urban areas and major transport routes, including along the Dublin to Sligo rail line and the four national roads (N4, N5, N55 and N63). Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts and is recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease, lung cancer, stroke, and both chronic and acute respiratory diseases, including asthma **[See reference 155]**. It is estimated that there are approximately 1,300 premature deaths annually in Ireland due to poor air quality from fine particulate matter **[See reference 156]**. Pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society such as children, the elderly, and those with existing heart and lung conditions. There is also often a strong correlation between poor air quality areas and less affluent areas.

C.38 Noise is a common problem arising from transport and heavy industry, and studies have shown it can have major negative direct and indirect effects on health and well-being, on quality of life, and on wildlife. Exposure to noise can increase stress levels, disrupt communications and disturb sleep. There is scope for noise emissions from transport to be reduced by reducing the number of cars on the road, supporting a modal-shift to active travel, and developing green infrastructure along transport corridors.

Projected baseline information

C.39 Given that the county, particularly Longford Town, has performed poorly for perception of personal health against neighbouring local authority areas, it is likely to continue to do so without intervention. However, the Longford Town LAP has the potential to have a positive effect on the health and wellbeing of the population of Longford by encouraging active lifestyles through the provision of sufficient quality open spaces / recreational resources and active travel routes. As more people engage in physical activity, their physical and mental health will improve.

C.40 There is a direct relationship between air quality levels, traffic and congestion and health issues. The predicted growth of Longford's population as outlined in the Longford County Development Plan **[See reference 157]** will inevitably result in an increase in road-based traffic and congestion which will

adversely affect the air quality in the county, particularly in Longford Town. In the 2022 Census, out of 868 towns, Longford Town recorded the 82nd highest number of people in Ireland who stated that their health was 'bad' or 'very bad' (3%) **[See reference 158]** and these health issues may be exacerbated by the predicted increase in transport-related emissions. Conversely, increasing the provision of active travel routes in Longford is likely to reduce transport-related emissions, thereby improving air quality and the health and wellbeing of Longford's population.

Access to services, facilities, and open spaces

Current baseline information

C.41 Good and equitable accessibility to services, facilities and open spaces is vital to the health and well-being of a community. Services and facilities include hospitals and GPs, recreational resources, food retailers, employment and education centres, and other aspects of social infrastructure such as community centres and places of worship (as shown in **Figures C.5** and **C.6**).

C.42 There is a high proportion of residents in County Longford commuting to other areas for employment, averaging commuting distances of approximately 20km **[See reference** 159**]**. According to the 2022 Census, the majority of commuting trips (to work, school, college or childcare) are by car (driver and passenger) at 57.6% in the town. The number of commuting trips by car nationally is 63%, which demonstrates the below average level of car dependency in Longford Town **[See reference 160]**. Active travel is the only other significant mode of transport used to travel to work and school, with 20.5% of people walking or cycling to work or school, which is above the national average of 12%. Only 2.8% of people use public transport (bus, minibus, coach or train) to travel to work or school in Longford Town which is below the national average of 5%.

C.43 There are several constraints to the existing active travel network in Longford which impede active travel to key services and facilities, including:

- Lack of safe crossings and facilities (especially at roundabouts and on Longford Main Steet).
- Fragmentation and variable quality of the cycle network.
- Lack of permeability between key areas in the town and to key destinations (e.g. schools, train station, etc.).
- Lack of footpaths, or only on one side, particularly around the edges of Longford Town.
- Limited cycling facilities in Longford Town (Main Street / Earls Street).
- Physical barriers to the active travel network from the rail and national road infrastructure, and waterways.

C.44 The following constraints to the public transport network are identified, which may account for the low level of use by residents in Longford Town to access services and facilities:

- Only two train stations within the county - at Longford Town and Edgeworthstown.
- Infrequent local bus services.
- Scheduling issues between transport modes.
- Longer bus journey times compared to car journeys.
- The accessibility of the train stations by walking and cycling is an issue.

C.45 There are a number of key services, facilities and areas of open space in Longford Town, including 32 healthcare facilities; 16 educational facilities; the Albert Reynolds Peace Park (the Mall) containing the Mall Walking Trail; the Leisure complex; the Royal Canal Greenway; County Longford Golf Club; the former Longford greyhound racing stadium; Pearse Park GAA stadium; Longford Rugby Club grounds, Tennis Club, bowling centre as well as other residential amenity areas and open spaces with the town.

C.46 Travel times to key services and facilities in the town are detailed in **Table C.1**. The national average journey times by car (61%), walking (58%) and cycling (71%) are less than 15 minutes **[See reference 161]**. As illustrated in **Table C.1** journey times to key services and facilities by car and bike generally take less than 15 minutes, in line with the national average. However, access to many services and facilities in Longford Town by walking will generally take longer than the national average journey time.

Table C.1: Travel times between key services and facilities

From	To	Distance	Walking (travel time)	Cycling (travel time)	Car (travel time)	Public transport
Train/Bus Station	Main Street	600m	6 mins	2 mins	1 min	-
Axis Retail Centre	Main Street	2km	23 mins	9 mins	8 mins	-
Longford Business and Technology Park	Main Street	1.6km	20 mins	8 mins	5 mins	-
Royal Canal	Main Street	450m	6 mins	2 mins	3 mins	-
McEoin Park	Main Street	1.4km	18 mins	7 min	5 mins	-
Pearse Park GAA	Main Street	1.4km	17 mins	5 mins	4 mins	-
Longford Rugby Club	Main Street	1.6km	20 mins	7 mins	4 mins	-
Longford Slashers GAA	Main Street	1.9km	23 mins	6 mins	5 mins	-
Abbeycartron	Main Street	~1.3km	16 mins	5 mins	3 mins	-
Adrnacassa Ave	Main Street	~1.4km	17 mins	6 mins	6 mins	-

From	To	Distance	Walking (travel time)	Cycling (travel time)	Car (travel time)	Public transport
Cartronageeragh Business Park	Main Street	~2.1km	27 mins	7 mins	6 mins	-
Cloonbalt Wood	Main Street	~2.4km	30 mins	9 mins	5 mins	-
Longford	Athlone	~40km	-	-	45 mins	49 mins (bus)
Longford	Dublin (Connolly Station)	~120 km	-	-	1 hr 40 mins	1 hr 50 mins (train) 2 hrs (bus)

Projected baseline information

C.47 Development pressures could lead to loss of some existing open space and sports/recreation facilities, whilst projected population increases are likely to increase demand for such facilities. Access to key services and facilities could become more challenging as the population in Longford continues to grow and age.

C.48 There are several transport projects in the pipeline which will improve access to key services, facilities and opens spaces in Longford Town, most notably:

- N4/M4 Mullingar to Longford (Roosky) upgrade – The portion of road which will be upgraded passes through the settlements of Edgeworthstown, Longford and Newtownforbes **[See reference 162]**.
- The Royal Canal Way – The 16.5km Cloondara Greenway forms part of the extended Royal Canal Quay which provides an off-road trackway between Longford to Killashee and along the Royal Canal towards Cloondara Harbour. This will provide a multi-purpose active transport route

that connects to the ongoing improvements to the Royal Canal Way, which extends to Dublin.

- National Cycle Network – Connecting Longford Town to Roscommon in the south-west and Sligo in the north.
- 'Longford Connected' and the 'Camlin Quarter Regeneration Project' aim to deliver urban realm improvements and improve the environmental quality, walkability and liveability of the town and enhance the existing townscape. The Camlin Quarter Regeneration Project includes Connolly Barracks, Church Street, Great Water Street, Little Water Street and the Albert Reynolds Peace Park.
- Interurban cycle and walking connections in Longford Town.

C.49 The Longford Town LAP has the potential to have a positive effect on improving the health and wellbeing of the population of Longford by encouraging active travel choices; improving access to health and welfare services; and improving the provision of and access to open spaces.

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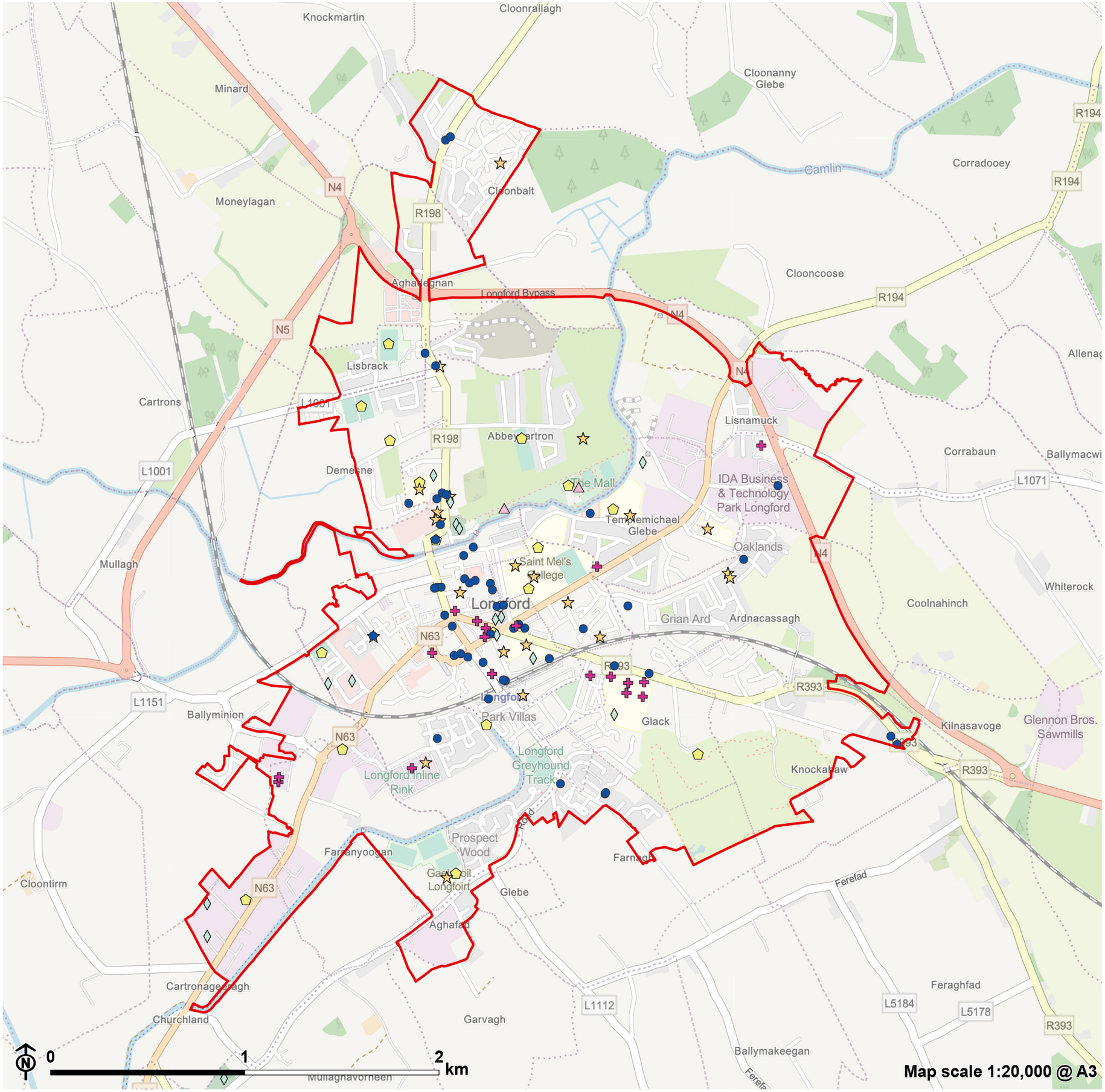
Figure C.5: Services and facilities in Longford Town



- Longford Town LAP Study Area
- Health care facility
- Civic service
- Place of worship
- Educational facility
- Sports facility
- Playground

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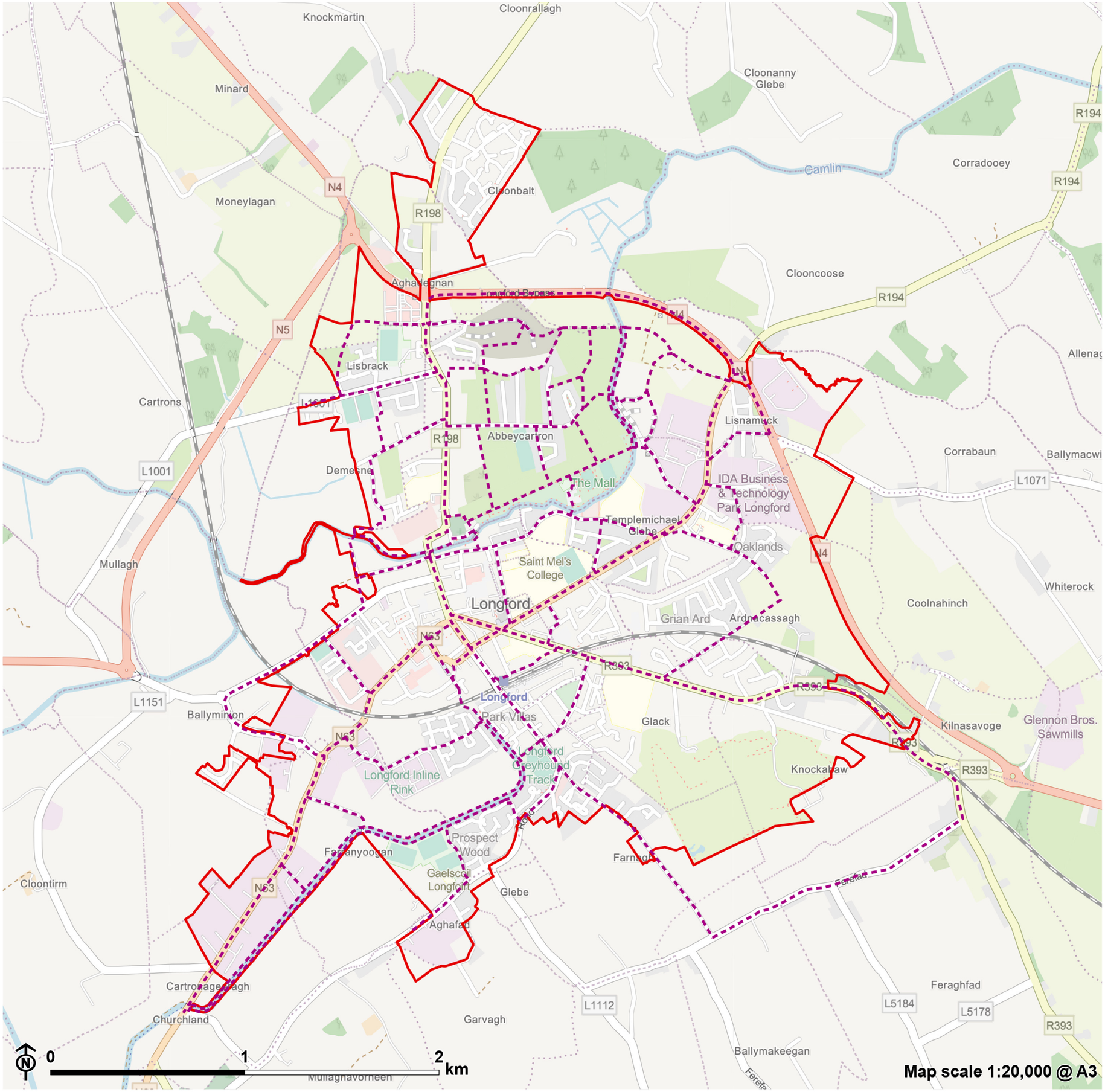
Figure C.6: Recreation in Longford Town



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12003_Longford_Figure_Updates_March_2024/
FIGC_6_Recreation_A3L 17/05/2024 EB:spears_d

Affluence and deprivation

Current baseline information

C.50 The Pobal HP deprivation Index provides a method of measuring the relative affluence or disadvantage of a particular geographical area using data compiled from various censuses. It is a recognised resource for identifying affluence and disadvantage, by providing local analysis of relevant metrics such as unemployment, educational attainment and population change.

C.51 According to the Pobal HP Deprivation Index, County Longford is the second most deprived region in the country and generally experiences varied levels of deprivation (see **Figure C.7**). Most areas in the county are categorised as 'marginally above average' or 'marginally below average'. There are no areas described as 'affluent' within County Longford. The most disadvantaged areas are within Longford Town. Townparks in the west of Longford Town experiences the highest level of disadvantage, described as 'extremely disadvantaged'. The remaining town is considered 'Marginally Above Average', 'marginally below average', 'disadvantaged' or 'very disadvantaged' **[See reference** 163**]**.

Projected baseline information

C.52 The Longford County Development Plan supports the economic, social and physical regeneration of deprived areas in the county. Areas such as the Ardnacassa area, McEoin Park and other areas suffering from social and economic deprivation in the town are identified as areas which will be prioritised for regeneration in the Longford County Development Plan. Therefore, levels of deprivation may improve as a result of targeted regeneration plans for the town. Similarly, the Longford Town LAP seeks to improve active travel infrastructure throughout the town and to key employment and education locations, thus removing one of the barriers to future employment for many social groups.

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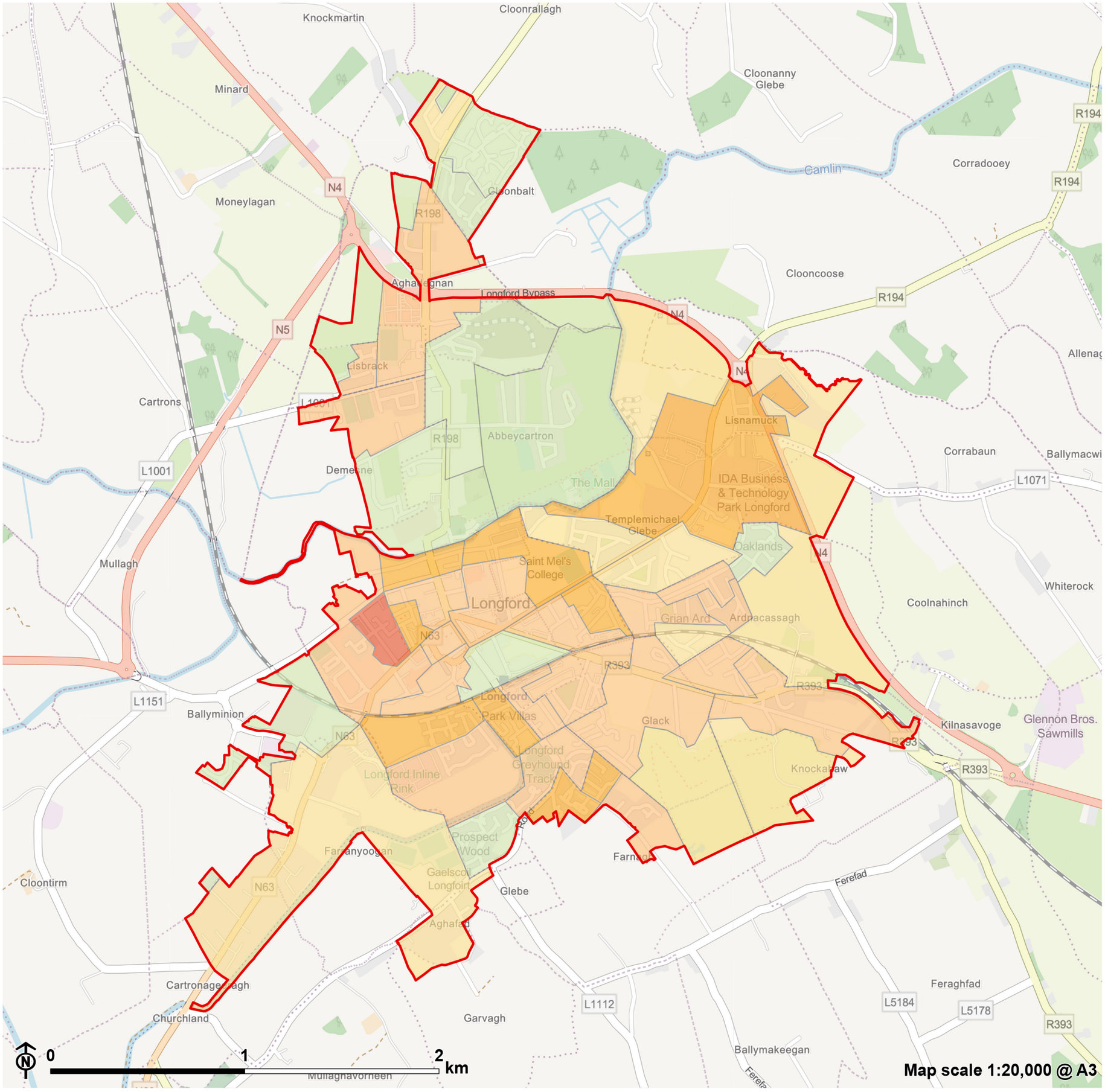
Figure C.7: Affluence and deprivation in Longford Town



- Longford Town LAP Study Area

Pobal HP Deprivation Index

- Marginally above average
- Marginally below average
- Disadvantaged
- Very disadvantaged
- Extremely disadvantaged

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Haase, T. and Pratschke, J. (2023) The 2022 Pobal HP Deprivation Index, accessed at: pobal.ie/research-analysis/open-data/

Climatic factors

Climate change predictions

Current baseline information

C.53 Climate change presents a global risk, with a range of different impacts that are likely to be felt within Longford across numerous receptors. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report on global warming outlines that, under emissions in line with current pledges under the Paris Agreement, **global warming is expected to surpass 1.5ºC**, even if these pledges are supplemented with very challenging increases in the scale and ambition of mitigation after 2030. This increased action would need to achieve net zero CO_2 emissions in less than 15 years **[See reference 164]**. In light of IPCC work, the Government of Ireland declared a Climate Emergency in May 2019 **[See reference 165]**. In December 2019, the Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive of County Longford signed the Climate Action Charter, demonstrating Longford County Council's commitment to providing local leadership on climate action **[See reference 166]** and prepared a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy **[See reference 167]**. The objectives of the Strategy of most relevance to the Longford Town LAP are to:

- Incorporate climate action awareness and response throughout council policy.
- Ensure / increase the resilience of infrastructural assets and inform investment decisions.
- Maintain the integrity of public infrastructure against negative climate change impacts and increase the design resilience of planned developments into the future.
- Promote a combined climate action response to infrastructure provision.
- Integrate climate action considerations into land use planning policy and influence positive behaviour.

