



County Sligo Climate Action Plan 2024 -2029

Natura Impact Statement

November 2023

County Sligo Climate Action Plan

Natura Impact Statement

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Table of Contents

<u>1.0 INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>1</u>
1.1 STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY	1
1.2 EU HABITATS DIRECTIVE ARTICLE 6(3) ASSESSMENT	2
1.2.1 REQUIREMENT FOR AN ASSESSMENT UNDER ARTICLE 6 OF THE HABITATS DIRECTIVE	3
<u>2.0 SUMMARY OF THE SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>3.0 METHODOLOGY</u>	<u>5</u>
3.1 GUIDANCE	5
3.2 BACKGROUND TO HABITATS DIRECTIVE ARTICLE 6 ASSESSMENTS	5
3.3 STAGE 2: APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT STEPS	6
3.4 INFLUENCE OF THE APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT PROCESS ON THE PLAN	6
3.5 SOURCES OF INFORMATION	7
3.6 OVERLAP WITH THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE DRAFT CAP	7
3.7 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	8
<u>4.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTY SLIGO CAP</u>	<u>9</u>
4.1 BACKGROUND TO COUNTY SLIGO CCAP	9
4.1.1 LOCAL AUTHORITY CLIMATE ACTION PLANS	9
4.1.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE LA-CAP	10
4.2 SCALE, NATURE AND LOCATION OF THE COUNTY SLIGO CCAP	11
<u>5.0 EUROPEAN SITES</u>	<u>12</u>
5.1 OVERVIEW OF EUROPEAN SITES	12
5.2 ZONE OF INFLUENCE OF THE PLAN	13
5.3 IDENTIFICATION OF EUROPEAN SITES	14
5.4 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	14
<u>6.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE DRAFT CAP</u>	<u>15</u>
6.1 ELEMENTS OF THE DRAFT CAP WITH POTENTIAL TO RESULT IN ADVERSE EFFECTS	15
6.2 IDENTIFICATION OF THE NATURE OF ADVERSE EFFECTS	18
6.3 IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS	22
<u>7.0 MITIGATION MEASURES</u>	<u>24</u>

7.1	MITIGATION MEASURES FROM DRAFT SLIGO COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2024-2030	25
7.2	SEA & APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT MITIGATION MEASURES INCORPORATED IN THE DRAFT CAP 35	
7.3	RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTING MITIGATION MEASURES	37
8.0	CONCLUSION	37
	REFERENCES	38
	APPENDIX 1: EUROPEAN SITES SCREENED IN	39

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Doherty Environmental Consultants (DEC) Ltd have been appointed by Sligo County Council to prepare a Natura Impact Statement of the draft County Sligo Climate Action Plan (CAP). This NIR has been completed with respect to the requirements outlined in Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive and Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act and has been prepared in order to facilitate Sligo County Council's requirement for completing an Appropriate Assessment of the Plan.

The proposed CAP is not directly connected with or necessary for the management of any European Site and hence the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000, apply. Section 177U(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 requires that a screening for appropriate assessment of, inter alia, a land use plan be carried out by a competent authority to assess, in light of best scientific knowledge, whether the proposed Plan, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European site. A Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment has been completed and assessed the potential for the CAP to result in likely significant effects to European Sites. A summary of the screening is provided in the Section 2 below.

1.1 STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared by Mr. Pat Doherty BSc., MSc, MCIEEM, of DEC Ltd. Mr. Doherty is a consultant ecologist with over 20 years' experience in completing ecological impact assessments and environmental impact assessments. Pat has been involved in the completion of assessment reports for proposed developments and land use activities under the EIA Directive and Article 6 of the Habitats Directive since 2003 and 2006 respectively. He has extensive experience completing such reporting for projects located in a variety of environments and has a thorough understanding of the biodiversity issues that may arise from proposed land use activities. Pat was responsible for completing one of the first Appropriate Assessment reports for large scale infrastructure developments in Ireland when he prepared the Appropriate Assessment for the N25 New Ross Bypass in 2006/07. Since then Pat has completed multiple examinations of both plans and projects in Ireland. He has completed Natura Impact Statements for national scale plans such as Ireland's CAP Strategic Plan and National Seafood Development Plan and regional and county scale plans including County Development Plans, Local Area Plans, Tourism Strategies

and Climate Action Plans. Pat has completed multiple Natura Impact Statements for a range of development types that include large scale infrastructure developments in sectors such as transport and energy as well as industrial, commercial and residential developments.

Pat has completed focused certified professional development training in Appropriate Assessment as well as in a range of ecological survey techniques and assessment processes. Training has been completed for National Vegetation Classification (NVC) and Irish Vegetation Classification (IVC) surveying, bryophyte survey for habitat assessment and identification, professional bat survey and assessment training, mammal surveying and specific training for bird and bat survey techniques. Ongoing training has been completed by approved training providers such as CIEEM, British Trust for Ornithology, the Botanic Gardens and the Field Studies Council.

1.2 EU HABITATS DIRECTIVE ARTICLE 6(3) ASSESSMENT

Legislative protection for habitats and species is provided within the European Union by the Habitats Directive. The Habitats Directive has been implemented in Ireland and throughout Europe through the establishment of a network of designated conservation areas known as the Natura 2000 (N2K) network. The N2K network includes sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), under the EU Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the EU Birds Directive 2009/147/EC (as amended). SACs are designated in areas that support habitats listed on Annex I and/or species listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive. SPAs are designated in areas that support: 1% or more of the all-Ireland population of bird species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive; 1% or more of the population of a migratory species; and more than 20,000 waterfowl.

This Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment is being prepared in order to enable the competent authority to comply with Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC (The Habitats Directive). It is prepared to assess whether or not the project alone or in combination with other plans and projects is likely to have a significant effect on any European Site in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the European Sites and specifically on the habitats and species for which the sites have been designated. Measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the proposed project on European sites (i.e. “mitigation measures”) or best practice measures have not been taken into account in this screening stage appraisal.

1.2.1 Requirement for an Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive

According to section 177U(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) the competent authority has a duty to:

- Determine whether the proposed Project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of one of more European Sites; and, if not,
- Determine if the Project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on the European Site(s) in view of best scientific knowledge and the Conservation Objectives of the site(s).

This report contains information to support a Screening for Appropriate Assessment and is intended to provide information that assists the competent authority when assessing and addressing all issues regarding the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Project and to allow the competent authority to comply with the Habitats Directive. Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive defines the requirements for assessment of projects and plans for which likely significant effects on European Sites may arise. The Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive together list habitats and species that are of international importance for conservation and require protection. The Habitats Directive requires competent authorities, to carry out a Screening for Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects that are not directly connected to or necessary for the management of a European Site, to assess whether the plan or project alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have significant effects on European Sites in view of best scientific knowledge and the Site's conservation objectives. This requirement is transposed into Irish Law by, inter alia, Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). Section 177U(4) of Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act states:

"The competent authority shall determine that an appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or a proposed development, as the case may be, is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the draft Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site. "

2.0 SUMMARY OF THE SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

A Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment has been completed for the draft CAP. This Screening was completed in line with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive, as transposed into Irish law in Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in relation to land use planning.

The Screening represents the first stage of the Article 6(3) Habitats Directive assessment process and was undertaken to identify whether the plan has the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites. The first step of the Screening was to assess all actions proposed by the CAP for their potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites. A total of 6 no. actions were identified as having the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites. These actions are listed in full in Table 6.1 of this NIR. During the screening a clear relationship was identified between land use activities, that may arise as a result of the implementation of these actions and European Sites.

For instance, actions that aim to promote/facilitate adaptation measures for existing key infrastructure such as roads and flood defences; the provision of infrastructure to enable modal shifts in transport from private vehicle to active travel and public transport; the implementation of nature-based actions with local authority lands; and the facilitation of community decarbonisation and future proofing initiatives could, in the absence of appropriate design and consideration, contribute to land use effects with potential to result in adverse effects to European Sites.

Given elements of the draft CAP will facilitate land use activities that will have the potential to result in impacts to European Sites, further consideration of the CAP, alone and in-combination with other land use plans is required as part of a Natura Impact Statement.

Accordingly, this NIS has been prepared to inform the Appropriate Assessment of the draft CAP's potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites and their qualifying features of interest occurring within the zone of influence of the plan.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 GUIDANCE

This NIS has been undertaken in accordance with National and European guidance documents: Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities (DEHLG 2010) and *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites – Methodological Guidance of the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats directive 92/43/EEC*. The following guidance documents were also of relevance during this the preparation of this NIS:

- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites – Methodological Guidance of the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/42/EED. European Commission (2021).
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites – The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats directive 92/43/EEC. European commission (2018).

3.2 BACKGROUND TO HABITATS DIRECTIVE ARTICLE 6 ASSESSMENTS

The EC (2021) guidelines outline the stages involved in undertaking an assessment of a project under Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive. The assessment process comprises the four stages outlined below. Stage 1 to 3 form part of the Article 6(3) process, while Stage 4 forms part of the Article 6(4) process. This NIR presents the findings of an assessment for Stage 2 of this assessment process.

- Stage 1 – Screening: This stage defines the proposed plan, establishes whether the proposed plan is necessary for the conservation management of the Natura 2000 site and assesses the likelihood of the plan to have a significant effect, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, upon a Natura 2000 site.
- Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment: If a plan or project is likely to have a significant affect an Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken. In this stage the impact of the plan or project to the Conservation Objectives of the Natura 2000 site is assessed. The

outcome of this assessment will establish whether the plan will have an adverse effect upon the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.

- Stage 3 – Assessment of Alternative Solutions: If it is concluded that, subsequent to the implementation of mitigation measures, a plan has an adverse impact upon the integrity of a Natura 2000 site it must be objectively concluded that no alternative solutions exist before the plan can proceed.
- Stage 4 – Where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain but imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) exist for the implementation of a plan or project an assessment of compensatory measures that will effectively offset the damage to the Natura site 2000 will be necessary.

3.3 STAGE 2: APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT STEPS

The EC Guidance Assessment Criteria for Appropriate Assessment seeks the following information:

1. A description of the elements of the project that are likely to give rise to significant effects to European Sites;
2. The Setting out the Conservation Objectives of the Site;
3. A description of how the project will affect key species and key habitats;
4. A description of how the integrity of the site (determined by structure and function and conservation objectives) is likely to be affected by the project (e.g. loss of habitat, disturbance, disruption, chemical changes, hydrological changes etc.);
5. A description of the mitigation measures that are to be introduced to avoid, reduce or remedy the adverse effects on the integrity of European Sites.

3.4 INFLUENCE OF THE APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT PROCESS ON THE PLAN

The purpose of the Appropriate Assessment of the Plan is not only to assess the implications of this Plan on European Sites and their qualifying features of interest occurring within its zone of influence, but also to provide safeguards that aim to minimise the ecological implications of

the Plan and avoid likely significant effects to European Sites. This was completed by identifying any elements of the Plan and the current Sligo County CDP 2017-2023 that aim to protect the natural environment.

3.5 SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Information relied upon included the following information sources, which included maps, ecological and water quality data:

- Online data available on European sites as held by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) from www.npws.ie;
- GIS based ecological datasets held by the NPWS;
- GIS based ecological datasets held by Sligo County Council;
- Sligo County Development Plan 2024 – 2030 Natura Impact Statement

3.6 OVERLAP WITH THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE DRAFT CAP

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the draft CAP was carried out concurrently with the NIS. There were several areas of overlap and in accordance with good practice in terms of the following stages:

- Sharing of baseline data gathering and sharing, data on European sites and potential sensitivities and threats.
- Objectives that will result in land use activities were examined by the NIS team for potential adverse effects on integrity of the European Sites in terms of their Conservation Objectives but also any other ecological impacts outside of the European site scale were highlighted to the SEA team for them to address in the SEA process.
- SEA team was able to highlight potential interactions between other environmental issues such as water quality and infrastructure and the sensitivities of European sites to the NIS team.

3.7 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The purpose of an Appropriate Assessment is to examine the potential for a land use plan to result in land use activities that could compromise the conservation objectives of a European Site. For many conservation objectives that have been given site-specificity, they are themselves broken down into a series of attributes and targets for each Qualifying Interest.

To make the assessment process efficient and manageable without losing quality of analysis, the Conservation Objectives were distilled to four common themes that could then be used as assessment criteria to examine each Objective that has been identified as having the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites. Each of the four criteria was quite general in nature which allows an easier assessment but also resulted in a very light “trigger” for the potential for adverse effects on integrity of European Sites to be identified.

The common themes which have become the four assessment criteria for the analysis of zoning parcels are described below:

- **Are there hydrological/hydrogeological linkages between Objectives and European sites and potential for impacts arising to and from surface, ground and coastal water quality?** European sites in County Sligo host a range of freshwater (surface and ground) and marine-dependent QIs and SCIs. These QI’s and special conservation interests are reliant on freshwater, groundwater and/or coastal water quality. Therefore any Objectives that could directly or indirectly affect water quality or supply could potentially affect the European site.
- **Will there be a risk of direct habitat loss or loss of ecological networks supporting European sites?** For example, walking trails and other new development occurring on undeveloped lands within the European sites etc.
- **Will there be a risk of direct or indirect disturbance to European site habitats and/or species?** Even though many of the land use activities that arise from the draft CAP actions may not be directly within European sites, they could affect European Site and their Qualifying Interest (Qis) via indirect disturbance, e.g. recreation at coastal sites, river walkways, noise disturbance due to construction.

- **Will there be a risk of direct or indirect threats to European sites by invasive species?** Many freshwater and terrestrial European sites are vulnerable to the adverse effects of invasive species introductions and land use activities associated with certain Actions will have the potential to result in the spread of such species.

4.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTY SLIGO CAP

4.1 BACKGROUND TO COUNTY SLIGO CCAP

Through the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, Ireland is now on a legally binding path to net-Zero emissions no later than 2050, and to a 51% reduction in emissions by the end of this decade. The Act provides the framework for Ireland to meet its international and EU climate commitments and to become a leader in addressing climate change.

As required by the 2021 Act, Sligo County Council is preparing their first Local Authority Climate Action Plan (LA-CAP) which must be adopted by the Elected Members before 23rd February 2024. This will continue the work undertaken over the first Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 which was non statutory.

4.1.1 Local Authority Climate Action Plans

Local Authorities will have a particularly important role in the delivery of both climate mitigation and adaptation. This is reflected in the provisions of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act, 2021, which requires each Local Authority to prepare a CAP specifying the mitigation and the adaptation measures to be adopted by the Local Authority.

Local authorities are key drivers in advancing climate policy at the local level and the Sligo CAP aims to strengthen the alignment between national climate policy and local circumstances with the prioritisation and acceleration of evidence-based measures, to assist in the delivery of the climate neutrality objective for Sligo County Council.

Sligo County Council will use its CAP in planning how it will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase climate resilience from across its own assets and infrastructure, whilst also taking

on a broader role to influence, facilitate and co-ordinate the climate actions of communities and other stakeholders and what it will do to advocate for climate action in Sligo. In order to ensure that the CAP is centred around a strong understanding of the role and remit of Sligo County Council on climate action, the Plan is being developed through the following framework.