- Manage the risk of flooding through a variety of responses and to mitigate the risk and impact of flooding.
- Provide for enhancement of the natural environment to work positively towards climate action, to promote effective biodiversity management and enhance protection of natural habitats and landscapes and protect heritage and cultural infrastructure.
- Support climate action initiatives in line with local economic and community plan (LECP) actions.
- Build capacity and resilience within communities.

C.54 The Strategy outlines next steps including setting out short, medium and long-term actions to deliver the above objectives. Carbon neutrality and increasing Longford's resilience to climate change therefore needs to be fully woven into the Longford Town LAP and form a key part of the SEA.

C.55 Ireland has experienced a general trend towards warmer average temperatures in recent years with temperatures increasing by 0.9ºC during the period 1900 to 2019. Fifteen of the top twenty warmest years on record have occurred since 1990. In Ireland, 2023 was the warmest year on record by a large margin with average air temperatures of 11.20˚C. There has also been a significant reduction in average annual levels of spring and summer rainfall with a substantial increase in the frequency of heavy precipitation events in winter and autumn **[See reference 168]**.

C.56 The following statistics, derived from the nearest Met Éireann weather station at Mullingar, approximately 43km from Longford Town, indicate that Longford, in line with the national trend, has also been experiencing increases in average daily temperatures and rainfall **[See reference 169]**:

- The mean temperature between 1960 and 1990 is recorded at 8.8ºC and between 1979 and 2008 at 9.3ºC (representing a 0.7ºC increase over the period 1960-2008).
- The average rainfall 1960-1990 was recorded as 934.3mm and 1979-2008 941.3mm (representing a 7mm increase over the period 1960-2008).

C.57 Recent significant weather events in Longford include **[See reference 170]**:

- Extreme flooding events in 2009, 2011 and 2015 around Longford Town, Newtoncashel and Cloondara and threatened areas around Ballymahon and Lanesborough. Local spot flooding in rural areas was also a significant problem.
- Significant snow events in 2018 and severe winters in 2009/10 and 2010/11.
- Prolonged dry and hot spell in 2022 (warmest year on record), causing damage to transport infrastructure and increased woodland / peatland fires (similar dry spells recorded in 2018, 2006 and 1996).
- Storm events in years (e.g. Storm Ophelia in 2017) causing major disruption due to fallen trees and powerlines.

Projected baseline information

C.58 In general, climate change projections are indicating a greater chance of hotter, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters in Ireland. Ireland's climate is changing in line with global trends and by the middle of the century (2041-2060), annual temperatures are projected to increase between 1-1.2^{o}C and 1.3-1.6^{o}C, depending on the emissions trajectory. Projections indicate a substantial increase in the frequency of heavy precipitation events in winter and autumn, an increase of approximately 20%. Sea levels and the number of intense storms are also projected to increase **[See reference 171]**. Climate change has the potential for diverse and wide-ranging impacts, as detailed overleaf.

Risks

- The number of incidents of food poisoning, heat stress and heat related deaths may increase in summer.
- Domestic energy use may increase during summer months as refrigeration and air conditioning demand increases.
- Wetter winters and more intense rainfall events throughout the year may result in a higher risk of flooding from rivers.
- More intense rainstorms may in some locations result in the amount of surface water runoff exceeding the capacity of drainage systems, consequently leading to more frequent and severe localised flash flooding.
- More frequent storms and floods may cause increased damage to property and infrastructure, resulting in significant economic costs.
- Periods of drought in summer could lead to soil shrinking and subsidence, causing damage to buildings and transport networks. Drought may also impact negatively on agriculture, industry and biodiversity.
- Warmer and drier summers are likely to affect the quantity and quality of water supply, which will need careful management.
- The changing climate will impact on the behaviour and distribution of species and may encourage the spread of invasive species.

Opportunities

- Milder winters should reduce the costs of heating homes and other buildings, helping to alleviate fuel poverty and reducing the number of winter deaths from cold.
- Domestic energy use may decrease in winter due to higher temperatures.
- Warmer and drier summers may benefit the recreation and tourism economy.

- Ireland's agriculture and forestry may be able to increase production with warmer weather and longer growing seasons.

Greenhouse gas emissions

Current baseline information

C.59 Longford County Council identified Longford Town as a decarbonisation zone, in line with Action 165 of the Climate Action Plan 2019, which requires every local authority to identify a pilot decarbonisation zone to test the scale and scope of decarbonising society and the economy **[See reference 172]**.

C.60 Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2025 **[See reference** 173**]** sets out decisive action to reduce overall greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and to put Ireland on a more sustainable path. The rate of emissions reductions in Ireland was modest until 2008 and since 2011 emissions have trended upwards again, with an overall peak in 2018 (60.9 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (MT CO_2eq). GHG emissions are failing to fall consistently each year. In 2021, Ireland's provisional GHG emissions are estimated to be 61.53MT CO_2eq which is 4.7% higher than emissions in 2020, likely due to some sectors recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, and higher than the 2018 figure of 60.9MT CO_2eq **[See reference** 174**].** Agriculture is the largest source of emissions in Ireland, representing 34.3% of the nation's total emissions in 2022. The transport (17.1%) and energy (primarily power generation) (14.8%) sectors represent the second and third largest share of emissions. The transport sector has been the fastest growing sector of GHG emissions over the past three decades, with emissions increasing by 6% between 2021 and 2022 as the rebound from COVID-19 restrictions continued. Despite the impacts of COVID-19, GHG emissions in Ireland only decreased by 3.6% in 2020. However, 2021 saw GHG emissions rise again by 4.7% as some sectors recovered. The latest provisional data indicates in 2022 emissions fell by 1.8% compared to 2021, driven by higher fuel prices, reduced use of nitrogen fertiliser, increased renewable energy, behavioural change, and regulation.

Projected baseline information

C.61 Ireland is committed to reaching a legally binding target of net-zero emissions no later than 2050, and a reduction of 51% (compared to 2018 levels) by 2030 under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 **[See reference** 175**].** The latest EPA GHG projections **[See reference** 176**]** show that currently implemented measures can deliver an 10% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 compared to the 2018 level, significantly short of the 30% reduction target. Although a decrease has been shown in the provisional 2022 figure, GHG emissions are failing to fall consistently each year with the 2021 figure higher than the previous year and similar to the 2018 peak figure (since 2011). GHG emissions in Longford are likely to follow the national trend, although the implementation of the Longford Town LAP is likely to have a positive effect by creating a compact and sustainable town that reduces the need to travel by car to access services and facilities thus lowering transport emissions.

Road travel and associated energy consumption

Current baseline information

C.62 Longford is well served by transport links in the form of the Dublin to Sligo rail line, and several strategic roads which traverse the county, including the N4 and N5, both of which are components of the Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) Comprehensive Network. Longford Town experiences a high level of inbound commuters with the majority of commuting trips facilitated via private transportation (57.6% of people commute by car as a driver or passenger). The number of commuting trips by car nationally is 63%, which demonstrates the below average level of car dependency in Longford Town **[See reference 177]**. The use of sustainable modes of transport within the town for commuting indicates that 20.5% of people commute by active travel, which

is above the national average of 12%; and 2.8% of people commute by public transport which is below the national average of 5%.

C.63 COVID-19 has significantly impacted commuter numbers nationally in recent years. However, in Longford Town, a relatively small proportion of the working population work from home at 2.83% (193 persons) (Census 2022), although this is still an increase on the figures from Census 2016 when 1% or the working population worked from home.

C.64 An independent report commissioned by the Society of the Irish Motor Industry identified that there are currently 1,900 electric vehicle (EV) charging points in the country across 800 sites, of which there are only 19 in County Longford **[See reference 178].** There are five electric charging points in Longford Town at Market Square, Bridge Street, Richmond Street, Camlin Service Station, Dublin Road and Irish Rail, Earl Street. A report issued by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly in 2022 highlights that Longford is one of the counties with the lowest number of EV charging points in Ireland, with only Leitrim having fewer EV charging points **[See reference 179].**

Projected baseline information

C.65 The majority of commuting trips in the county and town are by private car and this trend is likely to continue without significant intervention.

C.66 In terms of transport energy use, there has been very little decarbonisation of the transport fuel mix to date, with transport CO_2 emissions remaining tightly coupled to energy use which is dominated by fossil fuels and accounted for over 95% of transport energy use in 2020. In 2019, transport CO_2 emissions were the same as they had been in 2005. If this trend continues, Ireland will miss its target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 and reach net-zero no later than 2050.

C.67 Ireland proposes to have 1 million electric vehicles on the road by 2030, which will require 100,000 public chargers. As stated above, there are 1,900

charging points currently which falls far short of the number needed to support the increase in electric vehicles. Without targeted intervention, Longford will remain as one of the lowest counties for EV infrastructure which will adversely affect the take-up of electric vehicles in the county, resulting in a continued reliance on petrol and diesel vehicles.

Flooding and heat events

Current baseline information

C.68 Flood risk in the county is implicitly linked to climate change considering the changes predicted in weather patterns which could lead to more frequent flooding in Longford. Longford is affected by flooding from several sources: fluvial, surface water, ordinary watercourses, sewer and groundwater. Flooding has been an issue in the county over recent years, with extreme flooding events in 2009, 2011 and 2015 around Longford Town, Newtoncashel and Cloondara and threatened areas around Ballymahon and Lanesborough. Local spot flooding in rural areas was also a significant problem **[See reference 180]**.

C.69 Longford Town has a history of flooding as the town is drained by the River Camlin and a number of tributaries. Significant areas of flood risk are identified along the River Camlin and downstream to the west of the town where there are various areas of raised ground. There are existing flooding issues with the Dublin-Sligo rail line immediately west of Longford Town which are likely to be exacerbated by increased rainfall **[See reference 181]**.

C.70 Longford has experienced several prolonged hot and dry spells, particularly in the summers of 2022 (hottest on record), 2018, 2006 and 1996, which caused damage to buildings, transport infrastructure and increased woodland and peatland fires. The warmer and drier summers also affected the quantity and quality of water supply, negatively impacting agriculture, industry and biodiversity. Flooding and extreme heat events also negatively impacted

more vulnerable members of the county, including young children, older people, people with health issues, people with physical mobility issues, etc.

Projected baseline information

C.71 As outlined in the 'Climate change predictions' section of this chapter, the climate in Longford is changing, resulting in an increase in prolonged dry spells, intense rainfall events and more frequent storms and floods, leading to adverse effects on people's health and wellbeing and increased damage to property and infrastructure resulting in significant economic costs.

Air

Current baseline information

C.72 Emissions from home heating, agriculture, transport and energy generation all contribute to poorer air quality throughout the year. By European standards, Ireland's ambient air quality is relatively good and ambient air quality limit values are respected. The EPA's Air Quality in Ireland 2023 Report **[See reference 182]** found that there were no exceedances of air pollutants above the EU annual limit values. However, the pollutants of most concern are those whose main source is traffic (particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2). These pollutants exceed the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Air Quality Guidelines (AQGs) for health and in 2023 Ireland did not meet the WHO AQGs for heath.

C.73 In addition to their potential negative effects on human health, emissions of NO_2 and PM can affect ecosystems. It is likely that the strongest effect of emissions of nitrogen oxides across Ireland is through their contribution to total nitrogen deposition. All plants need nitrogen to grow but if too much nitrogen is present, it becomes a pollutant and can result in biodiversity change. Nitrogen deposition can also increase the risk from abiotic factors (e.g. drought and frost)

or cause acidification of soils. As well as these effects of nitrogen deposition, direct effects can occur on habitats and species where there is high exposure (e.g. habitats adjacent to national roads, and habitats in and around urban centres). Particulates (i.e. $PM_{10,}$ $PM_{2.5}$) are essentially dust emissions that can settle on vegetation and affect animal respiration.

C.74 From October 2022, the Solid Fuel Regulations 2022 **[See reference 183]** apply nationwide which restricts the commercial sale of smoky fuels, including smoky coal, turf and wet wood, aiming to prevent harmful pollution from domestic burning of solid fuels. However, people with turbary rights will be unaffected by these regulations and will be able to continue to use turf as a source of fuel for domestic purposes.

C.75 County Longford currently enjoys a high air quality standard, with the Air Quality Index for Health (AQIH) rating air quality in the county as 'Good'. However, increased vehicle usage, burning of fossil fuels including peat for domestic purposes, and emissions from industry and agricultural practices are a threat to air quality in the county. The closure of the peat-generated ESB power station at Lanesborough at the end of 2020 has had a significant positive effect in terms of reducing air pollution in the county. The most pronounced areas for air pollution are built-up urban areas and major transport routes, including along the Dublin to Sligo rail line and the four national roads (N4, N5, N55 and N63). The air quality index for Longford Town is calculated on an hourly basis. The monitoring site is located on the Dublin Road, less than a mile from Longford Town Centre. The AQIH rating for air quality in the town is 'Good'. However, there is a decline in air quality during peak commuter times and in the winter (from emissions from fires and stoves) **[See reference 184]**. In December 2022, freezing weather conditions saw a significant spike in air pollution with the monitoring site on Dublin Road recording the highest level of air pollution in the country **[See reference 185]**.

Projected baseline information

C.76 The introduction of the Solid Fuel Regulations 2022 is likely to reduce air pollution from domestic burning of solid fuels, however, the extent of the positive effect is limited as people with turbary rights are able to continue to burn turf as a source of fuel for domestic purposes.

C.77 There is a direct relationship between air quality levels and traffic growth. The predicted growth of Longford's population as outlined in the Longford County Development Plan **[See reference 186]** will inevitably result in an increase in road-based traffic and congestion which will adversely affect the air quality in the county, particularly in Longford Town. Conversely, increasing the provision of active travel routes and electric vehicle charging infrastructure in Longford is likely to reduce transport-related emissions.

C.78 There are likely to be lasting changes to people's travel habits as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as improvements in technology and infrastructure. Evidence suggests that office-based staff are working remotely/at home more often thereby reducing the need to travel to offices and transport-related emissions **[See reference 187]**.

C.79 There is a possibility that air quality may worsen in the long-term as a result of climate change, due to a greater likelihood of prolonged periods of still, dry days, and to-date this relationship has been difficult to predict.

C.80 Overall, future changes in air quality are difficult to predict.

Soil

Current baseline information

C.81 County Longford has a range of Geological Sites, many of which fall within existing pNHAs and SACs where ecological interest is founded upon the underlying geodiversity. The north of the county has some of the oldest rock comprising sandstones and shales from the Ordoviian period. Most of the remaining bedrock geology of the county, including Longford Town, comprises limestone. There are 15 Geological Sites in County Longford with a concentration of these in the north-east and south-east parts of the county and there is one Geological Site within Longford Town, St Mel's Cathedral (see **Figure C.**). St. Mel's Cathedral is a landmark building in Longford Town for its excellent display of rock used as building material, both in the original edifice and in its restoration following a fire in 2009.

C.82 According to the CORINE land cover data, the most dominant land cover types in the county are pastures **[See reference 188]** and peatbogs. Luvisols soils **[See reference 189]** and peat-based soils are the two most dominant soil types in the county. However, the majority of Longford Town comprises 'continuous urban fabric', which is assigned to areas that have greater than 80% of land surface covered by impermeable features such as buildings, roads, etc **[See reference 190]**.

C.83 There are currently 35 sites listed on the Derelict Sites Register in Longford Town, the largest of which is on Little Water Street, and two sites listed on the Vacant Sites Register at Little Water Street and Richmond Street.

C.84 There are several notable construction projects that are either planned, programmed or underway in Longford, which will require significant amounts of mineral resources in the future, including the N4/M4 Mullingar to Longford (Roosky) Upgrade which will pass Longford Town and the Royal Canal Way.

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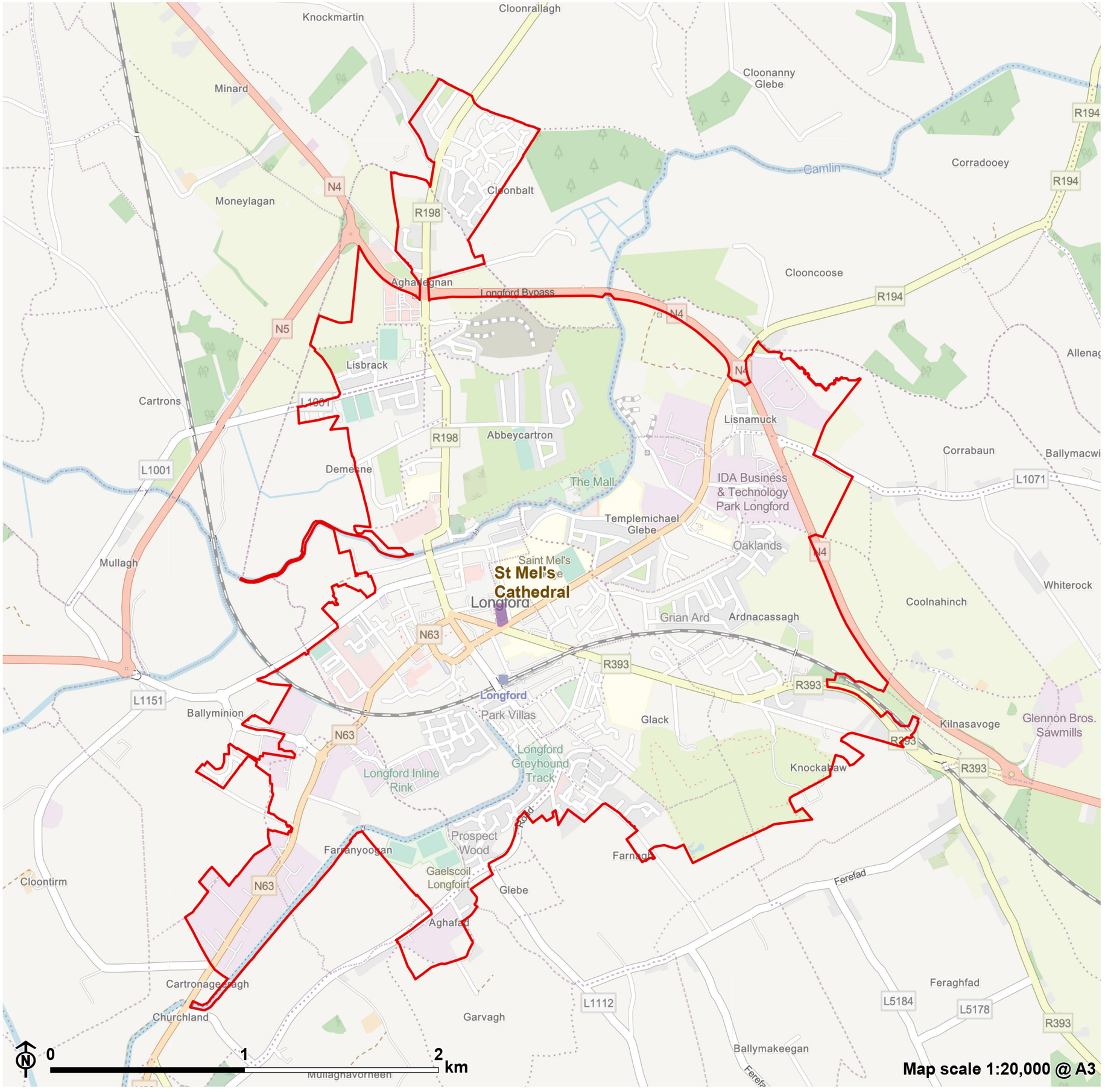
Figure C.8: Geological sites



- Longford Town LAP Study Area
- Geological heritage site

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Projected baseline information

C.85 The Longford County Development Plan **[See reference 191]** and the Longford Town LAP promote urban 'compact growth' regeneration of Longford Town. It seeks to bring redundant, underutilised and derelict land and buildings back into active use in preference to the continued sprawl of urban development into the countryside. This will reduce the need for greenfield development; support the urban fabric; and re use existing resources. This approach will have a significant positive effect on protecting valuable soil resources in the future.