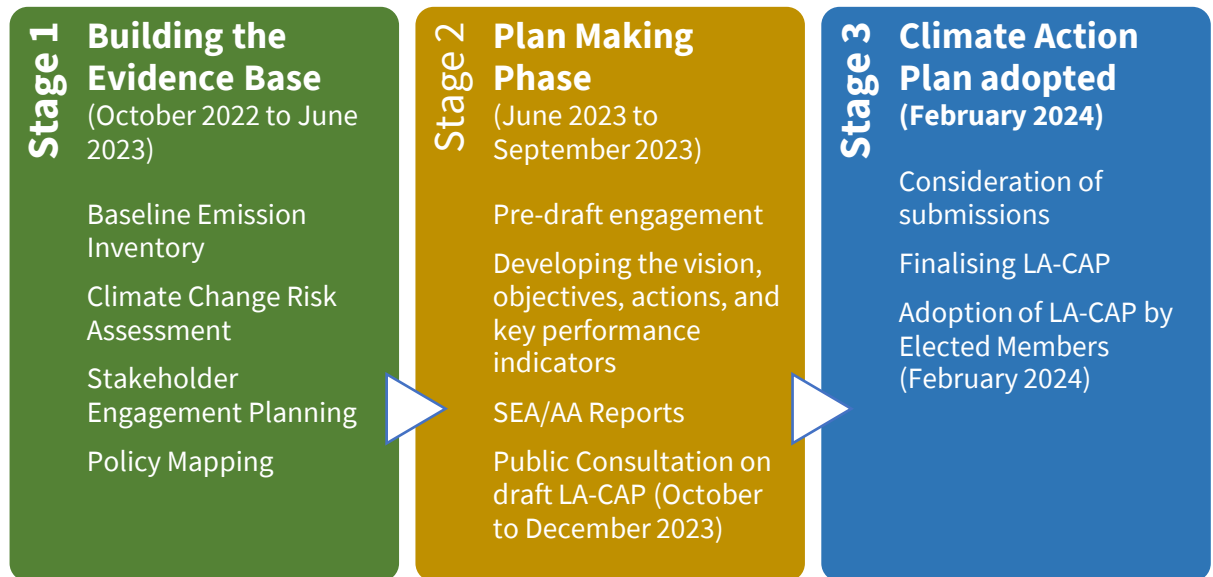
- Fully accountable: Targeted actions for areas where Sligo County Council has full accountability for climate action within their own operations.
- Influence: Actions for where Sligo County Council can influence businesses, communities, and individuals in the delivery of local climate action through the functions and services they provide.
- Coordination: Actions for where Sligo County Council can coordinate and facilitate local and community action bringing together stakeholders in partnership to achieve climate action related projects.
- Advocate: Actions aligned to Sligo County Councils role as advocate on climate action through raising awareness, communicating, informing, and engaging in open dialogue on the topic.

While the Climate Action Plan will be ambitious to reflect the leadership role of Sligo County Council on climate action, the Plan will not include actions whereby their implementation and achievement fall outside their role, remit, and governance.

4.1.2 Development of the LA-CAP

The development of the Climate Action Plan will follow a number of stages as explained in the Figure 4.1. below.

Figure 4.1 Stages in the development of the Climate Action Plan



4.2 SCALE, NATURE AND LOCATION OF THE COUNTY SLIGO CCAP

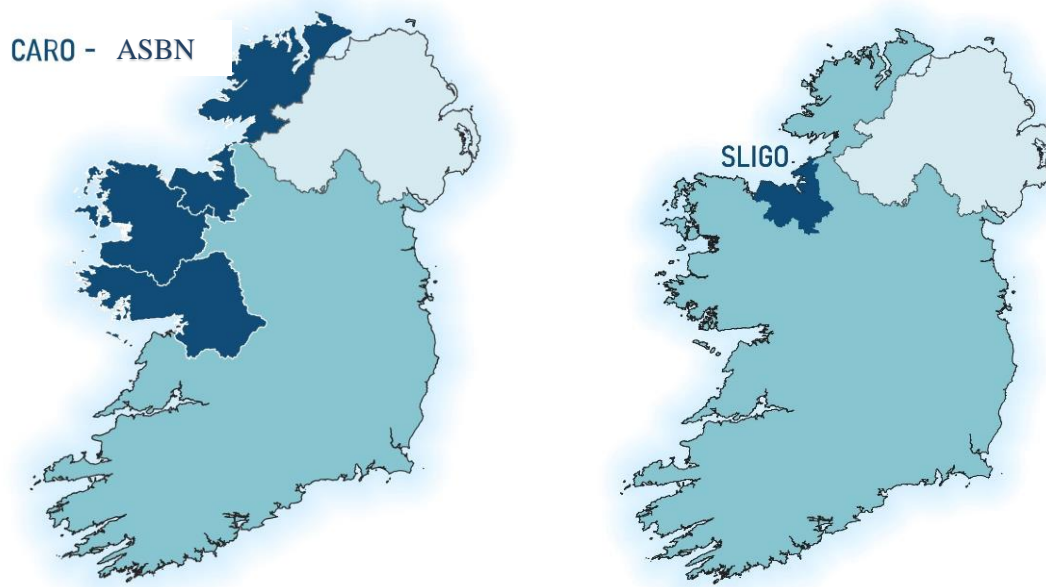
The plan will cover all of the functional area of County Sligo. **Figure 4.2** shows the location of County Sligo, and the Atlantic Seaboard North Climate Action Regional office extent (CARO).

The plan is still being progressed but a number of principal themes are identified and these will be supported by actions. These themes include:

- Sustainability and resource management.
- Governance
- Community resilience and transition
- Environment and Biodiversity
- Transport and mobility

The Plan will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment, Ecological Impact Assessment and requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent granting. Actions arising from the plan will demonstrate compliance with the environmental protection measures in the current Sligo County CDP 2017-2023 (extended), Draft Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030, and SEA Environmental Reports and Natura Impact Reports that accompanies same.

Figure 4.2: County Sligo and the Atlantic Seaboard North CARO



5.0 EUROPEAN SITES

5.1 OVERVIEW OF EUROPEAN SITES

County Sligo is situated in the west coast of Ireland, bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the north, County Mayo to the west and south and the Counties of Leitrim and Roscommon to the south.

The County has a diverse topography varying from wide and open expanses of peatland and moorland, limestone pavement, extensive forested areas, estuarial mudflats, high Atlantic cliffs, inland lakes and waterways and fertile plains.

The Plan area is rich in biodiversity, containing many important, and protected, habitats and species such as, coastal habitats from cliffs to estuaries, reefs, machairs, mudflats, sandy beaches, and terrestrial habitats such as lakes, turloughs, fens, wetlands, woodlands, bats, wildfowl (duck and geese), waders, salmon, lamprey and otters. However, it also contains many other habitats which are not protected such as scrub, parks, streams, hedgerows, tree lines, roadside verges, housing estate open spaces and gardens.

There are a total of 30 European Sites; 20 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and 10 Special Protection Areas (SPA), occurring within Sligo. Collectively referred to as the Natura 2000 network, SACs and SPAs are designated in consideration of Habitats Directive Annex I habitats and Annex II species and classified in consideration of Birds Directive Annex I bird species. The 30 European Sites make up a sizeable percentage of the land cover within the county. This area reflects the international and national significance of Sligo's wealth of natural heritage. Few Natura 2000 sites are exclusively designated or classified in consideration of terrestrial or aquatic qualifying interests; many consist of a combination of terrestrial, freshwater and marine habitats and species. In the natural environment also there is considerable overlap between terrestrial and aquatic fauna and flora, with each co-existing and co-reliant in many cases.

As well as within Co. Sligo there are a high number of European Site bordering the county. In order to identify these sites the spatial boundary data for the European site network, as published by the NPWS in July 2023 was used. All European Sites which were deemed to be within the zone of influence of the potential implications of the draft CAP are considered further in Section 3.2 below and are listed in Table A1.1 in Appendix 1.

5.2 ZONE OF INFLUENCE OF THE PLAN

The approach to defining the zone of influence of the County Sligo CAP follows the approach used during for the draft Sligo County Development Plan 2024 - 2030. The land use effects of the CAP, be they direct or indirect effects, will be primarily restricted to County Sligo only. However a wider zone of influence is used for impacts relating to surface waters that are hydrologically connected to the Plan area and that support freshwater-dependent habitats;

habitats for SACs or SPAs; habitats for Annex 2 qualifying species; and habitat for SPA special conservation interest bird species.

5.3 IDENTIFICATION OF EUROPEAN SITES

In line with the approach to defining the zone of influence as set out above, the screening of the draft CAP identified 35 SACs within County Sligo and within a 15km buffer of the county boundary; 9 SACs hydrologically connected to the Plan Area of County Sligo; 15 SPAs within County Sligo and within a 15km buffer of the county boundary; and 5 SPAs hydrologically connected to the Plan Area of County Sligo.

As such a total of 66 sites comprised for 46 SACs and 20 SPAs fall within the zone of influence of the draft CAP. These 66 European Sites are listed in Appendix 1.

5.4 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

The function of this NIS is to examine the potential adverse effects of the draft CAP on European Sites and the conservation objectives set out for the features of interest for which these sites are designated as SACs and SPAs. Generic Conservation Objectives have been published for all European Sites occurring in Ireland. The generic Conservation Objectives for SACs and their qualifying habitats and qualifying species are:

- To maintain the Annex I habitats for which the SAC has been selected at favourable conservation status;
- To maintain the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected at favourable conservation status;
- To maintain the extent, species richness and biodiversity of the entire site; and
- To establish effective liaison and co-operation with landowners, legal users and relevant authorities.

The generic Conservation Objectives for SPAs and their special conservation interests are:

To maintain the bird species of special conservation interest, for which the SPA has been designated, at favourable conservation status.

Favourable Conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- Its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing;
- The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future; and

The conservation status of its typical species is “favourable”. Favourable Conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- Population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats;
- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future; and
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

In addition to the published generic Conservation Objectives for all European Sites, Site Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) have been published for individual European Sites. These SSCO identify the attributes that underpin the conservation status of qualifying features of interest/special conservation interests and provide targets for ensuring that their favourable status is maintained and/or restored. As outlined in Section 3.7 above five assessment criteria have been used during this NIS that aim to capture the attributes and targets that underpin the site-specific conservation objectives for European Site. These five criteria are used to examine the potential for land use activities associated with Objectives to result in adverse effects to European Sites.

6.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE DRAFT CAP

6.1 ELEMENTS OF THE DRAFT CAP WITH POTENTIAL TO RESULT IN ADVERSE EFFECTS

The actions of the draft CAP have been examined for their potential to result in land use effects, which in turn could contribute, in the absence appropriate safeguards and consideration, to adverse effects to European Sites. A total of 6 no. actions have been identified as having the

potential to support future land use activities that could in turn result in adverse effects to European Sites.

It is noted that actions of the draft CAP are strategic in nature and lack specificity with regard to the nature and location of future land use activities that may be supported by the 6 no. action listed in Table 6.1 below. As such the identification of potential adverse effects is based on a consideration of conceivable land use activities that could arise as a result of the supporting policy framework established by the draft CAP. The consideration of such adverse effects is set out in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: Draft CAP Actions Identified as Having Potential to Contribute to Adverse Effects to European Sites

Action No.	Action	Adverse Effects
<i>Strategic Goals</i>		
14	Ensure all public lighting is retrofitted to low energy lamps and that the system is monitoring and managed to maximise energy efficiency	In the absence of the inclusion of measures that aim to safeguard crepuscular and nocturnal fauna that are sensitive to night time lighting from negative disturbance effects of lighting, the conversion of lighting will have the potential to result in adverse disturbance effects. In terms of European Sites, those that could be adversely affected will include SPAs that are designated for their role in supporting bird species that are known to be sensitive to night time lighting.
20	Continue to monitor coastal erosion along Sligo shoreline and maintain existing sea defences	the maintenance of existing sea defences could conceivably include land use activities with potential to result in adverse effects to European Sites. A significant proportion of the Sligo coastline from Ballysadare Bay northwest to the county boundary with Leitrim occurs within the boundaries of European Sites. The provision of works to maintain existing sea defences and coastal resilience could result in direct impacts such as habitat loss or habitat degradation or indirect impacts such as habitat and species

Action No.	Action	Adverse Effects
		disturbance and changes in key indicators of conservation status of coastal habitats such as erosions and deposition rates etc.
21	<p>Convene a Flooding Working Group to improve local flood protection (maintenance) and enhanced flood response (required resources). Examine areas where sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) can be considered.</p>	<p>European Sites occur in all surface water catchments within Sligo. The SACs and SPAs occurring in these catchments support freshwater and/coastal habitats and species that are dependent on or sensitive to freshwater hydrological processes and any changes to them. The delivery of works to improve local flood protection and enhance flood response will have the potential to result in direct impacts such as habitat loss or habitat degradation, should the occur within European Sites or indirect impacts such as habitat and species disturbance and changes in key indicators of conservation status such as water quality and hydrological regimes.</p>
31	<p>Develop a register of Council owned properties that may be used for Nature based solutions, and implement actions, including the establishment of an annual native tree planting programme, over lifetime of LACAP</p>	<p>Whilst the planting of trees to increase overall tree canopy cover is recognised as having the potential to result in positive impacts for biodiversity in general it is noted that the planting of trees in inappropriate areas such as open peatland habitats or the planting of inappropriate species (e.g. Cornus sericea particularly in wet habitats) could have the potential to result in adverse effects to the conservation status of habitats or species of European Sites.</p>
36	<p>Deliver on existing multi-annual Active Travel programme and continue to work for future expansion of the network.</p>	<p>The delivery of active travel projects could conceivably result in the support of new infrastructure that in turn could have potential to result in direct impacts such as habitat loss or habitat degradation or indirect impacts such as habitat and species disturbance and changes in key indicators of conservation status such as water quality.</p>

Action No.	Action	Adverse Effects
38	Develop Sustainable Travel Mobility Hubs and promote shared mobility solutions that will allow for the move away from private car ownership	The delivery of Sustainable Travel Mobility Hubs is predicted to be provided within or adjacent to urban, town, village centres within the County and outside of the boundary of any European Sites. Notwithstanding this the provision of hub infrastructure could conceivably have potential to result in indirect impacts such as habitat and species disturbance and changes in key indicators of conservation status such as water quality.

6.2 IDENTIFICATION OF THE NATURE OF ADVERSE EFFECTS

The potential impacts of the implementation of the draft CAP Actions listed in Table 6.1 to European Site is examined in Table 6.2 below by evaluating the potential for each of these Action to result in adverse effects to the 4 assessment criteria.