C.86 New development, recreational and environmental pressures, such as extreme weather and flooding, present the greatest risk to Geological Sites.

C.87 Soils in Ireland have degraded significantly over the last two decades due to erosion by wind and rail, compaction of soil from new development, organic matter decline, and climate change. These trends are likely to continue.

Water

Current baseline information

C.88 Within County Longford, the River Camlin rises near Granard and flows through Clonbroney, Ballinalee, Killoe and Longford Town before its two distributaries enter the River Shannon. The Royal Canal is a 145km canal linking Dublin and the River Shannon. It passes north to south through County Longford joining the River Shannon at Cloondara in the west. A spur of the Royal Canal originates in Longford Town, exiting south out of the town (see **Figure C.7**).

C.89 The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) sets out the protection and enhancement of the country's water sources and aims to improve water quality. County Longford is primarily located within the Shannon (International) River

Basin District (RBD), with a small portion in the north of the county draining to the North Western RBD. RBDs are further identified by 'catchments' and 'sub-catchments'. County Longford covers a number of river catchments:

- Erne (catchment code 36);
- Upper Shannon (code 26C);
- Upper Shannon (code 26E);
- Upper Shannon (code 26F).

C.90 In 2022, the EPA published a report 'Water Quality in Ireland 2016-2021' **[See reference 192]** which provides an assessment of the ecological health of Ireland's water resources. The assessment found that there has been an overall decline in surface water quality, including in Ireland's rivers and lakes, since the previous assessment in 2013-2018. Ireland's Third Cycle Draft River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) 2022-2027 **[See reference 193]** outlines measures required to improve water quality and achieve a 'good' ecological status by 2027. Within County Longford, the RBMP has identified two 'Areas Prioritised for Action' for improvement in water quality, namely Lough Forbes and the River Camlin which runs through the north of Longford Town from east to west. Excessive amounts of nutrients and total ammonia are the main issues that are causing the River Camlin to fail in its achievement of WFD objectives. These nutrients are mainly from urban wastewater diffuse pollution, industry and agricultural lands in the catchment **[See reference 194]**.

C.91 Source Protection Areas are defined around large and public potable groundwater abstraction sites. These provide additional protection by constraining the proximity of an activity that can impact the quality of drinking water.

C.92 **Figure C.9** illustrates the main watercourses within Longford.

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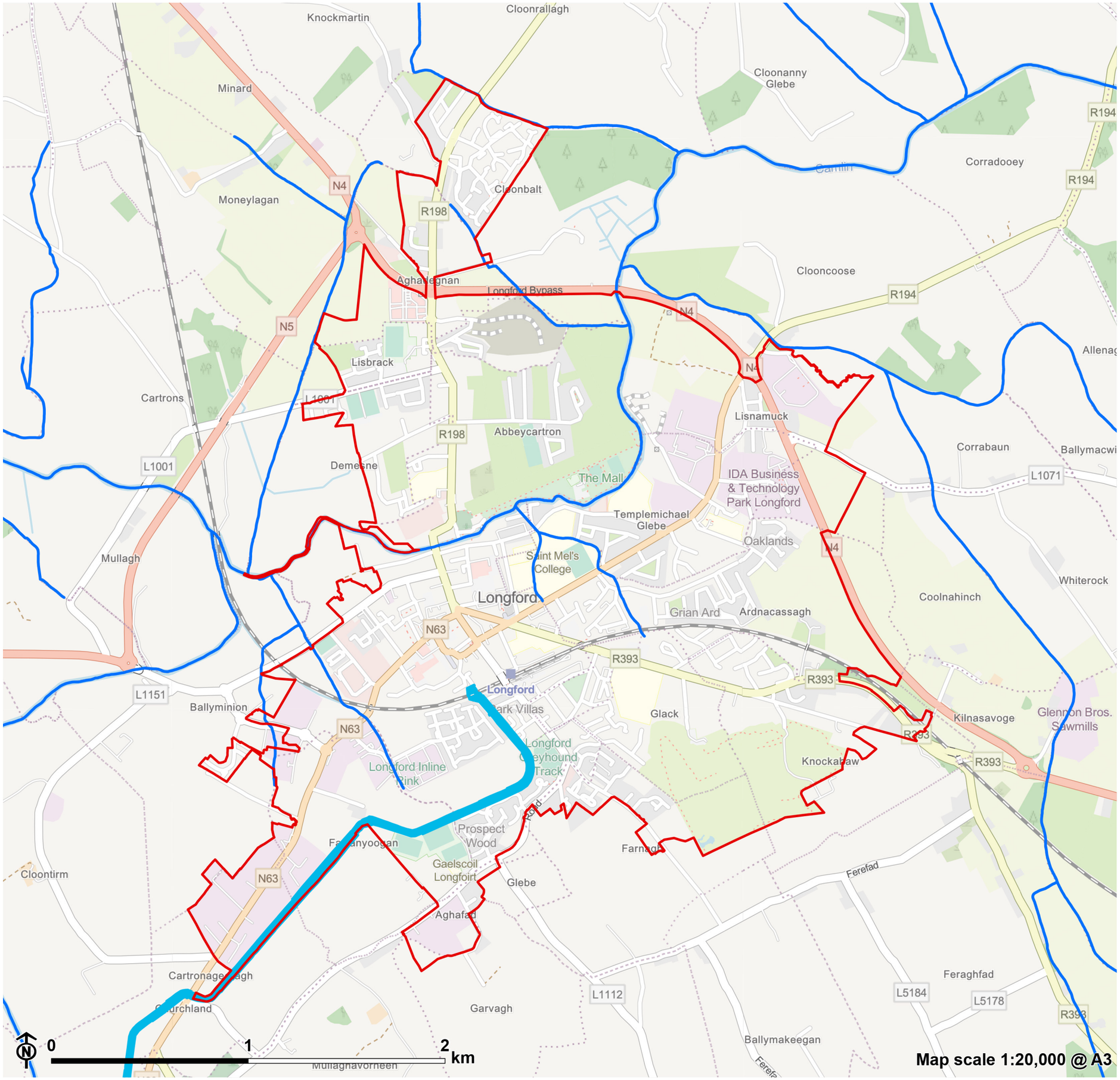
Figure C.9: Watercourses and waterbodies



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Projected baseline information

C.93 Under predicted climate change scenarios, more frequent drought conditions are expected in Ireland, along with increased demand on water resources. Future developments will create additional demand for water abstraction from surface and groundwater sources in Longford.

C.94 Water quality in Ireland's rivers and lakes is continuing to decline, with Ireland's surface water quality poorer now than in the previous assessment period 2013-2018. This trajectory is likely to continue without the implementation of the measures outlined in the Draft River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) 2022-2027 **[See reference 195]**. Similarly, without targeted intervention, it is likely that water quality in the River Camlin will continue to deteriorate. However, the Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme (ASSAP) advisors are currently working with the Council, landowners and other stakeholders to develop actions to improve the water quality of the river **[See reference 196]**. It is predicted that through the implementation of these actions the river's water quality will improve in line with WFD objectives. However, water quality is influenced by a wide range of internal and external factors including climate change, geology and soils, population change and pollution from human activities such as industry and agricultural practices. Future development, particularly in areas close to water bodies, may present a challenge in improving water quality.

Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage

Current baseline information

C.95 Longford has a range of unique heritage assets that contribute to the character of the town as shown in the subsequent figures.

C.96 The Record of Protected Structure (RPS) is a live register of assets that the local authority considers to be of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical perspective. There are 531 Protected Structures within County Longford **[See reference 197]** of which 154 are located within Longford Town, including Sean Connolly Barracks, St Mel's Cathedral and St. Mel's College. Of the 154 Protected Structures in Longford Town, 125 of these are also listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage **[See reference 198]**. Within Longford Town there are also 20 areas identified as 'zones of notification' around the protected monuments.

C.97 Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA) are places, areas, or groups of structures or townscape that are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical perspective. There are two ACAs within the county:

- Ardagh Town; and
- Battery Road, Longford Town.

C.98 As stated above, Longford Town contains one ACA along Battery Road. Battery Road is located in the northern portion of the town and the ACA encompasses an area stretching from the existing roundabout at Lisbrack Road in the north, down to and including Church Street in the south. The ACA is centred along the main vehicular carriageway, Battery Road. The characteristics of the ACA for which it is designated include the large plot sizes and distinct spatial quality, the architectural styles of the houses, distinct landscaping, historic boundary walls and nineteenth century footpath. There also are numerous sites listed on the Record of Monuments and Places for their archaeological significance.

C.99 Longford Town is identified as a historic town in need of regeneration in the Eastern and Midlands RSES and Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, partly due to the high number of prominently located vacant or derelict historic building stock.

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Figure C.10: Conservation Areas and National Monuments

Longford Town LAP Study Area
Battery Road Architectural Conservation Area
National Monument

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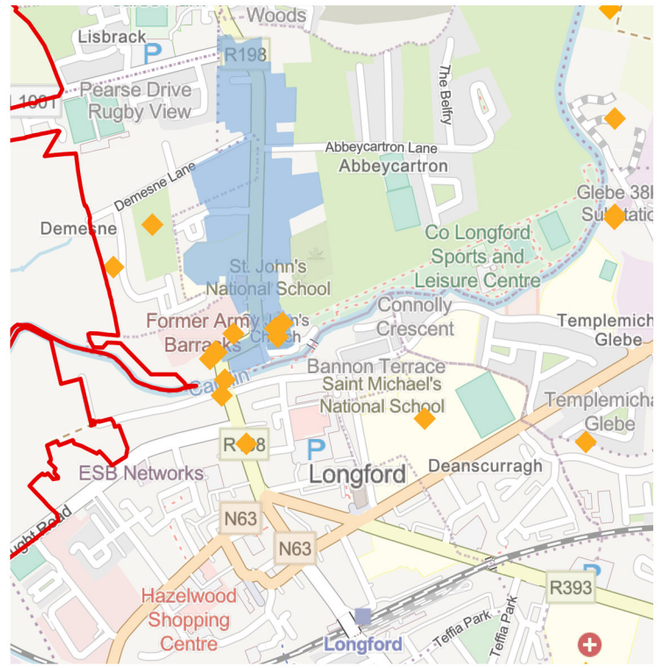

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Figure C.11: Record of Protected Structures and Monuments with Preservation Order

- Longford Town LAP Study Area
- Record of Protected Structure
- Monument with Preservation Order

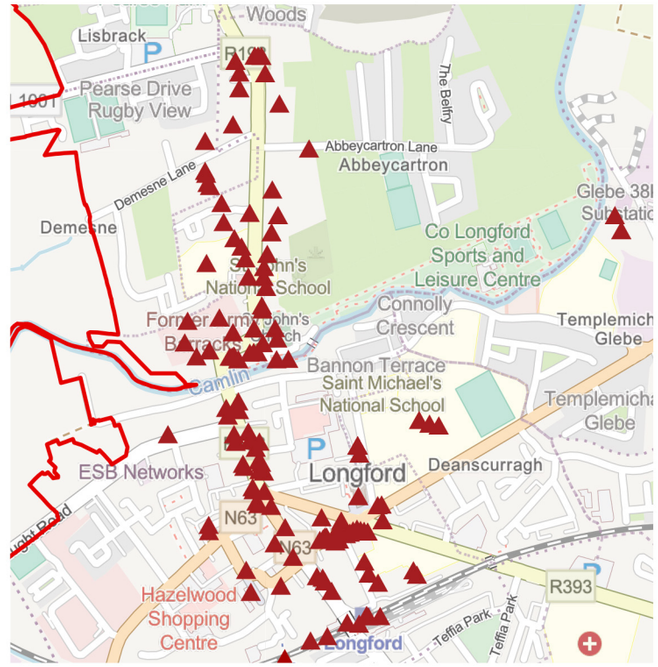

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Figure C.12: National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

Longford Town LAP Study Area
National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

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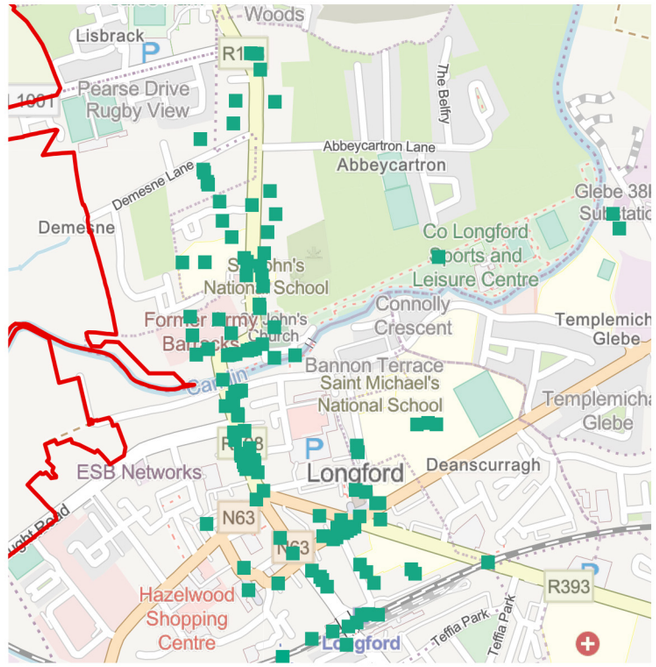

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Projected baseline information

C.100 As identified above, Longford Town is identified as a historic town in need of regeneration in the Eastern and Midlands RSES and Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027. Without targeted action, it is likely that the condition of historic buildings will deteriorate, with more historic buildings falling into disrepair and potentially become derelict. The Council is committed to working with stakeholders in the promotion of heritage-led regeneration which is likely to result in the regeneration of prominently located vacant or derelict historic building stock in the future **[See reference 199]**. Many opportunities exist for the sensitive and adaptive reuse of Protected Structures, historic building stock and industrial structures in the town. Examples of heritage-led regeneration plans are the Connolly Barracks and the Camlin Quarter area in Longford Town. Furthermore, investment programmes, including the Croí Cónaithe Fund and Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, support a proactive approach to rejuvenating towns and villages in Ireland which are likely to have a positive effect on the regeneration of vacant or derelict historic building stock.

C.101 The historic environment can be considered a finite resource. It cannot be replaced and is susceptible to decline over time as historic features experience degradation and decay. However, cultural heritage as a whole can evolve and change, and features which are not currently considered a valued part of the historic environment may become so in the future, either due to their uniqueness, past use or historic and cultural significance.

C.102 At a local level within Longford Town, new development, infrastructure and environmental pressures such as extreme weather and flooding present risks to cultural heritage assets.

Landscape

Current baseline information

C.103 Longford has a rich and diverse landscape. A Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) **[See reference 200]** is contained within the Longford County Development Plan. The LCA identifies seven broad Landscape Character Types (LCT) within the county as set out below.

- **Unit 1 – Northern Drumlin Lakeland** (low to medium with some high sensitivity in the vicinity of the lakes and designated scenic routes).
- **Unit 2 – Northern Upland** (medium to high sensitivity).
- **Unit 3- Shannon Basin/Lough Ree** (medium sensitivity along the southern-eastern border to high sensitivity along the shores of the lake, islands, the riverbanks and in the vicinity of the aquifer).
- **Unit 4 – Central Corridor** (generally low sensitivity. Potential areas of medium to high sensitivity in the vicinity of protected woodlands, riverbanks and in the vicinity of the aquifer).
- **Unit 5 – Inny Basin** (generally low sensitivity. Potential areas of medium to high in the vicinity of protected woodlands and riverbanks).
- **Unit 6 – Peatlands** (visual sensitivity generally low as their flat nature allows development to be accommodated with minimum screening needed to achieve integration into its surrounds. An exception to this designation is the vicinity of the Royal Canal where sensitivity is high. In environmental terms, sensitivity is medium to high due to the limited capacity of the receiving environment).
- **Unit 7 – Open agricultural** (visual sensitivity generally low to medium. Exception in the vicinity of the Royal Canal, the River Inny, in Upland Areas with designated scenic views and in proximity to the heritage village of Ardagh where sensitivity is high).

C.104 Longford Town and its environs are located within **Unit 4 – Central Corridor** LCT. Longford Town is the dominant settlement in the county in terms of population, economic activity, level of service, infrastructure and connectivity. The urban network is strongest in this area of the county with a defined hierarchical system dominated by the settlements of Longford, Edgeworthstown and Newtownforbes which are situated along the main transport routes. The road network is dense in this area of the county due to the relatively flat topography. Agriculture is well developed in the wider LCT surrounding Longford Town and the main industrial centre of the county is located at Longford Town with major installations at Lisnamuck/Templemichael, Townsparks, Ballymacormack and the Athlone Road. There is a high capacity for the absorption of additional development in this LCT compared to other areas of the county due to the existing strong urban network **[See reference 201]**. In response to this the Longford CDP zoned the land in the town into the following categories (as illustrated in **Figure C.10**):

- Town core uses including retail, residential, commercial and other uses.
- Residential development (e.g. potential sites may range from small gap infill, unused or derelict land, sites within an established residential area.)
- Residential development with the provision of necessary social and physical infrastructure (new residential development in an area).
- Strategic residential reserve (longer-term housing requirements).
- Industrial/workshop, warehouse and commercial, and/or business development (e.g. offices).
- Recreational open space and ancillary structures.
- Educational, health, social, cultural, religious and community facilities.
- Area of constrained land use (management and sustainable use of flood risk areas).

C.105 Longford Town is identified as a town in need of regeneration in the Eastern and Midlands RSES and Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027. Several strategic sites are designated as regeneration areas in the Longford CDP including:

- Connolly Barracks / Northern Quarter.
- Market Square.
- Ballymahon Street.
- Longford Shopping Centre.
- Little Water Street.
- Athlone Road Commercial/Industrial Area.
- The Mall and Camlin Village.

C.106 These areas contain lands that detract from the overall area in which they are situated, either by way of heightened levels of vacancy (commercial, industrial, residential) or through poor maintenance and/or dereliction, or a mix of these attributes. These areas are prominently located and have a significant visual impact that affects the overall image and investment potential of Longford Town **[See reference 202]**.

C.107 Longford has many vantage points offering attractive views from upland areas, along river valleys and boglands. The Longford CDP identifies two types of views: 1) Full (uninterrupted) and 2) Intermittent (broken or sporadic). A 'full (uninterrupted) protected view' is identified passing through Longford Town, along the N63 to Lanesborough **[See reference 203]**.

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Figure C.13: Landscape Character Types

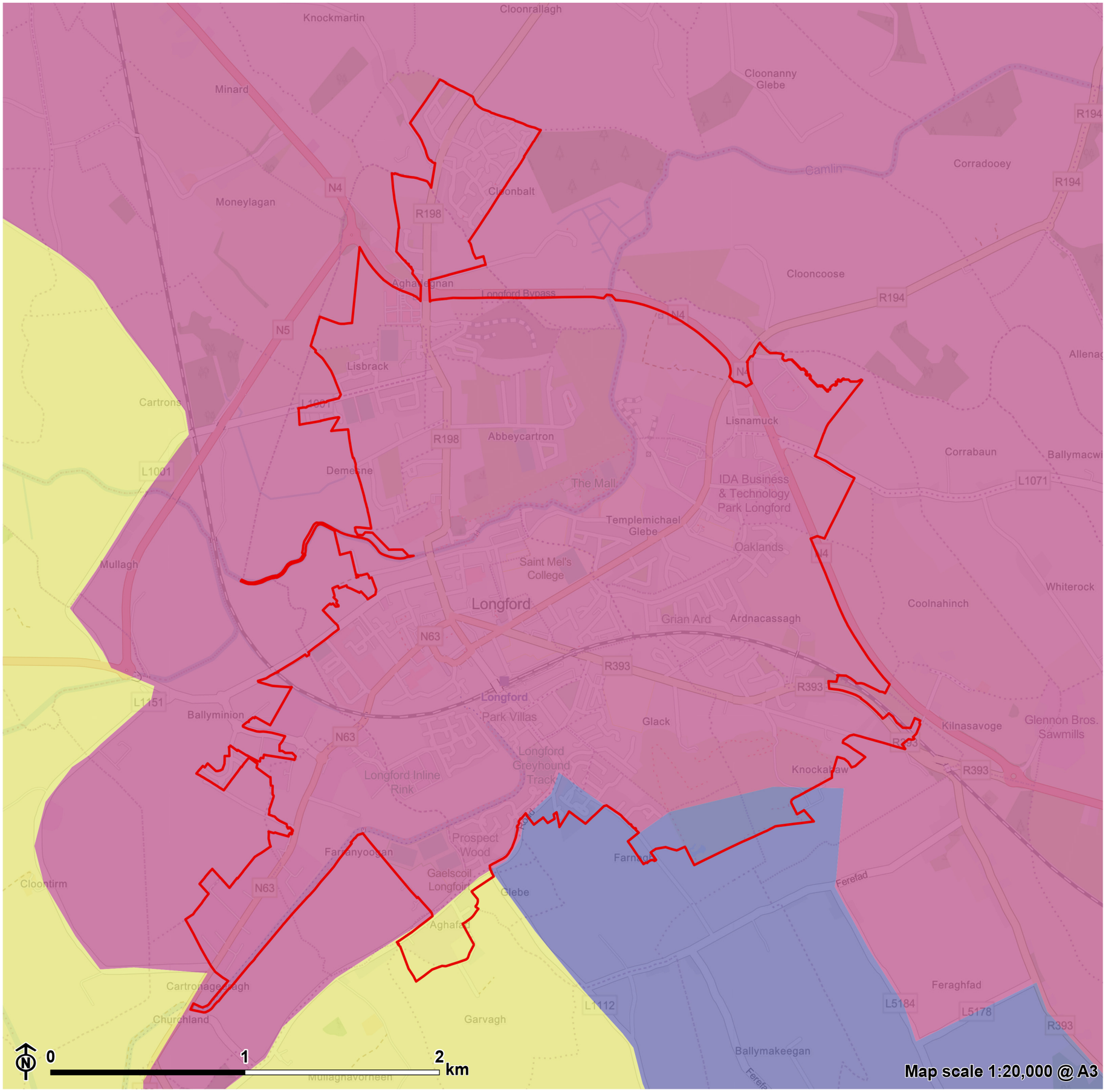

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Figure C.14: Longford County Development Plan Zonings

Longford Town LAP Study Area

Local Plan Zoning

- Industrial/Commercial/Warehousing
- New Residential
- Recreation/Amenity/Green space
- Residential
- Social/Community/Education/Public utility
- Strategic Residential Reserve
- Town Core
- Areas of Constrained Use

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Projected baseline information

C.108 Major transport infrastructure, renewable / non-renewable energy developments (e.g. large-scale windfarms and the extension to the Ballymahon Gas Pipeline), and regeneration projects are likely to be key drivers for landscape change in the county. The development of the following projects is likely to influence the townscape of Longford Town:

- N4/M4 Mullingar to Longford (Roosky) upgrade – The portion of road which will be upgraded passes through Edgeworthstown, Longford Town and Newtownforbes in County Longford **[See reference 204]**.
- The Royal Canal Way – The 16.5km Cloondara Greenway forms part of the extended Royal Canal Quay which provides an off-road trackway between Longford to Killashee and along the Royal Canal towards Cloondara Harbour. This will provide a multi-purpose active transport route that connects to the ongoing improvements to the Royal Canal Way, which extends to Dublin.
- 'Longford Connected' and the 'Camlin Quarter Regeneration Project' aim to deliver urban realm improvements and improve the environmental quality, walkability and liveability of the town and enhance the existing townscape. The Camlin Quarter Regeneration Project includes Connolly Barracks, Church Street, Great Water Street, Little Water Street and the Albert Reynolds Peace Park.

Material assets

C.109 Material assets and resources are broad terms, taken in this context to mean physical materials that are valued and/or used by people. These can include buildings and infrastructure, transport routes, minerals and land. Assets and resources relating to population and housing, energy, landscape, cultural heritage, biodiversity, and soil and water resources are examined under other headings in this report.

C.110 The material assets and resources that are considered in this section are:

- Transport infrastructure.
- Waste.
- Water supply and wastewater services / infrastructure.

Transport infrastructure

Current baseline information

Road network

C.111 Longford Town is strategically positioned at the meeting of two of Ireland's National Primary Routes, the N4 and N5, and the National Secondary Routes, the N55 and N63.

Public transport network

C.112 The Dublin – Sligo rail line traverses the county from east to west alongside the N4. The rail line serves Longford Town and Edgeworthstown stations. During the working week there are ten trains in each direction. Journey times are approximately 2 hours to Dublin and 1 hr 25 mins to Sligo. According to the National Transport Authority Heavy Rail Census Report in 2019 **[See reference 205]**, passenger volumes at Longford and Edgeworthstown are both at a little under 1,000 passengers in each direction, with slightly more passengers travelling through Edgeworthstown than Longford.

C.113 There are also a number of bus and coach which connect through County Longford. These services are operated by Expressway, Bus Éireann, TFI, Local Link and M4 Direct:

- Expressway Services:
  - 22: Dublin – Ballina
  - 23: Dublin – Sligo
- Bus Éireann Routes:
  - 73: Waterford – Athlone – Longford
  - 425 Galway – Mountbellew – Roscommon – Longford
  - 463: Longford – Carrigallen
  - 466: Athlone – Ballymahon - Longford
  - 467: Longford – Lanesborough – Roscommon
- Transport for Ireland Service:
  - 975: Cavan – Crossdoney - Drumlish - Longford
- M4 Direct Service
  - 842: Ballymahon - Edgeworthstown – Dublin

C.114 Within the county, local connections are provided by on-demand bus services Local Link however the frequencies of currents services are limited **[See reference 206]**.

C.115 The Longford LTP **[See reference 207]**, which was prepared to inform the LAP, identifies the following constraints associated with public transport in the town:

- Only two train stations within the county at Longford Town and Edgeworthstown.
- Infrequent local bus services.
- Scheduling issues between transport modes.
- Longer bus journey times compared to car journeys.
- The accessibility of the train stations by walking and cycling is an issue.

Walking, wheeling and cycling network

C.116 The active travel network in County Longford comprises footpaths, Greenways and cycle paths. With relatively compact town centres, including in Longford Town, distances are walkable. However, the pedestrian network generally will cover the town centre area but disappears at the edge of the settlement, which disconnects settlements from each other **[See reference 208]**.

C.117 The Royal Canal Greenway is one of the most popular active travel routes and connects Longford Town and Cloondara. The Greenway provides a high-quality travel with segregated facilities for active modes of travel.

C.118 The existing cycle network in the county is largely similar to the walking network and includes the Royal Canal Greenway and the Peatland Trails. Moreover, there are some signed on-road cycle routes across the county which require cyclists to share the road with motorised vehicles. There are a number of segregated cycling projects under construction within Longford Town, however, these provide only limited improvements to the accessibility of key destinations within the town **[See reference 209]**.

C.119 The Longford LTP was prepared to inform the LAP and identifies the following constraints associated with active travel in Longford Town **[See reference 210]**:

- Lack of safe crossings and facilities (especially at roundabouts and on Longford Main Steet).
- Lack of wayfinding and legibility in proximity of the Royal Canal Greenway.
- Lack of permeability between residential areas.
- Most residential areas are more than a 10-minute walk from bus stops or train station.
- Fragmentation and variable quality of the cycle network.

- Lack of permeability between key areas in the town and to key destinations (e.g. schools, train station, etc.).
- Lack of footpaths, or only on one side, particularly around the edges of Longford Town.
- Limited cycling facilities, including sheltered and secure cycle parking, in Longford Town (Main Street / Earls Street).
- Physical barriers to the active travel network from the rail and national road infrastructure, and waterways.

Projected baseline information

C.120 The predicted growth of Longford's population will increase pressure on Longford's infrastructure, including its transport systems. Further to this, effects of climate change are predicted to result in disruption to transport infrastructure and services in the future. Potential impacts include deterioration of road surfaces impacting local transport networks and businesses. There are several transport projects in the pipeline which will significantly alter the transport network in Longford, most notably:

- N4/M4 Mullingar to Longford (Roosky) upgrade – The portion of road which will be upgraded passes through the settlements of Edgeworthstown, Longford and Newtownforbes **[See reference 211]**.
- The Royal Canal Way – The 16.5km Cloondara Greenway forms part of the extended Royal Canal Quay which provides an off-road trackway between Longford to Killashee and along the Royal Canal towards Cloondara Harbour. This will provide a multi-purpose active transport route that connects to the ongoing improvements to the Royal Canal Way, which extends to Dublin.
- National Cycle Network – Connecting Longford Town to Roscommon in the south-west and Sligo in the north.
- 'Longford Connected' and the 'Camlin Quarter Regeneration Project' aim to deliver urban realm improvements and improve the environmental quality, walkability and liveability of the town.

- Interurban cycle and walking connections in Longford Town.

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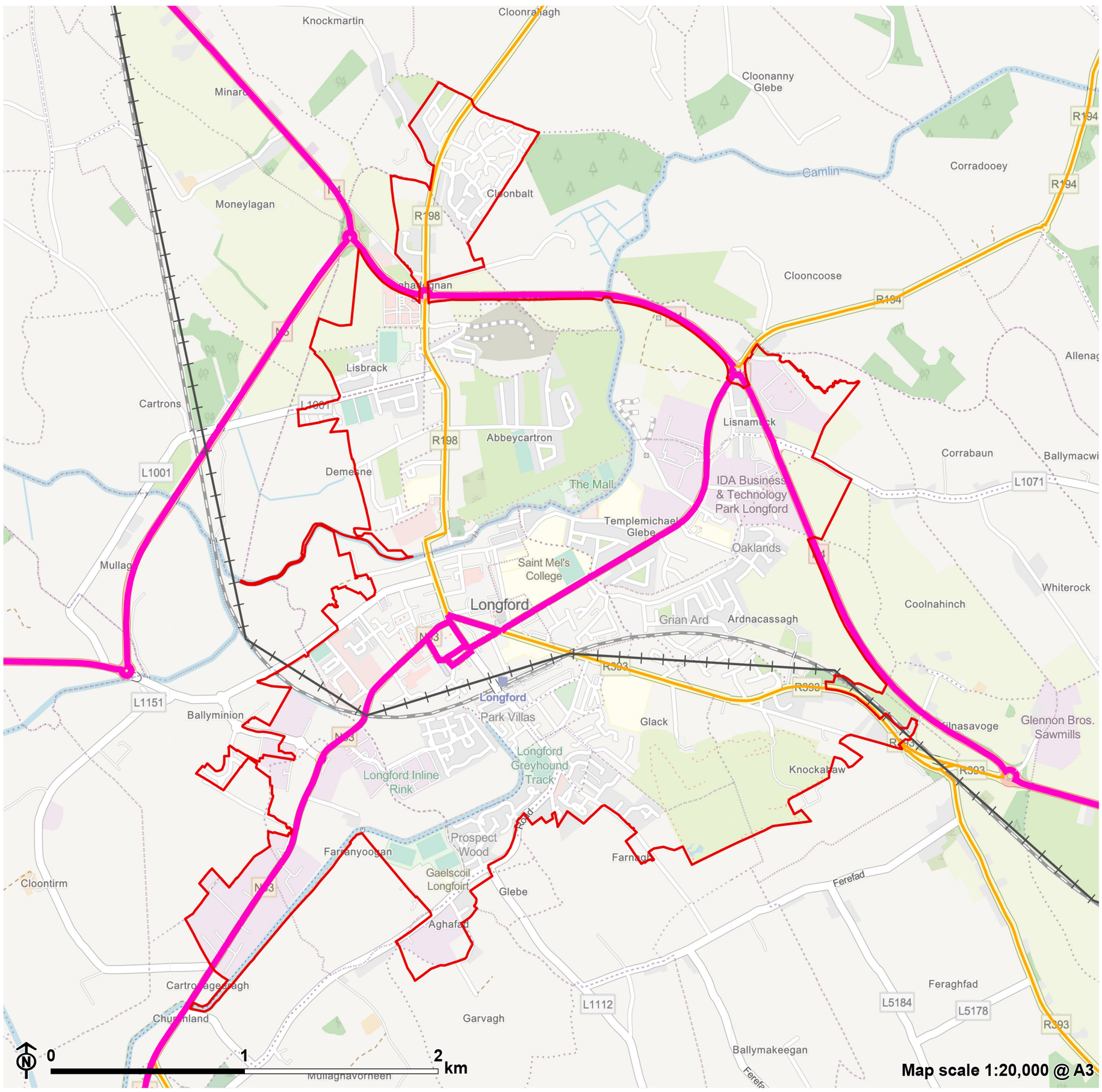
Figure C.15: Transport networks



Longford Town LAP Study Area
Railway
National road
Regional road

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Waste

Current baseline information

C.121 At national level, Ireland has seen significant change in recent decades in how it manages its municipal waste. Disposal to landfill fell sharply from over 80% in 2001 to 15% in 2019. Most municipal waste diverted from landfill goes to energy recovery. However, recycling rates have largely plateaued since 2010 and have slipped in recent years, from 40% in 2017 to 37% in 2019. Whilst 2019 rates ensure that Ireland is compliant with the Waste Framework Directive's municipal recycling target of 50% by 2020, recycling trends indicate that the country faces a significant challenge meeting the EU's future targets for 2025 (55%) and 2035 (65%) **[See reference 212]**.

C.122 In 2012, Longford produced 9,591 tonnes of household managed waste. The Eastern and Midlands Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 **[See reference 213]**, which covers 12 local authorities including County Longford, is responsible for addressing the generation and management of waste in the Region. The Plan aims to rethink the approach to managing waste, according with the transition to a more circular and bio economy.

C.123 In County Longford, there are 18 sites with permits to accept and clean soil and stone and two sites with permits to accept inert construction and demolition waste **[See reference 214]**. In Longford Town, a civic amenity site operated by a private operator (Mulleadys) is located on the Athlone Road and opens 1.5 days / week. There are also three bring banks for bottles and cans located within the town at Tesco Carpark, Market Square and Dunnes Stores.

Projected baseline information

C.124 In terms of how waste arisings are managed, recent national trends are predicted to continue; with gradual reductions in the proportion landfilled.

Recycling trends suggest that recycling rates will remain at a similar level without significant intervention. These projections are also highly dependent on other variables, including population growth and the implementation of infrastructure and regeneration projects. Ireland's National Waste Policy 2020-2025 – A Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy **[See reference 215]** sets out how Ireland is fully committed to transitioning to a circular economy.

Water supply and wastewater services / infrastructure

Current baseline information

C.125 Water supply (including piped water and drinking water) and wastewater services for Longford Town are provided by Uisce Éireann with the support of Longford County Council. The main water source is Lough Forbes on the River Shannon.

C.126 Most of the sewers in Longford Town are separated by foul and surface water, although some combined sewers remain (near Springlawn and Teffia Park/Dublin Road Junction).

C.127 It is important that measures are in place to prevent surface water pollution and flooding, recognising that alterations in one part of the catchment may have knock-on effects elsewhere. Currently, there are surface water drainage deficiencies in some areas within Longford Town, including Springlawn and the Teffia Park/Dublin Road Junction. These areas are associated with combined sewer systems.

Projected baseline information

C.128 Uisce Éireann has recently completed upgrade works to increase output at the Lough Forbes Water Treatment Plant. This is expected to help meet meeting current and future demand from 2024 onwards.

C.129 Uisce Éireann has identified that there may be a need for Longford's Waste Water Treatment Plant to be upgraded. It is not expected that these upgrade works would commence within the lifetime of the LAP. In the interim period, there may be increased need for new developments to instal onsite treatment plants to treat wastewater. These would be subject to meeting agreed parameters and securing appropriate planning permission, licences etc.

Appendix D

SEA matrices

Vision and Strategic Aims

Table D.1: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Vision and Strategic Aims'

Vision	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
Vision	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

Commentary

- Minor positive effects are identified for EPOs 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna, 5: Air, 6: Soil and 7: Water as the Vision aims to ensure the conservation and protection of the natural environment.
- The Vision also aims to ensure the conservation and protection of the built environment of Longford, which will likely result in minor positive effects for EPOs 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage and 10: Material assets.
- The conservation and protection of both Longford's natural and built environment will result in minor positive effects for EPOs 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation and 9: Landscape as for example, the natural and built environment, as well as Longford's landscape, will be made more resilient to effects of climate change such as flooding.
- A minor positive effect is identified for EPO 2: Population and human health as the Vision aims to provide development in an equitable manner for all people within Longford Town. In addition, conservation and protection of the natural environment will positively impact the wellbeing and health of the population.

Strategic Aims	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
Strategic Aim 1 – Core Strategy Compliance Strategic Aim 2 - Residential Sustainability and Placemaking Strategic Aim 3 – Economic Development Strategic Aim 4 – Tourism	+	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

Strategic Aims	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
Strategic Aim 5 – Regeneration and Placemaking Strategic Aim 6 – Social Infrastructure Strategic Aim 7 – Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure Strategic Aim 8 – Built and Cultural Heritage Strategic Aim 9 – Infrastructure Strategic Aim 10 – Sustainable Transport Strategic Aim 11 – Climate Change Strategic Aim 12 – Implementation and Monitoring										

Commentary

- A significant positive effect is identified for the strategic aims for EPO 2: Population and human health as the majority of the strategic aims support the enhanced wellbeing of Longford Town's population through the development of integrated and sustainable neighbourhoods (Strategic Aims 2 and 3); the development of new social and healthcare infrastructure (Strategic Aim 6); the development of sustainable and active travel networks (Strategic Aim 10); and the protection and creation of new areas of open space and green infrastructure (Strategic Aim 7). Each of these will likely contribute to promoting active and healthy lifestyles by improving the town's environment and encouraging access to the outdoors.
- A minor positive effect is identified for the strategic aims for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna. Strategic Aim 7 supports the protection and enhancement of the natural heritage and biodiversity of Longford Town which will also have positive effects for EPOs 5: Air, 6: Soil and 7: Water.
- Positive effects are also expected for EPO 5: Air as Strategic Aims 10 and 11 support sustainable modes of transport and low-carbon development, which will decrease emissions and improve air quality. These actions will also result in positive effects for EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation.
- Strategic Aim 11 also aims to ensure Longford Town becomes a climate resilient town, which will have positive effects for EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation.
- Minor positive effects are also expected for EPOs 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, 9: Landscape and EPO 10: Material assets, as Strategic Aims 4, 5, 8 and 11 include aims to conserve and manage Longford's unique heritage assets, as well as promote sustainable tourism which will increase access to and understanding of Longford Town's landscape and historic environment. In addition, they outline aims to tackle problems of lack of investment and physical dereliction and decay (including via including integrated land use) and to ensure the delivery of new infrastructure makes efficient use of land.

Core Strategy Compliance

Table D.2: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Core Strategy Compliance' objectives

Core Strategy	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
CS 01 – County policy objectives CS 02 – Land use zoning	**+/-?**	**++/-**	**++/-**	**+/-**	**++/-**	**++/-**	**+/-**	**+/-**	**++/-**	**++**

Commentary

- The LAP will accord with the objectives set out in the County Development Plan (CDP). A significant positive effect is identified for these objectives for EPO 2: Population and human health as the Core, Settlement and Housing County Policy Objectives (CPOs) support sustainable development in Longford. This includes via supporting the appropriate quantum, location and phasing of development and securing of future growth opportunities, having regard to existing services and planned infrastructural investment. This will result in development of the appropriate amount and mix of homes to meet local needs over the plan period, as well as increase the range and affordability of housing to support the growing population and for all social groups. However, focussing more people and new developments to a limited number of locations may place pressure on services and facilities.
- Significant positive effects are identified for EPO 10: Material assets. These objectives promote the development of land in a manner that supports public transport and existing services; and prioritises sequential development of settlements, including the development of infill and brownfield lands, which is an efficient use of land and resources. These objectives also support the optimisation of existing infrastructure and provision of new infrastructure sufficient to meet demand. A minor negative effect is also identified for EPO 6: Soil as several zoned sites comprise greenfield land which, if developed, would result in the loss of valuable soil resources.
- The prioritisation of sequential development of settlements may encourage the use of sustainable transport modes, including active travel, due to proximity to services and facilities. This may result in decreased greenhouse gas emissions and subsequent improvements in air quality. However, development on greenfield land further from the town centre may still occur in the future, which could increase reliance on private vehicles for transport. Furthermore, the CDP supports the maintenance of national road network capacity which may encourage travel by fossil fuel powered vehicles. Therefore, mixed effects are identified for EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation and EPO 5: Air.
- Increased development may negatively impact Longford's landscape/townscape and historic environment assets if inappropriately designed. However, the regeneration of the town through the redevelopment of brownfield land and the reuse of existing buildings will help tackle physical dereliction and will enhance the setting of heritage assets, townscape character and visual amenity. Therefore, mixed effects are expected for EPO 8: Cultural heritage and EPO 9: Landscape.
- Mixed effects (minor positive / minor negative) are identified for EPOs 4: Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation and 7: Water. Adherence with the CPOs in the CDP will help to direct new development to brownfield land in preference to greenfield land which will maintain Longford's soil resources and will reduce soil sealing and surface water run-off. However, several zoned sites comprise greenfield land which would result in the loss of soil resources increasing the area of impermeable surfaces in Longford.

- A mixed effect is expected for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna as the scale of development proposed will likely have negative effects on the habitats and species of Longford Town, particularly if development is on greenfield land. However, the CPOs prioritise the development of brownfield land, which will aid in preserving greenfield sites, though it is recognised that brownfield sites may also have niche habitats for biodiversity.