Table 6.2: Identification of adverse effects to the Qualifying Features/Special Conservation Interests of European Sites

Actions	Hydrological pathway to European Site whose conservation objectives are reliant on surface, ground and coastal water quality	Direct habitat loss of European Site	Direct or indirect disturbance to European Site habitat and/or species	Direct or indirect impacts to European Site from invasive species
14	The implementation of this action will not result in perturbations to surface waters.	The implementation of this action will not result in direct habitat loss.	The implementation of this action, could in the absence of appropriate design safeguards, result in indirect habitat loss for bird species of SPAs that are sensitive to night time lighting.	The implementation of this action will not result in the spread of invasive species.
20	Yes. A significant proportion of the Sligo coastline from Ballysadare Bay to the Leitrim County boundary as well as at Aughris Head, occurs within the boundary of European Sites and the provision of works to maintain coastal sea defences and coastal resilience could be connected to European Sites via coastal hydrological pathways. Changes in coastal water quality or the hydrological regime of coastal waters could result in disturbance to coastal qualifying habitats and the habitats relied upon by coastal qualifying species.	The provision of works to maintain coastal sea defences and coastal resilience along the Sligo coast could overlap with European Site designations given that large stretches of the Sligo coastline are located within such designations. In the event of such overlap the potential could arise for the loss of qualifying habitat under circumstances where due consideration and safeguards do not inform such developments.	The implementation of this action, could in the absence of appropriate design safeguards, result in indirect habitat loss and/or loss of habitat for qualifying species.	Yes. If developments supported by the action result are located in areas that are already infested by non-native invasive species, the potential will exist for their spread.
21	Yes. European Sites occur in all surface water catchments within Sligo and the majority of these sites support freshwater and coastal	The provision of new infrastructure development supported by this action could overlap with European Sites. In the event of such overlap the potential could	Yes. The provision of developments supported by this action could have the potential to result in direct and indirect	Yes. If developments supported by the action result are located in areas that are already infested by non-native invasive species, the

Actions	Hydrological pathway to European Site whose conservation objectives are reliant on surface, ground and coastal water quality	Direct habitat loss of European Site	Direct or indirect disturbance to European Site habitat and/or species	Direct or indirect impacts to European Site from invasive species
	dependent qualifying habitat and species. These qualifying habitat and species are reliant on good water quality and the maintenance of existing or the provision of new flood relief infrastructure supported by this action could, in the absence of suitable safeguards, have the potential to result in perturbations to water quality with downstream impacts to qualifying habitats and species.	arise for the loss of qualifying habitat under circumstances where due consideration and safeguards do not inform such developments.	disturbance to qualifying habitat or species where the development site is connected to such habitats or the habitats relied upon by such species via impact pathways such watercourse etc.	potential will exist for their spread.
31	The implementation of this action will not result in perturbations to surface waters.	The implementation of this action will not result in direct habitat loss.	The implementation of this action, could in the absence of appropriate design safeguards, result in indirect habitat loss for bird species of SPAs. Such an indirect effect could arise if tree planting is undertaken in open habitats such as grasslands or peatland habitats that are relied upon by waterbirds. Tree planting in such habitats can also increase the risk of predation of such species by providing perch sites for predatory bird species including raptors and corvids.	The selection of inappropriate tree species or the use of planting substrate that is not certified to be free of invasive species could result in the spread of such species.

Actions	Hydrological pathway to European Site whose conservation objectives are reliant on surface, ground and coastal water quality	Direct habitat loss of European Site	Direct or indirect disturbance to European Site habitat and/or species	Direct or indirect impacts to European Site from invasive species
36	Yes. County Sligo supports a high number of European Sites that support freshwater and coastal dependent qualifying habitat and species. These qualifying habitat and species are reliant on good water quality and the provision of new infrastructure development supported by this action could, in the absence of suitable safeguards, have the potential to result in perturbations to water quality with downstream impacts to qualifying habitats and species.	The provision of new infrastructure development supported by this action could overlap with European Sites. In the event of such overlap the potential could arise for the loss of qualifying habitat under circumstances where due consideration and safeguards do not inform such developments.	Yes. The provision of developments supported by this action could have the potential to result in direct and indirect disturbance to qualifying habitat or species where the development site is connected to such habitats or the habitats relied upon by such species via impact pathways such watercourse etc.	Yes. If developments supported by the action result are located in areas that are already infested by non-native invasive species, the potential will exist for their spread.
38	Yes. County Sligo supports a high number of European Sites that support freshwater and coastal dependent qualifying habitat and species. These qualifying habitat and species are reliant on good water quality and new development, that could be supported by this action could, in the absence of suitable safeguards, have the potential to result in perturbations to water quality with downstream impacts to qualifying habitats and species.	The implementation of this action will not result in direct habitat loss. As noted in Table 6.1 above such hubs it is envisaged be located within or adjacent to existing urban, town or village centres and outside the boundary of any European Sites.	Yes. The provision of developments supported by the action will have the potential to result in direct and indirect disturbance to qualifying habitat or species where the development site is connected to such habitats or the habitats relied upon by such species via impact pathways such watercourse etc.	Yes. If developments supported by the action result are located in areas that are already infested by non-native invasive species, the potential will exist for their spread.

6.3 IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS

This Section provides an outline of the potential cumulative effects on the European Sites within the zone of influence of the Plan. There is potential for a wide range of plans and project to combine with the draft CAP and documented threats and pressures to these European Sites. Table 6.3 below provides a non-exhaustive list of the Plans that represent those most likely to combine with the draft CAP to result in potential cumulative effects. An assessment for potential cumulative effects to arise is provided for each of the Plans listed in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: In-Combination Assessment with Other Plans

Principal Plans	Comment	Statement
National Planning Framework (under revision)	This plan was subject to full SEA and AA and concluded that subject to full adherence and implementation of measures likely significant effects were not identified	No in-combination impacts were predicted as a result of implementation of the Plan, the revised NPF will be subject to full SEA and AA.
CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027 / FoodVision 2030 /	The CAP Strategic Plan is the key mechanism for agriculture and needs to comply with all environmental legislation and the mitigation measures for interventions as detailed in the SEA ER and NIS	No in-combination impacts were predicted as a result of implementation of the Plan, the revised NPF will be subject to full SEA and AA
Northern and Western Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy 2020-2032;	These plans were subject to full SEA and AA and concluded that subject to full adherence and implementation of measures likely significant effects were not identified.	No in-combination impacts were predicted as a result of implementation of the Plans.
Third Cycle River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027 draft	The third and current cycle aims to build particularly on the initiatives of the second cycle,	No in-combination impacts were predicted as a result of implementation of the Plans

Principal Plans	Comment	Statement
	<p>particularly the governance and implementation structures, and to improve the establishment of Irish Water, An Forum Uisce, the Local Authority Waters Programme and the Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme.</p> <p>These actions support the policies in the LAP. However, any developments that may arise as a result of this plan will be required to have a project level AA and EIA which will assess these in detail and provide suitable mitigation measures where appropriate.</p> <p>The Third Cycle RMP is subject to full SEA And AA.</p>	
<p>Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023 (extended) & Draft Sligo County Development Plan 2024 - 2030</p>	<p>Both Sligo County Development Plans have been prepared in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000, and have been subject to full SEA, AA and SFRA.</p> <p>Both plans set out the overall strategy for planning and sustainable development for the county. Chapter 10 of both plans outline the aims of the</p>	<p>No in-combination impacts were predicted as a result of implementation of the Plans.</p>

Principal Plans	Comment	Statement
	Sligo County Council to protect and enhance the natural heritage and biodiversity of designated and non-designated ecological sites and sets out the policies and objectives for this.	
Sligo County Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2017 -2022; new LECP in prep.	These plans were subject to SEA and AA screening and concluded that subject to full adherence and implementation of measures likely significant effects were not identified.	No in-combination impacts were predicted as a result of implementation of the Plans.
County Sligo Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024	Sligo Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2019-2024 and any subsequent versions). This Plan has been subject to SEA/AA screening and is being replaced by the CAP 2024 - 2029	No in-combination impacts were predicted as a result of implementation of the Plans.

7.0 MITIGATION MEASURES

Given that the draft CAP is required to align with and sit alongside the Draft Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030 in terms of planning hierarchy applicable to the county it follows that all environmental safeguards set out in the County Development Plan will be applicable to the safeguarding European Sites from potential adverse effects identified for the draft CAP.

The following subsections below sets out the suite of mitigation measures to ensure the draft CAP does not give rise to significant environmental effects.