Core Strategy objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
CS 03 – Compact growth CS 04 – Monitoring constructed and permitted developments CS 05 – Town centre first approach CS 06 – Allocated housing requirements CS 07 – Brownfield and infill sites CS 08 – Town centre and new residential zones CS 09 - Regeneration CS 10 – Industry and employment CS 11 – Physical and social infrastructure CS 12 – Land use zoning matrix and development management standards CS 13 – Strategic reserve	**+/-?**	**++/-**	**++/-**	**+/-**	**++/-**	**++/-**	**+/-**	**+/-?**	**++/-?**	**++**

Commentary

- Significant positive effects are identified for these objectives for EPOs 6: Soil and 10: Material assets as a town centre first approach will regenerate brownfield land; support the reuse of existing buildings; and optimise the use of existing infrastructure. In addition, Strategic Reserve sites will result in more efficient and sustainable use of land in Longford by controlling piecemeal development and promoting coordinated development in the long-term. A minor negative effect is also identified for EPO 6: Soil several zoned sites comprise greenfield land which, if developed, would result in the loss of valuable soil resources.
- A mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is identified for these objectives for EPO 2: Population and human health, as they support the provision of housing to meet the needs of Longford's population. The creation of sustainable compact settlements will ensure residents have good access to employment opportunities, and educational, health and community services and facilities. Compact growth will also promote active travel and thus improve the health of residents. However, focussing more people and new developments to a limited number of locations may place pressure on services and facilities.

- A mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna. A higher density of development in the town could result in fewer green spaces in urban areas. In addition, brownfield sites can still harbour valuable biodiversity which may be adversely impacted by development. However, focusing new development in the town centre core will preserve greenfield land on the periphery of Longford Town from development, protecting habitats and species.
- Similarly, mixed effects (minor positive / minor negative) are identified for EPOs 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation and 7: Water. The higher density of development in the town could result in fewer areas of open space, increasing flood risk. However, focusing new development in the town centre core will preserve greenfield land on the periphery of Longford Town from development, protecting valuable areas of land for flood attenuation.
- Compact growth discourages urban sprawl and reduces the need to travel to access services and facilities. It also increases the ability to travel via sustainable modes such as walking and cycling which reduces transport-related emissions. However, the increase in population in the town centre could also result in increased traffic and congestion as private car travel remains the most popular form of travel, which will have adverse effects on air quality. Therefore, mixed effects are identified for EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation and EPO 5: Air.
- Overall mixed effects are expected for EPO 8: Cultural heritage and EPO 9: Landscape as the townscape character and the high concentration of heritage assets could be adversely affected by concentrated new development. Furthermore, several of the sites zoned for development comprise greenfield land which, if developed, would alter the landscape character of the area. However, the regeneration of the town through the redevelopment of brownfield land and the reuse of existing buildings will help tackle physical dereliction and would contribute to the enhancement of the setting of heritage assets, townscape character and visual amenity. These effects are uncertain as they will depend on the detailed location and design of new development.

Core Strategy	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
CS 14 – European sites	++	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0

Commentary

- A significant positive effect is expected for CS 14 for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna as it directly supports the protection of the qualifying interests of the European sites, ensuring that significant adverse effects do not occur as a result of the implementation of the LAP. The protection afforded to the European sites through this objective will have secondary beneficial effects for EPOs 6: Soil and 7: Water.

Core Strategy	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
CS 15 – Architectural Conservation Area	0	+	0	0	0	0	0	++	++	+

Commentary

- A significant positive effect is identified for CS 15 for EPO 8: Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage as the designation of, and adherence to the planning requirements of, the ACA will aid in conserving and enhancing the significant qualities, fabric and setting of Longford's historic environment.
- Best practice guidance as outlined in Appendix 2 of the LAP requires new developments to contribute to the visual enhancement and vibrancy of the area whilst respecting its existing physical character urban grain and plot size. This will help preserve and enhance landscape / townscape character and viewpoints. Therefore, a significant positive effect is also identified for EPO 9: Landscape.
- Additionally, a minor positive effect is identified for EPO 10: Material Assets as the best practice guidance outlined in Appendix 2 of the LAP encourages the reuse of existing buildings and materials, and discourages the demolition of protected structures, which allows for the efficient use of resources.
- Preserving the character of the ACA may promote increased enjoyment of the area and may encourage more investment in the area, with greater opportunities for skills development and employment. Therefore, a minor positive effect is expected for EPO 2: Population.

Residential Sustainability and Placemaking

Table D.3: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Residential Density, Mix and Design' objectives

Residential Density, Mix and Design objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
RES 01 - County Policy Objectives RES 02 – Providing a sustainable mix of housing RES 03 – Residential development building requirements RES 04 - Innovative housing models RES 05 – Meeting the housing needs of Longford's people RES 08 - Traveller Specific Accommodation RES 09 - Reuse of upper floors above commercial premises RES 10 - Healthy place-making and liveability RES 11 - Social infrastructure, community and recreational facilities	-?	++	+/-?	0	+/-?	+	-?	+/-?	+/-?	+

Commentary

- A significant positive effect is expected for these LAP objectives for EPO 2: Population and human health as they ensure a sustainable mix of housing types to meet the needs of the people of Longford, including members of the Travelling community, older people and people with disabilities. RES 10 supports healthy place-making and increasing the liveability of Longford, which supports people's wellbeing. RES 11 also requires the provision of social infrastructure, community and recreational facilities in tandem with residential development, ensuring the needs of the people of Longford are met.
- Mixed effects (minor positive / minor negative) are expected for EPOs 3: Energy / Climate change mitigation and 5: Air as the increase of housing in the town may increase accessibility to employment, services and facilities via more sustainable and active travel modes of transport, reducing traffic congestion, GHG emissions and improving air quality in the town centre. Conversely, the increase in residential developments to meet housing needs may also increase traffic and emissions as people may continue to travel by private car which could have an adverse effect on air quality. The effects are uncertain and will depend on residents' travel behaviours.
- Minor positive effects are expected for EPO objectives 3: Energy and climate change mitigation, 6: Soil and 10: Material assets. These LAP objectives aim to ensure residential units are designed and constructed based on the principles of energy efficiency, thereby aiding in mitigating emissions and using resources effectively. In addition, the objectives support development in appropriate brownfield/infill areas in preference to greenfield land; encourage the reuse of upper floors above commercial premises in the Town Centre for residential accommodation (the most efficient use of land); and ensure residential units are designed and constructed on the principles of universal design and life-long adaptability.

- Meeting the housing needs of the residents of Longford will require the development of a combination of greenfield and brownfield land which may result in habitat loss, fragmentation and species disturbance, depending on the scale, location and design of the residential development. Development of greenfield land is likely to have more adverse effects on biodiversity, although it is recognised that brownfield sites and existing vacant and derelict buildings often provide niche habitats and places of shelter for protected species. Therefore, a minor negative effect is identified for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna.
- Well-designed residential developments that integrate and are considerate of the local environment are likely to benefit the built / historic environment and landscape. Similarly, new developments or the reuse of existing buildings in areas of need of regeneration will positively contribute towards the setting of heritage assets and townscape character. However, poorly designed or sited residential developments may have an adverse effect on the setting of heritage assets / landmarks and landscape character or protected views. Uncertain mixed effects (minor positive / minor negative) are therefore identified for EPOs 8: Cultural Heritage and 9: Landscape depending on the scale, location and design of developments.
- An uncertain minor negative effect is expected for EPO 7: Water as, until the Longford Wastewater Treatment Plant is upgraded, there may be a need for new residential developments to install onsite treatment plants to treat wastewater which increases the risk of water pollution.

Residential Density, Mix and Design objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
RES 06 – Promoting an age-friendly town RES 07 - Implementation of age friendly principles	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Commentary

- A significant positive effect is identified for these objectives for EPO 2: Population and human health as they ensure that development is age-friendly, thereby meeting the needs and enhancing the wellbeing of Longford’s elderly residents.

Residential Density, Mix and Design objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
RES 12 - Requirements for apartment standards and building heights RES 13 – Mitigating noise impacts of heavily trafficked roads RES 14 - Social housing requirement RES 15 - Requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 RES 16 - Affordability requirement for residential developments	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Commentary

- A significant positive effect is identified for these objectives for EPO 2: Population and human health as RES 14, 15 and 16 support the provision of social and affordable housing that will aid in meeting the needs of Longford's residents. In addition, RES 13 will aid in mitigating noise impacts of heavily trafficked roads, which will improve residential amenity and wellbeing.

Residential Density, Mix and Design objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
RES 17 – Change from vacant commercial units to residential use RES 18 - Identifying suitably zoned and serviced lands RES 19 - Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund Scheme	-	++	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	++

Commentary

- A significant positive effect is identified for these objectives for EPO 2: Population and human health as they support the provision of an appropriate mix of residential types and tenures to meet local needs over the plan period. A significant positive effect is also identified for these objectives for EPO 10: Material assets as these objectives support the efficient use of land and the reuse of existing buildings for residential development. This will also safeguard soil resources, resulting in a minor positive effect for EPO 6: Soil.
- The redevelopment of these structures will help to regenerate the town and enhance the built/historic environment and character of Longford Town. Therefore, minor positive effects are expected for EPO 8: Cultural Heritage and EPO 9: Landscape.
- A minor negative effect is identified for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna as it is recognised that brownfield sites and existing vacant and derelict buildings often provide niche habitats and places of shelter for protected species.

Economic Development

Table D.4: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Economic Development' objectives

Economic Development objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
ECON 01 – CDP economic development policies ECON 02 - Key hub for employment, enterprise and tourism ECON 03 – Centre of employment ECON 04 - Physical infrastructure and zoned lands ECON 06 - Vitality and vibrancy of the town centre ECON 07 – Future core strategy and zoning provisions ECON 08 – Town centre ECON 09 - Creative and innovation hub and co-working space	**-?**	**++**	**+/-?**	**0**	**+/-?**	**0**	**0**	**+/-?**	**+/-?**	**+**

Commentary

- A significant positive effect is expected for EPO 2: Population and Human Health, as the LAP objectives support and promote economic development and regeneration which will increase employment opportunities and skills amongst the population and help reduce inequality. Additionally, promoting economic development and regeneration will help support local businesses, improving access of these services and facilities for residents, with subsequent benefits expected for population and human health. Furthermore, it is expected that the LAP objectives will increase the vitality and viability of the town centre, helping to attract more businesses and people to the area. This is expected to have a minor positive effect for EPO 10: Material Assets.
- Mixed effects (minor positive / minor negative) are expected regarding EPOs 3: Energy / Climate change mitigation and 5: Air as enhancing the employment provisions in the town will help to reduce out-commuting for employment. People may be able to access employment opportunities in the town via more sustainable and active travel modes of transport, reducing traffic congestion, GHG emissions and improving air quality in the town centre. However, it may also encourage more people to commute to Longford from other areas and as the majority of commuters travel by private car, this could have an adverse effect on air quality. The effects are uncertain and will depend on employees' travel behaviours.
- Well-designed developments that integrate and enhance the setting of heritage assets and the character of Longford Town are likely to benefit the built / historic environment and landscape / townscape. However, poorly designed or sited employment developments may have an adverse effect on the setting of heritage assets / landmarks and landscape character or protected views. Uncertain mixed effects are therefore identified for EPOs 8: Cultural Heritage and 9: Landscape depending on the scale, location and design of developments.

- An uncertain minor negative effect is identified for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna as new employment developments and the reuse of existing vacant and derelict buildings for employment may result in habitat loss, fragmentation and species disturbance (particularly in vacant and derelict buildings as these often provide niche habitats and places of shelter for protected species), depending on the scale, location and design of the employment development.

Economic Development objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
ECON 05 - Publicly owned land banks ECON 10 - Key tourism hub ECON 11 - Recreation and amenity potential of waterways ECON 12 – Environmentally sustainable town ECON 13 – Sustainable transport	-?	++	++	0	+	+	0	0	+	+

Commentary

- These LAP objectives support the development and regeneration of publicly owned land banks for employment, education, community, cultural and recreational opportunities. In addition, objectives promote tourism and developing the recreation and amenity potential of waterways. As such, these objectives are likely to have a significant positive effect for EPO 2: Population as they will improve accessibility to employment opportunities and key services and facilities, helping to reduce inequality. Furthermore, the enhancement of the Green and Blue Infrastructure Network will help people lead healthier and more active lifestyles, with associated benefits for health and wellbeing. Ensuring employment lands on the western side of the N4 are developed in accordance with sustainable transport principles will also benefit health by encouraging active lifestyles. Promoting the development of local community services and tourism facilities will help enhance the local economy, with associated benefits for EPO 2: Population and EPO 10: Material Assets.
- The regeneration of banks of land for employment and education opportunities in preference to development of greenfield land will safeguard soil resources, resulting in a minor positive effect for EPO 6: Soil.
- The increase in vitality and viability of the town centre will help attract more people to the town centre and improve the sense of community. Therefore, positive effects on population will be further enhanced. A more vibrant town centre may help improve the townscape with associated positive effects identified for EPO 9: Landscape.
- The enhancement of the Green and Blue Infrastructure Network and supporting sustainable transport principles would increase active and public travel, reducing private car use and road traffic, with associated benefits in terms of reduced GHG emissions and air pollution within the town. ECON 12 also supports economic development that contributes to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable town. Therefore, positive effects are identified for EPO 3: Energy/ Climate Change Mitigation and EPO 5: Air.
- However, the enhancement of the Green and Blue Infrastructure Network may result in habitat loss and species disturbance from recreational use of the waterways. Therefore, an uncertain minor negative effect is expected for EPO 1: Biodiversity.

Table D.5: Summary of SEA effects of the ‘Retail’ objectives

Retail objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
RET 01 – CDP economic development policies RET 02 - Town centre activities RET 03 - Accessibility and public realm RET 04 – Services RET 05 - Retail development RET 06 – Sequential test RET 07 - Public realm and traffic congestion RET 08 - Longford Town Team RET 09 - Evening and night-time economy	**0**	**++**	**+**	**0**	**+**	**0**	**0**	**+**	**+**	**+**

Commentary

- The LAP objectives promote the regeneration and increased use of the town centre through responsible retail development and improving public realm and recreational activities. Such actions will help enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre. This will increase job provision, attract more people to the town, and increase the sense of community and enjoyment of Longford’s town centre. A significant positive effect is identified for EPO 2: Population and Human Health as these objectives reduce the need to travel by private car to access services and facilities, as well as providing employment opportunities which will help to reduce employment deprivation.
- In addition, the objectives support the reuse/enhancement of existing buildings for retail which will have positive effects on for EPO 10: Material Assets.
- Minor positive effects are expected for EPO 8: Cultural heritage and EPO 9: Landscape as the LAP objectives include improvements to the public realm and town centre regeneration which will help reduce vacancy rates that might otherwise detract from the townscape character and setting of heritage assets.
- Minor positive effects are also identified for climate change and air quality. Promoting retail in Longford Town Centre will reduce the need for people to travel further afield by private vehicle to access such services which will reduce emissions and improve air quality

Tourism

Table D.6: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Tourism' objectives

Tourism objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
TOU 01 – CDP's tourism policies TOU 02 - 'Destination Town' TOU 03 - Branding and marketing TOU 04 - Celebration of the unique attributes TOU 05 - Visitor services centre and hub TOU 15 - Products and services TOU 16 - Clustering of tourism related developments TOU 18 - Signage theme TOU 25 - Support of eco-tourism TOU 26 - Best-practice on energy efficiency, waste management, and recycling	0	++	+/-?	0	+/-?	0	0	+/-?	+	+

Commentary

- Improving the visitor experience and increasing tourism to Longford Town will have a positive effect on economic development through job provision and supporting local businesses. Therefore, a significant positive effect is identified for EPO 2: Population and human health.
- Promoting tourism may result in increased visitor numbers to the town. If these visitors travel to Longford Town by private vehicle, there is likely to be an increase in traffic, congestion and emissions in the town centre. However, the objectives also support initiatives that encourage potential alternatives to the use of private cars to access visitor attractions. Emissions may also be mitigated as the objectives promote the use of best-practice guidelines on energy efficiency. Therefore, mixed effects (minor positive / minor negative) are expected for EPO 3: Energy / Climate Change Mitigation and EPO 5: Air.
- A minor positive effect is expected for 10: Material Assets as the objectives support waste management initiatives and recycling in tourism facilities and enterprises.
- The objectives support the delivery of public realm schemes in order to provide tourists with a strong sense of place which will have a minor positive effect for EPO 9: Landscape.
- A mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for EPO 8: Cultural Heritage. The objectives support the delivery of better signage to increase accessibility to heritage assets. However, the increase in visitor numbers may have adverse effects on heritage assets if not manged well.

Tourism objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
TOU 06 - Historical and cultural attractions TOU 07 - Longford's Camlin Quarter TOU 08 - Tourism trails and the Royal Canal Greenway TOU 09 - Support community projects and tourism initiatives TOU 10 - Evening and night-time tourism TOU 17 - Tourism and heritage trails TOU 24 - Cultural and historical events	+/-?	++	+/-?	0	+/-?	0	0	++/-	+	+

Commentary

- Promoting and developing historical, cultural and artistic heritage / visitor attractions, and the redevelopment of the Camlin Quarter as an area where cultural heritage and visitor attractions can be clustered, will enhance the appreciation and preservation of the historic environment in Longford. However, the increase in visitor numbers may have adverse effects on heritage assets if not properly manged. Therefore, a mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is identified for EPO 8: Cultural Heritage.
- Developing historical / cultural attractions and a strong evening and night-time tourism economy could result in derelict or unused buildings being repurposed which could enhance the townscape and visual amenity of Longford Town. A minor positive effect is identified for EPO 9: Landscape.
- Improving the visitor experience and increasing tourism to Longford Town will have a positive effect on economic development through job provision and supporting local businesses. The objectives also support the development of new recreational trails; the linking of these trails to important assets such as the Mid-Shannon Wilderness Park; and the enhancement of the waterways for recreation and amenity uses. Therefore, a significant positive effect is identified for EPO 2: Population and human health.
- The objectives support the development of the recreational and amenity value of the River Camlin and the Royal Canal and its links to the Longford Bogs and River Shannon which could result in adverse effects on biodiversity from increased recreational pressure. However, improving the network of green and blue infrastructure may enhance connectivity for species. An uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna.
- The objectives support the development of historical and cultural attractions, festivals and events. Depending on visitors' travel behaviours, there may be an increase in traffic generation, congestion and emissions if visitors choose to travel by private car. However, the objectives support the delivery and promotion of tourist recreational trails which is likely to encourage more active travel. Therefore, a mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for EPO 3: Energy/ Climate Change Mitigation and EPO 5: Air.
- The increased vitality and viability of the town centre from improving infrastructure through developing public spaces, maximising opportunities for tourism and recreational amenities and enhancing connectivity of walking and cycle routes are likely to result in a minor positive effect for EPO 10: Material assets.

Tourism objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
TOU 11 - Public open spaces TOU 12 - Access for all TOU 13 - Principles of Universal Design TOU 14 - Accessibility Audit TOU 19 - Walking and cycling routes TOU 20 - Canal and Camlin River TOU 21 - Royal Canal TOU 22 - Royal Canal Greenway and town centre TOU 23 - Opportunities for the Royal Canal Gateway Spur	+/-	++	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	+

Commentary

- These LAP objectives seek to develop public spaces that are accessible for all; to maximise opportunities for waterbodies as tourism and recreational amenities; to improve accessibility to tourism sites and facilities; and to enhance connectivity of walking and cycle routes. These objectives are likely to positively contribute to people's health and wellbeing and therefore a significant positive effect is identified for EPO 2: Population.
- Increasing the provision of safe, active travel infrastructure will have a minor positive effect for EPO 10: Material Assets.
- The creation of new and enhanced active travel routes (e.g. the proposed Longford Royal Canal Gateway Spur) will help reduce travel by private vehicles, with subsequent reductions in road traffic, greenhouse gas emissions, and vehicle-derived air pollution. Therefore, minor positive effects are identified for EPO 3: Energy/ Climate Change Mitigation and EPO 5: Air.
- Developing public open spaces in Longford Town will increase the area of permeable surfaces which will help to reduce flood risk. Therefore, a minor positive effect is also expected for EPO 4: Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation.
- The development of a better integrated network of pedestrian and cycling routes, including along the River Camlin and Royal Canal, may have mixed effects on EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna. Positive effects may be experienced as it would increase connectivity for species, however the increased recreational use of the waterways may result in species disturbance.
- The development of public open spaces and improvements along waterways may positively contribute to the setting of cultural heritage assets and the landscape/ townscape character of the town.

Regeneration and Placemaking

Table D.7: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Regeneration and Placemaking' objectives

Regeneration and Placemaking objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
REG 01 – CDP's regeneration and placemaking policies REG 02 - A 'Key Town' REG 03 – A strategic portal to the northwest REG 04 - A support centre to Athlone REG 05 - A strategic employment centre REG 06 - A tourism hub	-?	++	+/-?	0	+/-?	0	0	+/-	++	++

Commentary

- A significant positive effect is identified for EPO 10: Material assets as the objectives promote the regeneration of the town through the reuse and repair of existing buildings which directly relates to this EPO.
- A significant positive effect is expected for these LAP objectives for EPO 2: Population as they support regeneration and economic growth in Longford, which will help tackle the current lack of investment and social infrastructure deficits in the town. For example, enhancing the provision of services and facilities may increase employment and reduce inequality amongst the population.
- The regeneration of the town will help to tackle physical dereliction and will improve the attractiveness of the area, creating a distinct sense of place. Therefore, a significant positive effect is identified for EPO 9: Landscape.
- A mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for EPO 8: Cultural Heritage. The objectives support the regeneration of the town which will encourage the reuse of vacant protected structures. The objectives also support the development of the town as a tourism hub which is likely to increase accessibility to and appreciation of heritage assets. However, the increase in visitor numbers may have adverse effects on heritage assets if not manged well.
- An uncertain minor negative is identified for EPO 1: Biodiversity as REG 6 will result in increased visitor numbers which may increase associated pressures on the environment, including recreational damage to habitats and increased air pollution from cars visiting the area.
- Mixed effects (minor positive / minor negative) are expected regarding EPOs 3: Energy / Climate change mitigation and 5: Air as regenerating the town to provide more employment and tourism will help to reduce out-commuting. People may be able to access employment opportunities and tourist attractions in the town via more sustainable and active travel modes of transport, reducing traffic congestion, GHG emissions and improving air quality in the town centre. However, it may also encourage more people to travel to Longford from other areas for employment and tourism and as the majority of commuters travel by private car, this could have an adverse effect on air quality. The effects are uncertain and will depend on employees' and visitors' travel behaviours.

Regeneration and Placemaking objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
REG 07 – Social inclusion measures REG 08 - Development of publicly owned land banks REG 09 - Consolidation of the town centre REG 10 - Integration of public transport, walking and cycling facilities REG 11 - Connect educational, recreational, employment, civic and town centre economic activity REG 20 - Regeneration plans REG 21 - Town Centre First Strategy REG 22 - Enhancement of shopfronts	+	++	+	+	+	++	+	+	++	++

Commentary

- These LAP objectives support actions which will aid in improving wellbeing such as social inclusion measures, community development and regeneration including for residential, community, cultural and recreational opportunities. Regeneration and implementation of the Town Centre First Strategy will also enhance housing and the living environment in Longford. The objectives also seek to enhance recreational opportunities and to enhance permeability and sustainable mobility within the town centre by improving links between the core and surrounding areas through the further integration of public transport, walking and cycling networks, which will promote active and healthy lifestyles. Therefore, a significant positive effect is identified for these objectives for EPO 2: Population.
- REG 08 and 09 support the enhancement and linking of brownfield and outlying sites to the town centre, with a focus on the regeneration of publicly owned land, underused buildings and strategic sites. This will therefore protect greenfield land by prioritising development of brownfield land and will optimise the use of existing buildings resulting in significant positive effects for EPO 6: Soil and EPO 10: Material Assets.
- The objectives seek to reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land in the town and encourage the re-use/enhancement of existing buildings. This will enhance the attractiveness of the town and create a distinct sense of place. This could also have positive effects on cultural heritage if protected structures are reused and enhanced. In addition, REG 20, 21 and 22 promote improvements in the public realm and enhancement of shop fronts. Such general improvements will also contribute towards enhancing the character and visual amenity of the town, and may also improve the setting of cultural heritage assets. Therefore, a significant positive effect is identified for EPO 9: Landscape and a minor positive effect is expected for EPO 8: Cultural heritage.
- REG 10 supports enhancing the permeability and sustainable mobility within the town centre by improving links between the core and surrounding areas through the further integration of public transport, walking and cycling facilities. This will result in less people travelling via private cars and thus result in a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions. This will help mitigate the effects of climate change and improve air quality. Negative impacts on the natural environment associated with vehicle pollution will also be reduced. Therefore, these objectives are expected to have minor positive effects for EPO 1: Biodiversity, 3: Energy / Climate Change Mitigation and 5: Air.
- Minor positive effects are expected for EPO 4: Flood risk / Climate Change Adaptation, and EPO 7: Water as the objectives support brownfield development over greenfield which will reduce soil sealing, surface water runoff and flood risk.

Regeneration and Placemaking objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
REG 12 – Camlin River development of recreational trails and networks REG 13 - North-south linkages from the Canal to the Camlin River REG 14 - Camlin Quarter Plan REG 15 – Development of the Camlin Quarter	+/-?	++	+/-?	0	+/-?	0	0	++/-	++	++

Commentary

- A significant positive effect is identified for these objectives for EPO 2: Population and human health as improved connectivity from the development of recreational trails, networks and linkages between the Royal Canal and River Camlin, will improve accessibility in Longford and encourage people to lead healthier lifestyles. This will have positive effects on both physical and mental health and wellbeing and could promote social inclusion.
- A significant positive effect is identified for EPO 10: Material assets as the objectives promote the regeneration of the Camlin Quarter through the reuse and enhancement of existing buildings and the development of new connectivity infrastructure (i.e. walking and cycling trails).
- A mixed effect is identified for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna as enhanced tourism development will result in increased visitor numbers which may increase associated pressures on the environment, including recreational disturbance to biodiversity and increased air pollution from cars visiting the area. However, the development of new recreational trails and networks can also function as corridors of connectivity for biodiversity.
- The objectives support the regeneration of the Camlin Quarter in accordance with the Camlin Quarter Masterplan which seeks to reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land in the area; encourage the re-use/enhancement of existing buildings; and develop it as an area where cultural heritage and visitor attractions can be clustered. This will enhance the overall attractiveness of the town and create a distinct sense of place in the Camlin Quarter. This will also enhance the appreciation and preservation of the historic environment in Longford. The objectives also support enhancing public realm and creating linkages to important landscape features (e.g. the Mall) and heritage assets (e.g. St Mel's Cathedral). Such improvements will also contribute towards enhancing the character and visual amenity of the town and may also improve the setting of cultural heritage assets. However, the increase in visitor numbers to the area may have adverse effects on heritage assets if not properly manged. Therefore, a significant positive effect is identified for EPO 9: Landscape and a mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is expected for EPO 8: Cultural heritage.
- Mixed effects are identified for EPO 3: Energy / Climate Change Mitigation and EPO 5: Air as active travel supported by the objectives may discourage car use and associated emissions. However, the objectives may also attract more visitors to Longford, which may increase traffic and congestion, depending on visitors' travel behaviours.

Regeneration and Placemaking objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
REG 16 - Delivering improved regeneration REG 17 - Universal accessibility REG 18 – Supporting projects in relevant plans REG 19 - Funding streams	0	++	+	+	+	0	0	++	0	+

Commentary

- A significant positive effect is identified for these objectives for EPO 2: Population as they support actions which will improve the wellbeing of the people of Longford through community capacity building and pursuing complementary funding streams that support broader aims to achieve outcomes in recreation, amenity and social inclusion, improved regeneration and universal accessibility.
- A significant positive effect is also identified for EPO 8: Cultural Heritage as REG 19 supports pursuing complementary funding streams that support broader aims to achieve outcomes in heritage. In addition, REG 18 supports the development of projects in the Military Assets as Public Spaces Integrated Action Plan, which may result in increasing accessibility to and understanding of military heritage assets.
- Minor positive effects are identified for EPOs 3: Energy / Climate Change Mitigation and 4: Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation as REG 19 supports pursuing complementary funding streams that support broader aims to achieve outcomes in climate action.
- A minor positive effect is identified for EPO 10: Material Assets as several of the objectives support regeneration, which will result in enhancement of Longford's material assets.

Table D.8: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Master Planning' objectives

Master Planning objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
MP 01 – Regeneration areas and vacant sites MP 02 – Strategic sites MP 03 – Additional 'Regeneration Areas' MP 04 – Social, economic and environmental gain for communities MP 05 – Transport Infrastructure MP 06 – Funding	+/-?	++	+	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	++/-	++	++

Commentary

- A significant positive effect is identified for these objectives for EPO 2: Population as they prioritise the regeneration of areas suffering from social and economic deprivation which will help to reduce inequalities in these areas. Additionally, improving transport infrastructure links in accordance to the Sustainable Transport measures of this plan will improve opportunities for active and sustainable travel, encouraging active lifestyles and supporting economic development. A significant positive effect is identified for EPO 9: Landscape as the objectives promote the regeneration of 'Strategic Sites' which will reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land; encourage the re-use/enhancement of existing buildings; and improve public realm. Such improvements will contribute towards enhancing the character and visual amenity of the town and may also improve the setting of numerous heritage sites in close proximity to the Strategic Sites, primarily located along Main Street and in the Camlin Quarter. However, due to the proximity of the Strategic Sites to heritage assets, there is potential for the regeneration to also adversely affect the fabric or setting of these assets if poorly designed. Therefore, a significant positive effect is identified for EPO 9: Landscape and a mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is expected for EPO 8: Cultural heritage.
- Mixed effects (minor positive / minor negative) are identified for EPOs 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna, 4: Flood risk / Climate Change Adaptation, 6: Soil and 7: Water. The objectives support brownfield development over greenfield, which will support the protection of habitats and reduce soil sealing, surface water runoff and associated flood risk. However, not all of the Strategic Sites are brownfield, for example The Mall and Camlin Village.
- Minor positive effects are expected for EPOs 3: Energy / Climate Change Mitigation and 5: Air as MP 05 outlines measures to improve transport links in accordance with the Sustainable Transport section of this Plan, which will facilitate the use of active and public transport. This will reduce reliance on private vehicles, hence reduce associated emissions and improve air quality.
- A significant positive effect is expected for EPO 10: Material Assets as the objectives support regeneration of existing buildings and improvement of transport links which optimises the use of infrastructure.

Table D.9: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Public Realm, Universal Design and Age Friendliness' objectives

Public Realm, Universal Design and Age Friendliness objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
PUA 01 – CDP's placemaking policies PUA 02 – Healthy place-making PUA 03 – Public realm PUA 04 – Reviewing studies PUA 05 – Development Plan Signage Design Guidelines PUA 06 – Public realm strategy PUA 07– Age friendliness PUA 08 - County Longford Age Friendly Strategy	+?	++	0	0	0	0	0	+	++	0

Commentary

- A significant positive effect is identified for these objectives for EPO 2: Population and human health as they support healthy place-making and public realm improvements that are inclusive and accessible for all. The objectives seek to address the lack of connection between the major recreational amenities at the Mall and the Canal to the town centre, which will enhance access to areas of open space and nature.
- The enhancement of the public realm is likely to have a significant positive effect for EPO 9: Landscape as it will improve the townscape character and visual amenity of the town. A minor positive effect is identified for EPO 8: Cultural heritage as improvements to the public realm may enhance the setting of heritage assets.
- Improvements to the public realm may also have benefits for biodiversity depending on design. Therefore, minor positive effects are identified for EPO 1: Biodiversity. However, these effects are uncertain as they depend on the design and if more natural features (e.g., trees) are incorporated into design.

Social Infrastructure

Table D.10: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Education, Childcare and Health Facilities' objectives

Education, Childcare and Health Facilities objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
ECH 01 - Early learning and childcare facilities ECH 02 - Childcare provision ECH 03 - Primary and secondary schools ECH 04 - School accommodation ECH 05 - Training and education ECH 06 - Education facilities ECH 07 - Health care facilities	0	++	+/-	0	+/-	0	0	0	0	+

Commentary

- The LAP objectives relating to education, childcare and healthcare facilities are expected to have a significant positive effect for EPO 2: Population and Human Health. The expansion and delivery of new educational facilities will give people the skills and knowledge to gain jobs and contribute towards the local economy, thus reducing employment deprivation. Improving the provision of healthcare facilities in Longford Town will have positive effects for the health and wellbeing of residents. The delivery of these objectives is particularly important as, in the 2022 Census, Longford Town recorded the lowest number of people in 'very good' health and the highest number of people in Ireland who stated that their health was 'bad' or 'very bad'.

- The expansion of existing schools and the delivery on new educational and healthcare facilities support the EPO 10: Material Assets as it optimises existing infrastructure and provides new infrastructure sufficient to resolve current capacity issues at the existing schools. Therefore, a minor positive effect is identified for this EPO.
- The expansion and delivery of new educational and healthcare facilities may generate additional private car journeys in the town contributing to traffic congestion and the release of GHG emissions. However, the proximity of new schools or healthcare facilities to public transport links / greenways may help to reduce the use of cars, particularly for school drop-offs / collections, by encouraging sustainable transport alternatives, reducing emissions and improving air quality. Therefore, mixed effects (minor positive / minor negative) are expected for EPO 3: Energy / climate change mitigation and EPO 5: Air.

Table D.11: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Social Infrastructure' objectives

Social Infrastructure objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
CSR 01 - Community, cultural and recreational facilities CSR 02 - Additional community and social infrastructure in disadvantaged areas CSR 03 - Multi-functional community facilities CSR 04 - Family Resource Centre CSR 05 - Cultural, arts and performance spaces CSR 06 - Places of worship/burial	0	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+

Commentary

- The LAP objectives relating to community, social, cultural and recreational facilities are expected to have a significant positive effect for EPO 2: Population and Human Health. Supporting and facilitating the provision of such facilities will increase access to services and facilities and promote physical activity and outdoor recreation, enabling people to stay independent, and reduce inequalities (particularly when provided in disadvantaged areas of the town).
- The provision of community services and infrastructure is also expected to have a minor positive effect for EPO 10: Material Assets.

Social Infrastructure objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
CSR 07 – Multi-functional public open spaces CSR 08 - Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Strategy CSR 09 - Amenities and features in open spaces CSR 10 - Accessible greenways and blueways CSR 11 - Linkages and connections CSR 12 – Connectivity of parks CSR 13 - Children's play facilities CSR 14 - Park to cater for the autistic community needs CSR 15 - Sports training hub CSR 16 - New local dog park CSR 17 - New local eco-park CSR 18 - Gardens/allotments and green waste composting sites CSR 19 - Open space and recreation facilities	**++/-**	**++**	**+**	**+**	**+**	**+**	**+**	**+**	**++**	**+**

Commentary

- The LAP objectives relating to the provision of multi-functional public open spaces are expected to have significant positive effects for EPO 1: Biodiversity (as part of an overall mixed effect), EPO 2: Population and Human Health, and EPO 9: Landscape.
- The provision of open space will encourage people to lead more active lifestyles resulting in positive effects for health and wellbeing. Open space can encourage this through recreation and facilitating active travel. Interaction with open space can also contribute to general wellbeing and can benefit people's mental health. In addition, providing and improving the quality of open space and its connectivity creates active and safe environments for the population. Accessible and multi-functional open spaces will ensure adequate access to facilities for all and reduce inequalities.
- These LAP objectives will also have a significant positive effect for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna by maintaining and enhancing the network of green and blue infrastructure. A connected network of open spaces across the town, such as local parks, amenity greenspace, community gardens, and green corridors etc. will prevent the fragmentation of ecological networks. Thus, a more connected network of open spaces will provide valuable habitats and a net gain in biodiversity. However, increased recreational use of the River Camlin and Royal Canal is also likely to result in minor negative effects for biodiversity due to increased disturbance.
- Additional significant positive effects are likely to arise for the landscape, townscape and visual amenity of Longford Town, which will be enhanced as a result of improved open space. Natural features contribute positively to the character of an area. Likewise, open space is likely to enhance the visual amenity of the heritage asset settings, therefore a minor positive effect is expected for EPO 8: Cultural heritage.

- Minor positive effects are identified for each of the other EPOs. Soils and material assets will benefit from the reuse of land for new facilities and the protection and expansion of greenspaces. Increased greenspace may also help reduce surface water runoff, preventing pollution entering into watercourses. Greenspace can also help slow the movement of water, and therefore may help reduce flood risk. Areas of open space also offer opportunities for flood attenuation, storing flood water to prevent flooding elsewhere. Finally, open space and trees help mitigate against the effects of climate change and improve air quality by sequestering carbon and filtering pollutants from the air. Improvements to air quality may be further enhanced as a result of increased active travel over private vehicles.

Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure

Table D.12: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Natural Heritage' objectives

Natural Heritage objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
NHB 01 – CDP's natural heritage policies NHB 02 - County Longford Heritage Plan NHB 03 - Longford's biodiversity and natural heritage NHB 04 - Appropriate Assessment NHB 05 – Ecological Appraisal NHB 06 – Harmful development NHB 07 - Designated sites NHB 08 - Enhance biodiversity NHB 20 - St. Mel's Cathedral NHB 24 - Habitat Mapping and Wetland Survey NHB 25 – Invasive species	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	++	+

Commentary

- These LAP objectives will help protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity and natural heritage throughout the LAP area. Objectives promote the protection and enhancement of wildlife, habitats and proposed and designated sites including European sites. The objectives require applicants to undertake an Appropriate Assessment for projects that may have impacts on SACs/SPAs in the region and an Ecological Assessment for developments that may potentially impact the pNHA. This is expected to result in a significant positive effect for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna. These effects are further enhanced as the objectives seek to identify opportunities for green infrastructure, control and eradicate invasive species, prevent development which would be harmful to habitats and species, and develop better habitat mapping.

- The implementation of these objectives is also expected to have a significant positive effect for EPO 9: Landscape, recognising the importance of natural landscape features and habitats in contributing to overall character of an area.
- Minor positive effects are expected for the remaining SEA objectives. Natural spaces offer opportunities for recreation which helps improve the mental and physical wellbeing of the population. Improving the extent and quality of natural heritage features, such as habitats, will help improve soil, water and air quality. Natural and semi-natural areas also help mitigate against the effects of climate change by sequestering carbon, and adapt to climate change by increasing connectivity and resilience of the green space network. Such areas also provide opportunities for shading and reducing flood risk.
- Associated benefits for cultural heritage may arise by improvements in the setting of heritage assets, and protecting natural heritage features will have positive effects for material assets.

Natural Heritage objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
NHB 09 - Riparian strips NHB 10 - Restoration and conservation of rivers and riverbanks	++	+	+	++	+	+	++	+	+	+

Commentary

- The LAP objectives which support measures to restore and conserve rivers and riverbanks and promote riparian planting are expected to have significant positive effects for EPO 1: Biodiversity, EPO 4: Flood risk / climate change adaptation and EPO 7: Water.
- These objectives will help protect and enhance water quality as well as preserve the natural flood regime of the area. In addition, riparian planting will provide benefits for biodiversity through improving connectivity of habitats along river corridors, filtering pollution entering watercourses, and providing areas of shade along the rivers.
- Associated minor positive effects are expected for the remaining SEA objectives as enhanced riparian planting supports the efficient use of natural resources and may enhance the character of landscape and setting of cultural heritage assets. Planting will help improve soil quality, filter air pollutants and sequester carbon.

Natural Heritage objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
NHB 11 – Ecosystem services NHB 12 – Vegetation, including hedgerows NHB 13 - All Ireland Pollinator Plan NHB 14 – Biodiversity-friendly landscaping and planting NHB 15 – Public realm biodiversity value NHB 16 - Mitigating measures for biodiversity NHB 17 - Stands of trees protection NHB 18 - Tree survey NHB 19 - Views and view corridors	++	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

Commentary

- These LAP objectives promote the protection, preservation and enhancement of green infrastructure, biodiversity and natural features, recognising the ecosystem services they provide.
- The objectives seek to protect and enhance existing natural vegetation, incorporating it into any new development or incorporating native species where vegetation loss is unavoidable. Damage and/or removal of trees is discouraged, with actions to identify further trees suitable for Tree Preservation Order protection. Objectives also promote planting of trees, native species and pollinator friendly species. Recognising the importance of habitats and natural vegetation, the objectives are expected to have a significant positive effect for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna. These effects are further enhanced as the LAP objectives specify that new developments, open space and areas of public realm should have regard to biodiversity.
- Subsequent benefits are expected for the remaining EPOs. Planting and enhancement of trees and vegetation will help sequester carbon and improve resilience to climate change by reducing flood risk and providing shading.
- In addition, planting will help improve soil quality, intercept pollution in surface water runoff before it enters watercourses, and filter pollution from the air. This also demonstrates efficient use of natural resources.
- The protection and enhancement of the natural environment is also likely to have minor positive effects for landscape/townscape character and the setting of cultural heritage assets. In addition, preserving the natural environment, including areas of open space will have positive effects on the population as it provides a recreational resource which encourages active lifestyles and contributes towards improved mental and physical health and wellbeing. These objectives primarily aim to deliver these actions to enhance biodiversity.

Natural Heritage	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
NHB 21 – Lighting of waterways NHB 22 - Survey bridge structures for bat roosts NHB 23 - Bat / bird nesting boxes	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Commentary

- The LAP objectives which seek to incorporate bat, bird and otter friendly lighting schemes, surveying of current structures for bat roosts and identifying opportunities for bat roosts and bird nesting boxes are likely to have a significant positive effect for EPO 1: Biodiversity.