All mitigation measures included in the following section are relevant to the protection of European Sites and their qualifying features of interest/special conservation interests. All

general mitigation measures that provide safeguards to biodiversity in general are also included in the list of mitigation measures outlined in the following section.

Section 7.1 sets out the relevant policies and objectives of the Draft Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030 that aim to protect the environment. These policies and objectives will act as safeguards to the potential adverse effects associated with the 6 no. actions of the draft CAP listed in Section 6.1 above.

Section 7.2 set out the results of the SEA and AA process review of the draft CAP actions that has culminated with the provision of additional wording to selected actions. The additional wording provides clarity and focus with respect to environment protection as well as providing for the opportunity for positive environmental effects across a variety of actions set out in the draft CAP.

7.1 MITIGATION MEASURES FROM DRAFT SLIGO CDP 2024-2030

The policies and objectives set out in the current Sligo County CDP 2017-2023 and Draft Sligo County Development Plan (2024 - 2030) that will provide safeguards for the potential adverse impacts that could arise out of land use activities supported by the draft CAP are outlined in Table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1: Sligo CDP 2017 - 2023 and Draft Sligo CDP 2024 -2030 Policies & Objectives that provide Environmental Safeguards & Protection for European Sites

Ref	Text
<p>It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:</p>	<p>P-DSNC-1 Protect and maintain the favourable conservation status and conservation value of all natural heritage sites designated or proposed for designation in accordance with European and national legislation and agreements. These include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Ramsar Sites, Statutory Nature Reserves. In addition, the Council will identify, maintain and develop non-designated areas of high nature conservation value which serve as linkages or ‘stepping stones’ between protected sites in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>P-DSNC-2 Promote the maintenance and, as appropriate, achievement of ‘favourable conservation status’ of habitats and species in association with the NPWS.</p> <p>P-DSNC-3 Carry out an appropriate level of assessment for all development plans, land-use plans and projects that the Council authorizes or proposes to undertake or adopt, to determine the potential for these plans or projects to impact on designated sites, proposed designated sites or associated ecological corridors and linkages in accordance with the Habitats Directive, All appropriate assessments shall be in compliance with the provisions of Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000.</p> <p>P-DSNC-4 Consider development within, or with the potential to affect, Natural Heritage Areas or proposed Natural Heritage Areas, where it is shown that such development, activities or works will not have significant negative impacts on such sites or features, or in circumstances where impacts can be appropriately mitigated.</p>

<p>It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:</p>	<p>P-NCODS-1 Minimise the impact of new development on habitats of natural value that are key features of the County’s ecological network. Developments likely to have an adverse effect on recognised sites of local nature conservation importance will be required to demonstrate the impacts on the ecological value of the site and will not be approved unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the development that outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation value of the site.</p> <p>P-NCODS-2 Ensure that development proposals, where relevant, improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and encourage the retention and management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora as per Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>P-NCODS-3 Ensure that proposals for development protect and enhance biodiversity, wherever possible, by minimising adverse impacts on existing habitats and by including mitigation and/or compensation measures, as appropriate, which ensure that biodiversity is enhanced. P-NCODS-4 Apply the precautionary principle in relation to development proposals with potential to impact on County Biodiversity Sites or on local nature conservation interest by requiring an ecological impact assessment (EcIA) to ensure that any proposed development will not affect the integrity and conservation value of the site.</p> <p>P-NCODS-5 Ensure that no ecological networks, or parts thereof which provide significant connectivity between areas of local biodiversity, are lost without remediation as a result of implementation of this Plan.</p> <p>P-NCODS-6 Provide guidance for developers and the general public in relation to nature conservation outside designated sites and the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geological heritage in general. P-NCODS-7 Integrate biodiversity consideration</p>
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<p>It is the policy of Sligo County Council to</p>	<p>P-INW-1 Protect rivers, streams and other water courses and their associated Core Riparian Zones (CRZs) from inappropriate development and maintain them in an open state, capable of providing suitable habitats for fauna and flora. Structures (e.g. bridges) crossing fisheries waters shall be clear-span and shall be designed and built in consultation with Inland Fisheries Ireland.</p> <p>P- INW-2 Protect and enhance biodiversity richness by protecting rivers, stream corridors and valleys by reserving land along their banks for ecological corridors, maintaining them free from inappropriate development and discouraging culverting or realignment.</p> <p>P- INW-3 Ensure that all proposed greenfield residential and commercial developments use sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) in accordance with best current practice, ensuring protection of the integrity of wetland sites in the adjoining area, including their hydrological regime.</p> <p>P- INW-4 Ensure that floodplains and wetlands within the Plan area are retained for their biodiversity and flood protection value.</p> <p>P- INW-5 Ensure that proposed developments do not adversely affect groundwater resources and groundwater-dependent habitats and species.</p>
<p>It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:</p>	<p>P-WTH-1 Protect trees, woodlands and hedgerows from development that would impact adversely upon them. Promote new tree and woodland planting and the enhancement of existing hedgerows by seeking increased coverage, in conjunction with new development using native species of local provenance, where possible.</p> <p>P-WTH-2 Discourage the felling of mature trees to facilitate development and, where appropriate make use of tree preservation orders to protect important trees and groups of trees which may be at risk or have an important amenity or historic value.</p> <p>P-WTH-3 Require the planting of native broadleaved species, and species of local provenance, in new developments. P-WTH-4 Promote the planting of native tree and shrub species by committing to using native species (of local provenance wherever possible) in its landscaping works and on County Council property.</p>
<p><i>Draft Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030</i></p>	

P-BD-1	Protect, conserve, enhance and sustainably manage the natural heritage, biodiversity, geological heritage, landscape and environment of County Sligo. P-BD-2 Protect and, where possible, enhance the plant and animal species and their habitats that have been identified under EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), the EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477/2011) as amended, Flora (Protection) Order 2015, the Wildlife Act 1976 (as amended), and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 as amended, including all statutory instruments made under each act.
P-BD-3	Ensure that the ecological impact of all development proposals on habitats and species are appropriately assessed by suitably qualified professionals, in accordance with best practice guidelines, taking full account of the precautionary principle where uncertainty exists.
P-BD-4	Minimise adverse impacts of proposed developments on existing habitats (whether designated or not) by including mitigation and/or compensation measures as appropriate.
P-BD-5.	Raise public awareness of the natural heritage and biodiversity of the County and encourage increased public participation in biodiversity conservation by supporting community-led initiatives
P-BD-6	Support the implementation of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025 and any subsequent revisions.
O-BD-1	Implement, in partnership with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, relevant stakeholders and the community, the objectives and actions of both the County Sligo Biodiversity Action Plan and the National Biodiversity Action Plan as it relates to the remit and functions of Sligo County Council.
O-BD-2	Prepare and support the implementation of a Green Infrastructure Strategy for County Sligo.

P-DSNC-1	Protect and maintain the conservation status of all natural heritage sites designated or proposed for designation in accordance with European and national legislation and agreements. These include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Natural Heritage Areas (NHA), proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA), Ramsar Sites, Statutory Nature Reserves, as identified by the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and any other sites that may be proposed for designation during the lifetime of this Plan.
P-DSNC-2	Promote the maintenance and, as appropriate, achievement of ‘favourable conservation status’ of habitats and species in association with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).
P-DSNC-3	Carry out an appropriate level of assessment for all development plans, land-use plans and projects that the Council authorizes or proposes to undertake or adopt, to determine the potential for these plans or projects to impact on designated sites, proposed designated sites or associated ecological corridors and linkages in accordance with the Habitats Directive. All appropriate assessments shall be in compliance with the provisions of Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).
P-DSNC-4	Ensure that all development proposals are subject to the process of Screening for Appropriate Assessment and subsequent stages of Appropriate Assessment, as relevant, carried out to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, in consultation with National Parks and Wildlife Service, as appropriate.
O-DSNC-1	Identify any areas of high nature conservation value which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, and which have not been previously identified.
O-DSNC-2	Undertake appropriate surveys and collect data to provide an evidence-base to assist the Council in meeting its obligations under Article 6 of the Habitats Directives (92/43/EEC) as transposed into Irish Law, subject to available resources.
P-PS-1	Ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact incapable of satisfactory mitigation on plant, animal or bird species protected by law.
P-PS-2	Consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (DHLGH) and take account of any licensing requirements when undertaking, approving and authorising development which is likely to affect plant, animal or bird species protected by law.