Table D.13: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Green Infrastructure' objectives

Green infrastructure objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
GI 01 – Green Infrastructure network GI 02 – Reduce fragmentation GI 03 – Integrate green infrastructure into development GI 04 – Open space and recreation facilities GI 05 – Green Infrastructure Projects Map GI 07 – Natural heritage, high-quality amenity areas and other green spaces GI 08 – Royal Canal and Camlin River GI 09 – Public rights of way GI 10 – Protect GI during construction GI 11 – Wildlife bridges GI 12 – Pedestrian and cycle paths GI 13 – Incorporate items of historical or heritage importance	++/-	++	++	++	++	+	+	+	++	+

Commentary

- Protecting, managing and enhancing green infrastructure within development and between open spaces creates more adaptable and sustainable places that are resilient to the effects of climate change and enhance landscape character. Green infrastructure also offers opportunities for flood attenuation, storing flood water to prevent flooding elsewhere. In addition, green space can help sequester carbon, reducing the future effects of climate change. Therefore, significant positive effects are expected for EPO 3: Energy / Climate Change Mitigation, EPO 4: Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation, and EPO 9: Landscape.
- In addition, the enhancement and expansion of the green infrastructure network is expected to have a significant positive effect on EPO 1: Biodiversity by increasing the amount and quality of habitats and improving connectivity of habitats, including via wildlife bridges, will enable greater species movement across the ecological network. Additionally, proposed development should be informed by ecology surveys. However, this effect is mixed with a minor negative effect as increased recreational use of the Royal Canal and River Camlin which might result in species disturbance.
- The protection and creation of open space, and walking and cycling routes as part of green infrastructure networks will encourage people to lead more active lifestyles. This will have a significant benefit for EPO 2: Population. Open space provides opportunities for recreation and incorporation of well-connected walking and cycling routes will encourage a modal shift to sustainable, active modes of transport. This will have subsequent benefits for population and human health, and associated benefits for air quality due to reduced reliance on private vehicles. Increased vegetation will also help filter pollutants from the air.
- The green infrastructure objectives will also have associated minor positive effects for soil resources as undeveloped land helps maintain soil quality, and planting can improve the structure of soil. Likewise, planting can have benefits for water quality by reducing surface water runoff and capturing pollutants before they reach watercourses. High quality green infrastructure may also help improve the setting of heritage assets and enable opportunities to incorporate heritage features into the GI network, with minor positive effects associated with cultural heritage. The efficient use of natural resources will also result in minor positive benefits for material assets.

Built and Cultural Heritage

Table D.14: Summary of SEA effects of the ‘Protected Structures’ objectives

Protected Structures objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
PS 01 - CDP’s protected structures policies PS 02 - Preservation of protected structures PS 03 - Origins, historical development and cultural heritage PS 04 - Conservation of protected structure PS 05 - Dereliction, endangerment, neglect and vacancy	-?	+	+	0	0	0	0	++	+	+

Protected Structures objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
PS 06 - Vernacular and industrial heritage PS 07 - Historic features of interest PS 08 - Heritage Centre and Museum PS 09 - Connolly Barracks PS 10 - Maintenance and repair										

Commentary

- A significant positive effect is identified for EPO 8: Cultural Heritage as these LAP objectives seek the protection, conservation, enhancement and promotion of Protected Structures and other cultural heritage assets in Longford Town. The objectives also support heritage-led regeneration of Longford Town which will benefit both cultural heritage and help enhance landscape character. As such, a minor positive effect is identified for EPO 9: Landscape.
- Heritage-led regeneration within Longford Town will also increase employment opportunities and public enjoyment through increased access and understanding of historic environment via regeneration and increased tourism. It is noted that support for a Town Heritage Centre and Museum is proposed, as is access to Connolly Barracks as a tourism destination. Improving access to cultural and tourism facilities will provide further benefits for the population. Overall, a minor positive effect is therefore expected for EPO 2: Population.
- Addressing dereliction, endangerment, neglect and vacancy through the promotion of appropriate uses and the sensitive conservation of historic buildings will optimise the use of existing infrastructure, which is an efficient use of material assets. Therefore, a minor positive effect is identified for EPO 10: Material Assets.
- However, old derelict and unused buildings are often home to bats and protected birds, and the redevelopment or reuse of these buildings could result in disturbance to any species nesting there. Therefore, an uncertain minor negative is identified for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna.
- Minor positive effects are expected for EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation as the reuse of buildings will ensure there is no loss of embodied carbon.

Table D.15: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Architectural Conservation Area' objectives

Architectural Conservation Area objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
AC 01 – CDP's architectural conservation policies AC 02 - Battery Road Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	++	++	+

Architectural Conservation Area objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
AC 03 – Materials which characterise vernacular architecture AC 04 - High-quality design AC 07 – Existing buildings which support ACA AC 08 - Discourage proposals for the demolition of a structure that positively contributes to the character AC 09 - New development to support ACA AC 10 - Intrusive elements AC 11 - Infill development AC 12 - Visual and urban clutter AC 13 - Battery Road ACA Statement of Character										

Table D.16: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Archaeological Heritage' objectives

Archaeological Heritage objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
AH 01 – CDP's built and cultural heritage policies AH 02 – Safeguard archaeological heritage AH 03 - Items of archaeological interest AH 04 - Public access to 'Sites and Monuments Record' sites AH 05 - Historic burial grounds AH 06 – Sites associated with waterbodies	0	+	0	0	0	+	+	++	+	0

Energy and Communications

Table D.17: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Energy, Communications and Waste' objectives

Energy, Communications and Waste objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
EC 01 - Water services, public transport, energy, telecommunications, waste management facilities EC 02 - Energy and communications networks EC 03 - Undergrounding	-	+	+	0	+	0	+	+/-	+/-	++

Commentary

- A significant positive effect is identified for these objectives for EPO 10: Material assets as the objectives will optimise existing infrastructure and provide new infrastructure sufficient to meet demand, as well as promote appropriate waste management.
- A minor negative effect is identified for EPO 1: Biodiversity as development of infrastructure and the undergrounding of cables is likely to impact habitats and species.
- New infrastructure development is also likely to impact the landscape, townscape and historic environment of Longford. However, the objectives also require new developments to be designed to consider landscape, residential amenity, and the environmental. The undergrounding of all electricity, telephone and television cables is likely to have positive effects for landscape and cultural heritage. Therefore, mixed effects are identified for EPOs 8: Cultural Heritage and 9: Landscape.
- A minor positive effect is identified for EPO 2: Population and human health as the provision of appropriate and adequate infrastructure will meet the needs of and enhance the wellbeing of the people of Longford.
- The objectives seek to develop public transport infrastructure. This may discourage private car use, reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, minor positive effects are identified for EPO 3: Energy/ Climate Change Mitigation and EPO 5: Air.
- A minor positive effect is identified for EPO 7: Water as the objectives support the delivery of adequate water infrastructure which will help to reduce pollution of water resources.

Energy, Communications and Waste objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
EC 04 - Recycling and bring bank facilities EC05 - Hazardous waste collection	-?	-?	0	0	0	-?	-?	0	0	++

Commentary

- A significant positive effect is identified for these objectives for EPO 10: Material Assets as they aid in optimising the reuse of materials to keep waste to a minimum; and the delivery of new waste infrastructure to meet demand.
- Uncertain minor negative effects are identified for biodiversity, population and human health, soil resources, and the water environment as objective EC 05 supports hazardous waste collection at the Athlone Road Civic Amenity Site. The effects are uncertain and will be subject to appropriate environmental and amenity safeguards.

Energy, Communications and Waste objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
EC 06 - Renewable energy technologies	+?	+?	++	0	+	0	0	+/-?	+/-?	++

Commentary

- Significant positive effects are identified for EC 06 for EPO 3: Energy / Climate Change Mitigation and EPO 10: Material Assets as this objective promotes the use of renewable energy, which will aid in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and minimise the consumption of non-renewable energy. Use of renewable energy over more traditional fossil fuels may also help reduce air pollution, with minor positive effects identified for EPO 5: Air. In addition, promoting renewable energy may help increase security of energy supply, with further associated benefits for material assets and population and human health.
- Reducing the effects of climate change by promoting renewable energy may also have subsequent benefits for other elements of the environment. This includes landscape, cultural heritage, biodiversity. However, the installation of renewable energy technologies in existing and proposed building stock may have adverse effects on the setting of cultural heritage assets and visual amenity. Therefore, mixed minor positive and negative effects are identified for EPO 8: Cultural Heritage and EPO 9: Landscape. However, these are uncertain.

Energy, Communications and Waste objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
EC 07 – Environmental quality EC 08 – Waste and recyclable materials EC 09 – Education and awareness	0	+	++	0	++	0	0	0	0	++

Commentary

- Significant positive effects are identified for EPO 3: Energy / Climate change mitigation and EPO 5: Air as the LAP objectives aim to protect environmental quality by implementing legislation relating to air quality, greenhouse gases and climate change. Additionally, supporting local schools, town and community groups such as Longford Green Towns Initiative through education and awareness will likely enhance the significance of this effect.
- These actions will also have a minor positive effect for EPO 2: Population as a reduction in emissions, as well as implementing legislation relating to light pollution, noise pollution and air quality will improve residential amenity. This will protect physical and mental health and wellbeing of residents.
- Ensuring adequate internal and external space for the correct storage of waste and recyclable materials, implementing legislation relating to waste management and supporting local schools, town and community groups such as Longford Tidy Towns will have significant effect for EPO 10: Material Assets. These actions support the efficient use of natural resources, minimise waste and promote appropriate waste management.

Table D.18: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Water Supply and Wastewater Services' objectives

Water Supply and Wastewater Services objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
WS 01 – CDP's transport, infrastructure, energy and communications policies WS 02 – Securing infrastructural services to designated sites WS 03 – Provision of drinking water WS 04 – Capacity WS 05 – Additional projects WS 06 – Extensions	+	+	0	++	0	0	++/--	0	0	++

Water Supply and Wastewater Services objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
WS 07 – Wayleaves WS 08 – Un-serviced land WS 09 – Pollutant development WS 10 – Protection from pollution WS 11 – Quality of surface water and ground water WS 12 – Foul and storm water network WS 13 – Sustainable use of water WS 14 – Water conservation education WS 15 – Appropriate Assessment WS 16 – River Basin Management Plan WS 17 – Septic tanks and treatment plants WS 18 – Drainage Impact Assessment WS 19 – Storm overflows WS 20 – Urban Wastewater Management Plan WS 21 – Nature Based SuDS WS 22 – Water efficient developments										

Commentary

- A significant positive effect is identified for these objectives for EPO 7: Water as they seek to maintain, improve and enhance water quality and quantity, including waterbodies and groundwater sources. This includes avoiding adverse impacts from pollution, storm overflows of sewerage, incorporation of SuDS, changes to drainage and promoting the efficient use of water. However, a significant negative effect is also identified as, until the Longford Wastewater Treatment Plant is upgraded, there may be a need for new residential developments to install onsite treatment plants to treat wastewater (i.e. individual septic tanks) which increases the risk of water pollution. However, there is an objective which discourages the over concentration of such individual septic tanks.
- A significant positive effect is identified for EPO 10: Material Assets as the objectives seek to ensure sufficient water supply and wastewater facilities are in place to support new development. In addition, objective WS 08 requires restricting or prohibiting the large-scale development of un-serviced land where serviced land, of an appropriate size and nature to meet the needs of the proposed development, exists in the vicinity. This will result in more efficient use of land and resources.
- A minor positive effect is identified for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna as a number of the objectives, including WS 09, WS 10, WS 15 and WS 21 seek to incorporate SuDS, mitigate water pollution and require water supply and waste water treatment developments to be screened for Appropriate Assessment, thereby helping to protect aquatic habitats and species.

- A minor positive effect is identified for EPO 2: Population and Human Health as the objectives seek to protect and improve waterbodies, sources and supply, including providing appropriate future capacity, which will enhance the wellbeing of Longford's population.
- Additionally, objectives supporting water conservation measures will also contribute towards climate change adaptation, recognising that one of the predicted effects of climate change is water scarcity. Incorporating SuDS will also result in the mitigation of surface water flooding, both now and in the future. Therefore, a significant positive effect is identified for EPO 4: Flood Risk/ Climate Change Adaptation.

Table D.19: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Surface Water' objectives

Surface Water objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
SW 01 – CDP's transport, infrastructure, energy and communications policies SW 02 – Surface water drainage issues SW 03 – Surface water drainage facilities provision SW 04 – Surface water attenuation measures SW 05 – Sustainable Urban Drainage SW 06 - Discharge of surface water run-off into foul sewage systems **SW 07** - Quality of surface water and groundwater	+	+	0	++	0	+	++	0	0	++

Commentary

- Significant positive effects are identified for EPOs 4: Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation, EPO 7: Water and 10: Material Assets as the objectives will result in the mitigation of surface water flooding, both now and in the future; the protection of water quality by incorporating SuDS and green infrastructure; minimising the extent of hard surfaces and avoiding the discharge of surface water run-off into foul sewage systems; and requiring all new developments to provide sufficient surface water drainage infrastructure.
- The objectives could also have subsequent benefits for the population as a result of reduced flooding and water pollution. Therefore, a minor positive effect is identified for EPO 2: Population.
- Minor positive effects are identified for EPO 1: Biodiversity and EPO 6: Soil as the objectives will aid in preventing water pollution which will protect habitats, species and soil resources. Furthermore, the objectives promote the use of SuDS and green infrastructure which can provide valuable habitats for biodiversity and can help filter pollution from water which will benefit aquatic species.

Table D.20: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Flood Risk Management' objectives

Flood Risk Management objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
FR 01 – CDP's transport, infrastructure, energy and communications policies FR 02 – Flood Risk Assessments FR 03 – Developments in flood vulnerable areas FR 04 – Future development FR 05 - environmentally sensitive sites and habitats	++	+	0	++	0	0	+	0	0	+

Commentary

- A significant positive effect is identified for EPO 4: Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation as the objectives seek to reduce flood risk, both now and in the future, as well as consider the impacts of climate change.
- Ensuring the protection of environmentally sensitive sites and habitats in flood risk management measures will result in a significant positive effect for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna as Longford's biodiversity will be conserved and enhanced.
- The requirement for development proposals within the 'Constrained Land Use' zone to be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment will help identify any risks associated with flooding prior to development. This could have subsequent benefits for the population as a result of reduced flooding events. Therefore, a minor positive effect is identified for EPO 2: Population.
- A minor positive effect is identified for EPO 10: Material Assets as the objectives seek to protect material assets by restricting development in areas identified as being of high risk of flooding.

Sustainable Transport

Table D.21: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Sustainable Transport' objectives

Sustainable Transport objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
ST 01 - Longford Town Transportation Plan ST 02 – CDP's transport, infrastructure, energy & communications policies ST 03 – Tourism policies ST 04 - Management of space in town centres ST 05 - Pedestrian and cycling permeability ST06 - Green Schools Programme and Sustainable Transport Measures Grants Scheme ST 07 - Accessibility Audit ST 08 - Mobility management plans ST 09 – New development accessibility ST 17 - Cycling infrastructure ST 30 – Local Transport Plan	+?	++	++	0	++	0	0	0	+	++

Commentary

- The LAP objectives support the implementation, enhancement and promotion of active and sustainable travel modes of travel, including by encouraging new developments to provide sufficient cycling infrastructure and a permeable layout. Promoting sustainable modes of travel will reduce the dependency to travel by private petrol and diesel cars, which will have significant positive effects for EPO 3: Energy/ Climate Change Mitigation. Subsequent benefits for air quality are also expected as a result of less reliance on petrol or diesel cars. Therefore, significant positive effects are identified for EPO 5: Air.
- The promotion of active modes of travel such as walking and cycling, will encourage people to lead more active and healthy lifestyles. This will help improve the mental and physical wellbeing of the population. Positive effects on the population are further enhanced as the LAP objectives seek to carry out an Accessibility Audit with the aim of improving accessibility for all, including the elderly, disabled and those less mobile. Therefore, significant positive effects are expected for EPO 2: Population.
- The objectives seek to manage space in town centres to deliver a high priority of permeability by active travel routes to create attractive and vibrant places to work and live. This will have benefits for the population, and help enhance the character of the townscape. Minor positive effects are identified for EPO 9: Landscape.

- Creating a more vibrant town centre will help increase the vitality and viability of the town, with significant positive effects expected for EPO 10: Material Assets. The enhanced provision of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure will further contribute to positive effects for material assets.
- New walking and cycle routes may act as corridors for wildlife, particularly if well vegetated. Therefore, minor positive but uncertain effects are identified for EPO 1: Biodiversity.

Sustainable Transport objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
ST 10 – Bus facilities ST 11 - Public transport routes ST 12 – Infrastructure and facilities ST 13 - Public transport corridors infrastructure ST 14 – Stakeholders ST 15 - New and upgraded bus stops ST 16 - Transport hub ST 33 – Modal share targets	0	++	++	0	++	0	0	0	0	++

Commentary

- Providing efficient sustainable travel infrastructure and encouraging model share targets will encourage more sustainable modes of transport, reducing the dependency on private vehicle travel. The reduction of private vehicle use is likely to reduce emissions, which will have significant positive effects for EPO 3: Energy/ Climate Change Mitigation. Subsequent benefits for air quality are also expected thereby significant positive effects are identified for EPO 5: Air.
- Improving access to sustainable modes of transport may help improve quality of life and encourage more active lifestyles. Additionally, encouraging model share targets and providing suitable infrastructure on public transport corridors to improve safety and efficiency will increase accessibility for all, reducing inequalities. Therefore, a significant positive effect is expected for EPO 2: Population.
- A significant positive effect is expected for EPO 10: Material Assets due to the increased provision of services and transport infrastructure. Furthermore, promoting high-capacity sustainable transport over petrol and diesel fuelled cars represents a more efficient use of natural resources.

Sustainable Transport objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
ST 18 - Development Management Standards for Electric Vehicles (EVs) ST 19 – Growth of EVs ST 20 – Parking for EVs	0	++	++	0	++	0	0	0	0	++

Commentary

- The provision of EV infrastructure will encourage people to switch from private petrol and diesel cars to more sustainable EV powered vehicles, minimising emissions. This will have significant positive effects for EPO 3: Energy/ Climate Change Mitigation. Subsequent benefits for air quality and human health are also expected thereby significant positive effects are identified for EPO 5: Air and EPO 2: Population.
- A significant positive effect is expected for EPO 10: Material Assets due to improved EV infrastructure within Longford, and the increased sustainable use of resources over fossil fuel powered cars.

Sustainable Transport objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
ST 21 - National road network ST 22 - Traffic impact assessments for networks as an N4/N5 bypass alternative ST 23 - N4 Mullingar-Rooskey dual carriageway ST 24 - N4 national primary road ST 25 – Traffic impact assessments for development north N4 bypass	-?	+/-?	--	-?	--	--	-?	-?	-?	++/--

Commentary

- Safeguarding and extending road networks as well as addressing safety, capacity and strategic function will have a significant positive effect for EPO 10: Material Assets. However, a significant negative effect is also identified as the proposed road network projects will require the significant consumption of resources. A significant negative effect is also identified for EPO 6: Soil as the development of these infrastructure projects will likely result in the loss of large areas of greenfield land.

- Improving the road network and connectivity may improve accessibility to facilities and services, with subsequent benefits for health and wellbeing. However, improvements to the road network may increase residents' exposure to noise/air/vibration/light pollution related to the increased volume of traffic. Hence a mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is expected for EPO 2: Population.
- Expanding the road network will likely encourage increased traffic volumes and transport-related emissions. Therefore, significant negative effects are identified for EPO 3: Energy/ Climate Change Mitigation and EPO 5: Air.
- Expanding the road network may potentially also have adverse effects on the water environment due to the sealing of soils and increased surface water runoff from roads. Likewise, the construction of new roads could detract from landscape character, visual amenity and the setting of heritage assets. Therefore, minor negative but uncertain effects are expected for EPO 4: Flood risk, EPO 7: Water, EPO 8: Cultural heritage and EPO 9: Landscape. These effects are uncertain as traffic impact assessments may mitigate the potential adverse effects of increased traffic on people, air, soil and water quality, landscape and cultural heritage.

Sustainable Transport objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
ST 26– Abbeycartron Sustainable Transport Proposal ST 27 - Links bridging the Camlin River ST 28 – Vehicular bridge over the Camlin River ST 29 - Permeable secondary road network ST 31 - Traffic and transport and permeability assessment ST 32 - Spatial planning and national roads guidelines	+/-?	++/-	--/+	-?	--/+	--?	--?	-?	+/-?	++/--

Commentary

- An uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna. There are no biodiversity sites in close proximity of the Abbeycartron site, however, there may still be some adverse effects to habitats and species that exist on the rural land that is currently in agricultural use on the edge of Longford Town from new residential development, associated traffic, and an increase in active travel in the area. These adverse effects may be minimised through the incorporation of habitat enhancement measures as part of the delivery of the Abbeycartron Access Strategy, thereby contributing to the network of functionally linked habitats in Longford Town.
- A mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is identified for EPO 2: Population and human health for the objectives relating to the Abbeycartron Access Strategy. The scheme proposes new pedestrian/cycle links and improved permeability routes to connect to the town and the Mall. The scheme also includes a new road between Battery Road roundabout and Abbeycartron Lane, providing access to Battery Road at two points, thereby reducing the overall volume of vehicles that utilise any one entrance, thereby reducing traffic congestion and pollution. A new road is also proposed across the Camlin to link to the Templemichael Industrial Estate. The new roads will also incorporate designated footpaths and cycle infrastructure. These interventions are likely to encourage walking and cycling for new and existing residents of Abbeycartron and improve access to services, facilities and employment opportunities for sustainable travel modes. This will encourage healthy lifestyles by promoting active

travel. However, a minor negative effect is also identified for this EPO as the new access roads that will accommodate significant residential development are likely to increase residents' exposure to noise/air/vibration/light pollution related to the increased volume of traffic in the area. This will be mitigated to some extent by the proposed active travel elements of the strategy, and the close proximity of zoned education facilities, however it is likely that new residents will still rely on private vehicles for some journeys as they are located on the periphery of Longford Town.

- An overall mixed effect (minor positive / significant negative) is identified in relation to EPO 3: Energy and climate change mitigation and EPO 5: Air. The proposal includes a road between the roundabout on Battery Road and Abbeycartron Lane, a road connection to the Templemichael Industrial Estate, and a road connection south of Abbeycartron Lane. Traffic volumes and transport-related emissions at these points are expected to increase as the Access Strategy is supporting the development of a significant amount of zoned residential development and education facilities. While the Access Strategy requires a traffic and transport, and permeability assessment and incorporates sustainable transport infrastructure, including cycle infrastructure and new connections between Abbeycartron Lane and the Mall, there is still likely to be high volumes of traffic as the development is located on the settlement edge. As such a significant negative effect is expected as the scheme is likely to increase transport-related emissions along Battery Road and Abbeycartron Lane. At the same time, new pedestrian and cycle links will help support the modal shift away from private vehicle use and reduce unnecessary car journeys thus lowering transport-related emissions and Longford's contribution to climate change.
- An uncertain minor negative effect is identified for EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation. The Abbeycartron redevelopment area is located in close proximity to the River Camlin, which has a high probability of river flood events, although not within the redevelopment area itself. Without appropriate mitigation, new development on greenfield land has the potential to exacerbate flood risk with the introduction of more impermeable surfaces within the plan area. This Access Strategy proposes the development of a number of new roads on greenfield land, as well as new paths, some of which cross the River Camlin. This is likely to introduce impermeable surfaces in an area at high risk of flooding, thereby potentially increase the severity and risk of flooding within the plan area. As such, an uncertain minor negative effect is identified for this EPO.
- A significant negative effect is identified for EPO 6: Soil in relation to the Abbeycartron Access Strategy. The proposed scheme is located on greenfield land at the edge of the existing built-up area of Longford Town. The development of transport infrastructure to support the zoned development will result in the loss of this greenfield land.
- An uncertain significant negative effect is identified for EPO 7: Water. The Abbeycartron redevelopment area is located in close proximity to the River Camlin and its tributaries and transport interventions within the proposed scheme, including the road connection and a number of new pedestrian/cycle routes, will cross the River Camlin. As such, development has the potential to adversely affect the quality of waterbodies although this is uncertain.
- An uncertain minor negative effect is identified for EPO 8: Cultural heritage. The Abbeycartron redevelopment area is located in close proximity to a small number of features listed on the Record of Protected Structures. However, the proposed Access Strategy will be located adjacent to the Battery Road Architectural Conservation Area. It is therefore possible that the proposed redevelopment and associated transport infrastructure/traffic could have adverse effects on the setting of the Architectural Conservation Area although this will depend on the design of traffic interventions.
- An uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for EPO 9: Landscape in relation to the Abbeycartron Access Strategy. The impact on Longford's existing landscape and townscape will depend largely on the detailed design of the Access Strategy and its associated residential development, therefore the effects are uncertain, however, due to the scale of the proposed Access Strategy, it is likely that the scheme will have an adverse effect on the landscape of Longford Town's rural edge. The Access Strategy provides new pedestrian and cycle links which will improve urban and rural connectivity, as well as improving access to valued landscapes and viewpoints including to the River Camlin and the Mall. The additional volume of traffic along Battery Road, associated with the new road and new population, has the potential to increase adverse effects on the townscape character of Battery Road, including through noise, air and light pollution. However, the Access Strategy could be strengthened by encouraging the retention and planting of green infrastructure along transport routes to protect landscape character and create a sense of place.
- An overall mixed effect (significant positive / significant negative) is identified for EPO 10: Material assets. The Abbeycartron Access Strategy will provide essential transport infrastructure to support the zoned residential development of the area. This will provide road, cycle and walking infrastructure for the growing population of Longford Town in a key redevelopment area. The inclusion of high-quality pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, and new permeability routes will help support the modal shift away from private vehicles for new and existing residents, supporting a reduction in energy demand from the transport sector. However, supporting the Access Strategy will require development of new infrastructure, such as construction of new roads, which will require the significant use of resources.

Climate Change

Table D.22: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Climate Change' objectives

Climate Change objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
CC 01 - Climate Change Adaption Strategy CC 02 – CDP's climate change policies CC 03 - Climate actions of CDP CC 04 - Climate Action Plan CC 05 – Climate resilient plans and projects	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++	++

Commentary

- Significant positive effects are expected for EPO 3: Energy/ Climate Change Mitigation and EPO 4: Flood Risk/ Climate Change Adaptation as the LAP objectives support the implementation of climate resilient measures through the implementation of the County Longford Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, climate objectives and actions within the County Longford Development Plan and the Longford's Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. These documents also support objectives and actions to conserve and enhance Longford's biodiversity and increase blue and green spaces, and facilitate active and sustainable travel. This will enhance biodiversity and their associated habitats. Therefore, a significant effect is expected for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna.
- Furthermore, the subsequent decrease in private vehicle use will reduce traffic congestion, and the green and blue spaces will improve carbon sequestration, hence improving air quality. Increased blue and green infrastructure may also improve the setting of heritage assets and the landscape. Therefore, significant positive effects are expected for EPO 5: Air, EPO 8: Cultural Heritage and EPO 9: Landscape.
- Provision of green and blue infrastructure will also lead to more active lifestyles and promote improved physical and mental health, thus having a significant positive effect for EPO 2: Population.
- Furthermore, actions to maximise resource efficiency will bring a significant positive effect for EPO 10: Material Assets, as it increases resource use efficiency. Through actions to monitor, manage and improve soil, soil resources will be safeguarded. Therefore, a significant positive effect is identified for EPO 6: Soil.
- Likewise, objectives and actions set out in the strategies and plans also seek to monitor, manage and improve water quality, therefore a significant positive effect is expected for EPO 7: Water.

Climate Change objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
CC 06 - Sustainable densities and brownfield development CC 08 - Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) CC 09 - Biodiversity techniques CC 10 - Development in flood prone lands CC 11 - Green infrastructure network	++	++	0	++	0	++	++	+	+	++

Commentary

- Building at sustainable densities and incorporating green infrastructure is likely to benefit health and wellbeing by preventing overcrowding and promoting physical activity and outdoor recreation. Therefore, a significant positive effect is identified for EPO 2: Population.
- Supporting the use of biodiversity techniques (i.e. green roofs and walls) and creating green infrastructure networks helps enhance biodiversity and their associated habitats. Therefore, a significant positive effect is expected for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna. Minor positive effects are identified for EPO 8: Cultural heritage and EPO 9: Landscape as green infrastructure will protect landscape character and create a sense of place.
- Incorporating SUDS/nature-based solutions, avoiding inappropriate development in flood prone lands and integrating green infrastructure to support water retention and flood alleviation is likely to bring a significant positive effect for EPO 4: Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation. Additionally, these objectives will improve the quality of water, mitigate runoff and promote the efficient use of water, hence a significant positive effect is expected for EPO 7: Water.
- As well as the actions above, objectives to prioritise brownfield land and improve the circular economy will bring a significant positive effect for EPO 10: Material Assets, as it increases resource use efficiency. Through encouraging development of brownfield over greenfield and improving green infrastructure networks, soil resources will be conserved, therefore a significant positive effect is identified for EPO 6: Soil.

Climate Change objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
CC 07 - Renewable and low carbon energy sources CC 12 - Transport emissions CC 13 - Sustainable communities CC 14 – Sustainable development	0	+	++	0	++	++	0	0	+	++

Climate Change objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
CC 15 – Climate resilient communities CC 16 - Decarbonisation Zone CC17 – Protect air quality CC 18 - Technical standards for new development										

Commentary

- Development of local renewable and low carbon energy sources, as well as using sustainable building construction techniques and materials in new development, will reduce consumption of non-renewable energy (i.e. fossil fuels) and will use resources efficiently. This will have a significant positive effect on EPO 10: Material Assets and EPO 6: Soil.
- In addition to the development of low carbon and renewable energy, the designation of Longford Town as a 'Decarbonisation Zone' will minimise greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, a significant positive effect is expected for EPO 3: Energy / Climate Change Mitigation.
- Promoting sustainable, low-carbon and climate resilient patterns of development and encouraging a climate adaptation and mitigation approach to development will improve infrastructure resilience to future climate risks. Therefore, a significant positive effect is expected for EPO 4: Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation.
- Objectives to increase connectivity and prioritise sustainable transport routes will also bring positive effects for emissions reductions, via reducing traffic congestion, therefore having subsequent benefits for air quality. Objective CC17 also requires new developments to preserve air quality in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe Directive. Hence a significant positive effect is expected for EPO 5: Air.
- Reducing the need to travel in private vehicles by increasing sustainable travel options will also have benefits for EPO 2: Population. These benefits are further enhanced by improving access to local facilities, promoting active and healthier lifestyles, and reducing respiratory related illnesses due to improvements in air quality. CC 15 will also ensure that all new developments will be assessed against technical standards relating to traffic and pedestrian safety which will improve road safety and reduce road accidents.
- A minor positive effect is identified for EPO 9: Landscape as the objectives promote compact, sustainable developments which encourage active travel modes. This will reduce traffic congestion in the town which is likely to enhance townscape character.

Climate Change objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
CC 19 – Adapting existing homes CC 20 – Minimise resource and energy requirements	0	+	++	+	++	0	0	0	+	++

Climate Change objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
CC 21 – Energy in existing buildings CC 22 – Energy Master Plans CC 23 – Landfill disposal CC 24 – Climate action initiatives CC 25 – Pilot schemes **CC 26 – District heating** **CC 27 – Resource and waste management**										

Commentary

- Reducing resource and energy requirements for existing and new developments; implementing renewable energy; using district heating derived from waste heat; supporting sustainable energy master plans; supporting the circular economy principles during the preparation of resource & waste management plans; and developing pilot schemes that support climate change mitigation are likely to result in significant positive effects for EPO 3: Energy / Climate Change Mitigation and EPO 5: Air. These actions will promote energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality.
- These LAP objectives promote projects to enhance green infrastructure and adaptation measures which will increase climate resilience. Therefore, a minor positive effect is identified for EPO 4: Flood risk / Climate change adaptation.
- These actions will likely improve air quality by reducing greenhouse gas emissions as well as promote healthier lifestyles by enhancing green infrastructure. This will bring a minor positive effect for EPO 2: Population and human health.
- Promoting projects in Longford town that seek to enhance green infrastructure will protect landscape character and create a sense of place. Therefore, a minor positive effect is identified for EPO 9: Landscape.
- Minimising resource requirement for new development; deriving district heating from waste heat; supporting sustainable energy master plans; diverting waste away from landfill; supporting circular economy when preparing resource and waste management plans; and using renewable energy sources will support the efficient use of natural resources, optimise existing infrastructure, and maximise energy efficiency. This will have a significant positive effect for EPO 10: Material Assets

Implementation and Monitoring

Table D.23: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Implementation and Monitoring' objectives

Implementation and Monitoring objectives	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
AL 01 - Sequential development of lands AL 02 - Sequential development of lands from the town core out AL 03 - Strategic Residential Reserve land AL 03 – Active land management and enabling infrastructure AL 04 - Large strategically located landbanks AL 05 - Encourage urban regeneration of brownfield lands AL 06 - Vacant Sites Register AL 07 - Urban Regeneration and Housing Act AL 08 - Residential Zoned Land Tax Maps	+/-	++	+/-?	+/-	+/-?	++/-	+/-	+/-	++/-	++/-

Commentary

- These LAP objectives support compact growth of Longford Town through sustainable and sequential land use development which consolidates the town centre, commercial areas and residential areas. This will have a positive effect on EPO 2: Population and human health, as well as EPO 3: Energy / climate change mitigation and EPO 5: Air as it discourages urban sprawl, improves access to services and facilities, reduces traffic movements and encourages more sustainable transport methods. The positive effect identified for EPO 2: Population and human health is further strengthened as the objectives support the protection of lands zoned as 'Strategic Residential Reserves' for the longer-term provision of housing to meet the needs of Longford Town's population. A minor negative effect is also identified for EPO 3: Energy / climate change mitigation and EPO 5: Air as the objectives support the development of both Tier 1 and Tier 2 lands. Tier 1 lands are already well serviced and may facilitate active and sustainable travel, whereas Tier 2 are not serviced yet but will be over the lifetime of the plan. Tier 2 developments are generally located further from Longford Town centre compared to Tier 1 and therefore may result in residents being more reliant on private vehicles, although this is uncertain.
- The objectives promote actions such as active land management; the development of strategically located landbanks; urban regeneration of brownfield lands in preference to the development of greenfield sites; maintaining and updating a Vacant Sites Register; and utilising site activation measures. In addition, the objectives will result in more optimal use of land and resources by supporting the sequential development of lands with preference for Tier 1 (Serviced Zoned Land) followed by Tier 2 (Serviceable Zoned Land) lands. Therefore, a significant positive effect is identified for these objectives for EPO 10:

Material Assets. This is combined with a minor negative effect as the higher population density in Longford Town could put a strain on existing material assets, however it is assumed that development would only occur where it could be ensured that there is sufficient infrastructure in place prior to development.

- The objectives support development of brownfield land in preference to greenfield land which will protect valuable soil resources. However, the objectives provide some support for the development of Tier 2 lands, which include areas of greenfield land. Development of greenfield sites can have adverse effects as soil sealing can increase surface water run-off and flood risk. Therefore, mixed effects (minor positive / minor negative) are identified for EPOs 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation, 6: Soil, and 7: Water.
- These objectives promote sequential development of lands from the town core out according to the availability or feasibility of delivering services. Delivering appropriate designed development on vacant and brownfield sites will help improve townscape character. However, the sequential development of lands may include greenfield land outside the town centre which could adversely affect landscape character and visual amenity. Therefore, a mixed effect (significant positive and minor negative) is identified for EPO 9: Landscape.
- The objectives encourage the regeneration of vacant and brownfield land which may enhance the setting of cultural heritage assets. However, delivering a higher quantum of development, particularly if not designed well, could harm the historic environment of Longford Town and the setting of any heritage assets. Therefore, a mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for EPO 8: Cultural Heritage.
- A mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is also identified for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna as the objectives support the development of brownfield land in preference to greenfield sites which will minimise adverse effects on biodiversity, although it is recognised that brownfield sites contain their own niche habitats and species. The minor negative effect also relates to the development of Tier 2 greenfield sites which can result in the loss of habitats, fragmentation of ecological corridors, and disturbance to species.

Reasonable Alternatives

Table D.24: Summary of SEA effects of the 'Reasonable Alternatives'

Reasonable Alternative	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
Reasonable Alternative 1 – Town Centre First Approach	**+/-**	**++/-**	**++/-**	**++/-**	**++/-**	**++/-**	**++/-**	**++/-**	**++/-**	**++/-**

Commentary

- Reasonable Alternative 1 seeks to develop Longford Town in line with the Draft Town Centre First Approach Strategy and the priorities for growth of a 'Key Town' in the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities. The main aim of this approach therefore is to promote more consolidated and compact growth. However, it will be necessary to develop edge of settlement greenfield sites to meet the demand for housing and employment.

- A mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is identified for Reasonable Alternative 1 for EPO 10: Material Assets as a town centre first approach would regenerate brownfield land; reuse existing buildings; and be more efficient in terms of infrastructure provision and resource use. However, this may also result in more pressure on services and facilities, including infrastructure such as public transport, sewers and water supply. There will also be a need to develop some greenfield sites closest to the town which would be an inefficient use of resources.
- A mixed effect (significant positive / minor negative) is identified for Reasonable Alternative 1 for EPO 2: Population and human health as it would promote higher density development in the town which would result in people living closer to services and facilities and boost the vitality of the area. Higher density living also promotes more active travel and greater levels of social inclusion as well as providing natural surveillance, which all enhance health, wellbeing and safety of Longford's residents. In addition, the town centre first approach supports the development of a socially connected town with inclusive spaces and places which are accessible, age friendly, safe and welcoming, as well as the development of walkways and river access. However, more development in urban areas may increase pressure on existing services and also result in reduced living conditions due to the density and less outdoor space.
- Reasonable Alternative 1 would focus development in more urban areas, meaning greater reuse of buildings and less development of greenfield land. Although brownfield land has some biodiversity value, encouraging development on these sites over greenfield sites which often contain more habitats will have a positive effect on biodiversity. However denser development could also result in fewer green spaces in urban areas for biodiversity. As identified above, there will still be a need to develop sequential greenfield land. As such, an uncertain mixed effect (minor positive / minor negative) is identified for EPO 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna.
- Reasonable Alternative 1 would reduce the need to travel by private vehicle to access services and facilities and would increases access to sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling. Positive effects are identified for EPO 3: Energy / Climate Change Mitigation and 5: Air as this would result in decreased transport-related emissions and subsequently improve air quality. However, negative effects are also expected as the scale of development proposed in the town centre could attract more people to the area resulting in increased traffic and congestion, resulting in worsening of air quality. Residents and employees of the edge of settlement sites may also be more car dependent due to the distance from the town centre.
- Mixed effects (significant positive / minor negative) are expected for EPO 8: Cultural Heritage and EPO 9: Landscape as the reuse of existing buildings and/or brownfield land will tackle physical dereliction which will enhance townscape character, visual amenity and the setting of heritage assets. However existing urban areas tend to contain the highest concentrations of heritage assets and these assets could be adversely affected by concentrated new development. The Town Centre First Strategy promotes Longford as a town of cultural and heritage significance which may increase the appreciation of and accessibility to heritage assets, however, if access is not properly managed, this could have an adverse effect on heritage assets. Development of some areas of greenfield land at the edge of the settlement may adversely affect landscape character and visual amenity.
- Positive effects are identified for EPO 4: Flood risk and climate change adaptation, 6: Soil and 7: Water as Reasonable Alternative 1 promotes the reuse of existing buildings and brownfield land which would prevent soil sealing of greenfield land. This would aid in minimising and mitigating runoff from new developments and would reduce flood risk. Directing new development to the town centre will enable connections to the public water and waste water infrastructure, avoiding the need for individual septic tanks to be installed which can increase the risk of pollution. In addition, the Town Centre First Strategy promotes prioritising climate change adaptation. An adverse effect is also identified as there would still be some greenfield development at the settlement edge.

Reasonable Alternative	Biodiversity	Population	Energy / Climate Change Mitigation	Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation	Air	Soil	Water	Cultural Heritage	Landscape	Material Assets
Reasonable Alternative 2 – Dispersed Growth	**--/+**	**--/+**	**--/+**	**--/+**	**--/+**	**--/+**	**--/+**	**--/+**	**--/+**	**--/+**

Commentary

- Reasonable Alternative 2 supports dispersed growth in Longford. This approach supports development which is less consolidated and compact.
- A significant negative effect is identified for Reasonable Alternative 2 for EPO 10: Material Assets as dispersed growth will likely result in the development of greenfield land. This could sterilise mineral resources as well as resulting in the inefficient use of land by focusing development on undeveloped areas, including the development of new infrastructure.
- Reasonable Alternative 2 would have significant negative effects for EPOs 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna, 6: Soil, and 7: Water as it would likely result in the development and destruction of greenfield land, which would harm the natural environment through habitat loss and subsequent fragmentation of the ecological network. In addition, the loss of greenfield land would adversely affect soil quality, and would lead to soil sealing and increased surface water runoff into nearby watercourses. Unlike compact growth of the town which has existing infrastructure, the dispersal of growth will require new developments to install individual water and waste water infrastructure which increases the risk of water pollution.
- Significant negative effects are expected for EPOs 3: Energy / Climate Change Mitigation and 5: Air as access to services and facilities would be more difficult, especially via active travel and public transport due to distance and a relative lack of provision of public transport outside the town centre. This would likely result in a higher dependence on and use of cars and less active travel, resulting in an increase in transport emissions.
- A significant negative effect is identified for EPO 4: Flood Risk / Climate Change Adaptation as the development of greenfield land would reduce the amount of permeable surfaces which aid in flood mitigation.
- A significant negative effect is identified for EPO 9: Landscape as dispersed development could adversely impact on the open areas of Longford and lead to settlement coalescence.
- A mixed (minor positive and minor negative) effect is identified for EPO 2: Population and human health as development would be more dispersed and take place away from urban centres where there are already employment and education facilities. This would have negative impacts on social inclusion and access to these facilities would therefore be more difficult, especially via active travel and public transport due to distance and a relative lack of provision of public transport outside of the town centre. This would reduce active travel and increase vehicle-derived air pollution which will impact the physical and mental health of Longford's population. However, Reasonable Alternative 2 may decrease pressure on more urban services and facilities, though new ones would be required to be built elsewhere. More dispersed development may also result in better living conditions; access to more space, including open space for recreation; and be less polluted than urban centres. Although it is noted that access to community, health and sports facilities, including GPs is relatively limited.
- An uncertain minor negative effect is identified for EPO 8: Cultural heritage as the development of greenfield land could disturb buried archaeology and impact the setting of heritage assets.

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