P-PS-3	Provide guidance to developers and others in relation to species protected by law and their protection and management in the context of development.
P-PS-4	Ensure, where appropriate, the protection and conservation of areas, sites, species and ecological networks of biodiversity value outside designated sites and require an appropriate level of ecological assessment by suitably qualified professionals to accompany any development proposals likely to impact on such areas or species.
P-PS-5	Require all new developments to incorporate habitat facilities for wildlife species, including Swifts, in or on buildings or their facades, where appropriate. O-PS-1 Undertake surveys, as appropriate, to establish the location of protected flora and fauna in the Plan area through the County Heritage Plan and the County Biodiversity Action Plan
O-NCODS 2	2 Identify and protect, in co-operation with the relevant statutory agencies and other relevant groups, County Biodiversity Sites which are not otherwise protected by legislation.
O-NCODS-3	Ensure that the findings of the County Habitat Mapping project (when completed) are utilised to inform the development management process. P-WET-1 Have regard to the County Sligo Wetlands Surveys 2008-2011 and subsequent wetland surveys that may be published during the lifetime of this Plan. Protect surveyed wetland sites that have been rated of A (International), B (National) and C+ (County) importance.
P-WET-2	Ensure that an ecological assessment at an appropriate level (including EIA, where appropriate) is undertaken in conjunction with proposals involving drainage, reclamation or infilling of wetland habitats.

	<p>P-WHT-1 Protect woodlands, hedgerows and trees from development that would impact adversely upon them. Promote new tree and woodland planting and the enhancement of existing hedgerows by seeking increased coverage, in conjunction with new development using native species of local provenance, where possible. P-WHT-2 Discourage the felling of mature trees to facilitate development and, where appropriate make use of tree preservation orders to protect important trees and groups of trees which may be at risk or have an important amenity or historic value.</p> <p>P-WHT-3 Require the planting of native broadleaved species, and species of local provenance, in new developments and as part of Sligo County Council’s own landscaping works.</p> <p>P-WHT-4 Encourage the retention of hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatments in rural areas and prevent loss and fragmentation where practically possible.</p> <p>If removal of a hedgerow, stone wall or other distinctive boundary treatment is unavoidable, reinstatement of the same type of boundary shall be required. P-WHT-5 Promote awareness and require the retention and protection of hedgerows which mark townland boundaries, in recognition of their historic value and archaeological importance.</p> <p>P-WHT-6 Protect native and semi-natural woodlands, groups of trees and individual mature trees in line with best practice and encourage their effective management and retention.</p>
P-INV-1.	Prevent and control the spread of invasive plant and animal species within the county
P-INV-2	Require all development proposals to address the presence of invasive alien species on proposed development sites and (if necessary) require applicants to prepare and submit an Invasive Species Management Plan, in compliance with the provisions of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015.

P-INV-3	Promote best practice in the control of invasive species when carrying out statutory functions of the County Council in association with relevant bodies, including TII, the Department of Transport and the Department of Rural and Community Development.O-INV-1 Undertake studies through the County Heritage Plan and County Biodiversity Plan to quantify the extent of selected invasive species (Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed and Himalayan Balsam) within the Plan area, with recommendations of priority species for control or eradication, the degree of threat posed and the resources required for effective management.
P-OR-6	Where feasible, develop walkways and cycleways between green spaces or green corridors in built-up areas and recreational areas located outside settlements, including coastal, upland, lakeland and forestry sites and subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
P-CP-2	Require that any development within the coastal zone is appropriately sited and designed, having regard to coastal flooding, future shoreline erosion, predicted sea-level rise and OPW flood mapping.
P-CP-3	Require that detailed flood risk assessment is carried out in relation to development proposals within the coastal zone and particularly on all low-lying areas, where appropriate.
O-CP-1	Identify, prioritise and implement coastal protection works within the coastal zone where considered necessary, subject to the availability of resources and subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives.
O-CP-2	Monitor existing dune management schemes on an ongoing basis and carry out appropriate repairs, improvements and extensions, subject to the availability of resources and compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives. Where appropriate, continue to employ soft engineering techniques (i.e. dune stabilisation and planting).
O-CP-3	Examine existing beach bye-laws and make appropriate amendments, in the interest of protecting sand dunes from encroachment and damage.
33.2.5 Surface water drainage	All applications for planning permission shall incorporate proposals for the disposal of surface water. The use of nature-based solutions will be required in all medium to large scale development proposals.

P-FOR-1	Support sustainable forestry development in County Sligo, subject to the protection of scenic landscapes and views, water quality, heritage features, residential amenity and public safety.
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7.2 SEA & APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT MITIGATION MEASURES INCORPORATED IN THE DRAFT CAP

Table 7.2 set out the additional wording for listed actions that aims to clarify and focus environment protection as well as providing for the opportunity for positive environmental effects across the actions listed in the table. It is noted that not all actions listed in Table 7.2 have been identified as having the potential to result in adverse effects to European Sites but have been amended in light of the above mentioned aims of clarity, environment focus and enhancement. The additional wording provided for the actions listed in Table 7.2 below is shown as bold blue text.

Table 7.2: Mitigation Measures to Sligo Climate Action Plan

Action No.	Action Description
new action	In implementing this County Sligo Climate Action Plan, ensure compliance with forthcoming Sligo County Development Plan 2024-2030 and current CDP and local area plan objectives and policies relating to environmental management, the protection of statutory Conservation Areas and ensure compliance with specific environmental management measures relating to this plan. Landuse plans and projects arising from this Climate Action Plan will be underpinned by Strategic Environmental Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment, Appropriate Assessment, and Ecological Impact Assessments as relevant.
new action	Sligo County Council will take account of any relevant recommendations in the EPA State of Our Environment Report 2024, once published, in implementing the Plan over its lifetime.

new action	Sligo County Council will consider any relevant updated actions, measures or recommendations that may arise in updates to the National Climate Action Plan over the lifetime of the Plan.
14	Ensure all public lighting is retrofitted to low energy lamps and that the system is monitoring and managed to maximise energy efficiency with due regard to impacts on biodiversity
20	Continue to monitor coastal erosion along Sligo shoreline and maintain existing sea defences considering application of nature-based solutions and in line with conservation management objectives of European Sites.
21	Convene a Flooding Working Group to improve local flood protection (maintenance) and enhanced flood response (required resources). Examine areas where sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) and nature-based solutions can be considered.
27	Support and participate in regular public events that will improve awareness around the impacts of climate change and ways that we can adapt. Work with PPN to identify relevant topics & communities with a key focus on message and communicating to vulnerable groups
Action No.	Action Description
30	Develop a Biodiversity Action Plan for Co. Sligo which addresses all of the relevant climate related issues, supports green and blue infrastructure, nature-based solutions, integrates biodiversity considerations to new and existing developments, supports wildlife corridors and identification & implement appropriate actions. The implementation of the Biodiversity Plan will be underpinned by ecological surveys and assessments to ensure interventions are appropriate to the receiving environment.

31	Develop a register of Council owned properties that may be used for Nature based solutions, and implement actions, including the establishment of an annual native tree planting programme, over lifetime of LACAP that targets planting in appropriate place with appropriate planting mixes. .
new action	Work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to develop and progress future-proofing projects/initiatives with particular focus and support for projects and initiatives that provide co benefits to other environmental resources such as water, air quality, human health, biodiversity and landscape.
New action	With respect to DZ actions, ensure that they are aligned with the conservation objectives for the Lough Gill SAC, Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay (Sligo Bay) SAC and Cummeen Strand SPA

7.3 RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTING MITIGATION MEASURES

The responsibility for implementing land use actions proposed by the draft CAP lies with the relevant departments of Sligo County Council. Departments seeking to carry out land use activities, under the aegis of the support provided by the draft CAP action are obliged to ensure that the implementation of these objectives are consistent with the environmental safeguards as listed in Section 7.1 and Section 7.2 above. It is a statutory requirement for a competent authority (e.g. Sligo County Council) to carry out screening for appropriate assessment for all land use projects and all land use activities implemented under/facilitated by the draft CAP will be assessed for their potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites.

8.0 CONCLUSION

This NIS has reviewed the potential impacts arising from the draft CAP and found that, without the implementation of mitigation measures, the Plan will have the potential to impact upon the Conservation Objectives of European Sites and their relevant qualifying features that occur within the zone of influence of the Plan. Given the undefine spatial nature of the Actions and conceivable land use activities arising from the draft CAP actions it has not been possible to identify the specific European Site and associated features of interest that may be at risk of adverse impacts from the Plan. For such actions with potential to generate land use activities a

precautionary approach has been taken and it has been found in this NIS that in the absence of appropriate safeguards adverse impacts to European Site could arise. These adverse impacts are detailed in Table 6.1 and Table 6.2 of this NIS.

The mitigation measures outlined in Section 7 of this NIS will protect European Sites from potential adverse impacts. These measures have been implemented for previously adopted plans in County Sligo and are known to provide effective safeguards at the Plan level for the protection of European Site from potentially adverse land use activities.

With the proper implementation of all mitigation measures detailed in this NIS the draft CAP is not considered to have the potential to result in adverse impacts to European Sites occurring within County Sligo or the surrounding area.

REFERENCES

DEHLG (2010) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities. Rev Feb 2010. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.

European Commission (2021) Assessment of Plans and Projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate-General)

European Commission (2019) Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats’ Directive 2/43/EEC. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.

APPENDIX 1: EUROPEAN SITES SCREENED IN

Table A1.1 below provides a list of the European Sites occurring within the zone of influence of the draft CAP and screened in for further examination as part of an Natura Impact Statement of the draft Plan. The list of European Sites screened in follows that identified for the Sligo County Development Plan.

Table A1.1: SACs & SPA Identified as occurring within the zone of influence of the draft CAP

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying features of interest
SACs within County Sligo and within a 15km Buffer Zone of the County		
622	Ballysadare Bay SAC	Humid dune slacks [2190], Harbour seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>) [1365], Estuaries [1130], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail (<i>Vertigo angustior</i>) [1014], Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation - grey dunes [2130], Embryonic shifting dunes [2110], Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> - white dunes [2120]
1656	Bricklieve Mountains & Keishcorran SAC	Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510], Turloughs [3180], White-clawed crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>) [1092], Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (<i>Thlaspietea rotundifolii</i>) [8120], Marsh Fritillary (<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>) [1065], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) * important orchid sites [6210]
627	Cummeen Strand/Drum cliff Bay (Sligo Bay) SAC	Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> - white dunes [2120], Estuaries [1130], Embryonic shifting dunes [2110], Narrow-mouthed whorl snail (<i>Vertigo angustior</i>) [1014], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) * important orchid sites [6210], River lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>) [1099], Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation - grey dunes [2130], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Harbour seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>) [1365], <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130], Sea lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>) [1095], Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220]
492	Doocastle Turlough SAC	Turloughs [3180]
497	Flughany Bog SAC	Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150], Active raised bogs [7110], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying features of interest
458	Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SAC	Humid dune slacks [2190], Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330], Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230], Embryonic shifting dunes [2110], Sea lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>) [1095], Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> - white dunes [2120], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation - grey dunes [2130], Narrow- mouthed whorl snail (<i>Vertigo angustior</i>) [1014], Harbour seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>) [1365], <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310], Estuaries [1130], Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210]
1669	Knockalongy and Knockachree Cliffs SAC	Killarney fern (<i>Trichomanes speciosum</i>) [1421]
1673	Lough Arrow SAC	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. [3140]
1976	Lough Gill SAC	White-clawed crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>) [1092], Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355], Sea lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>) [1095], River lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>) [1099], Brook lamprey (<i>Lampetra planeri</i>) [1096], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco- Brometalia</i>) * important orchid sites [6210], Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0], Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i> - type vegetation [3150], Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) [1106], Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0]
633	Lough Hoe Bog SAC	Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110], White- clawed crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>) [1092], Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130], Geyer`s whorl snail (<i>Vertigo geyeri</i>) [1013]
634	Lough Nabrickkeag h Bog SAC	Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130]
2006	Ox Mountains Bogs SAC	Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160], Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010], Marsh saxifrage (<i>Saxifraga hirculus</i>) [1528], Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140], Depressions on peat <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150], Geyer`s whorl snail (<i>Vertigo geyeri</i>) [1013], Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130], European dry heaths [4030], Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110]

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying features of interest
623	Ben Bulbin, Gleniff and Glenade Complex SAC	Geyer's whorl snail (<i>Vertigogeyeri</i>) [1013], Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010], Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) * important orchid sites [6210], Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) [8110], Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355], Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060], Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (<i>Thlaspietea rotundifolii</i>) [8120], Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210], <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130], Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [6430], European dry heaths [4030], Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas- and submountain areas in Continental Europe [6230], Alkaline fens [7230], Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130], Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranuncion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260], Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220]
625	Bunduff Lough and Machair/Trawalua/Mulla ghmore SAC	Large shallow inlets and bays [1160], Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation - grey dunes [2130], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) * important orchid sites [6210], Machairs * in Ireland [21A0], Marsh Fritillary (<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>) [1065], Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> - white dunes [2120], Humid dune slacks [2190], <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Petalwort (<i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>) [1395], Alkaline fens [7230], Reefs [1170]
636	Templehouse and Cloonacleigha Loughs SAC	Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranuncion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260], Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. [3140]
2298	River Moy SAC	Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510], White-clawed crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>) [1092], Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) [1106], Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0], Active raised bogs [7110], Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150], Alkaline fens [7230], Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0], Sea lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>) [1095], Brook lamprey (<i>Lampetra planeri</i>) [1096], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120], Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355]
1680	Streedagh Point Dunes SAC	Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> - white dunes [2120], Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220], Narrow-mouthed whorl snail (<i>Vertigo angustior</i>) [1014], Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330], Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation - grey dunes [2130], Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]
637	Turloughmore (Sligo) SAC	Turloughs [3180]

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying features of interest
638	Union Wood SAC	Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]
1898	Unshin River SAC	Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) [1106], Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey- silt-laden soils (<i>Molinia caerulea</i>) [6410], Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alnus- Padion</i> , <i>Alnus incana</i> , <i>Salix alba</i>) [91E0], Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitans</i> and <i>Callitriche- Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260], Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) * important orchid sites [6210]
595	Callow Bog SAC	Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120], Active raised bogs [7110], Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150]
2354	Tullaghanrock Bog SAC	Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120], Active raised bogs [7110]
1899	Cloonakillina Lough SAC	Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120], Activeraised bogs [7110]Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]
428	Lough Melvin SAC	Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355], Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey- silt-laden soils (<i>Molinia caerulea</i>) [6410], Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) [1106], Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletta uniflora</i> and/or <i>Isoetes- Nanojuncetalia</i> [3130]
1403	Arroo Mountain SAC	European dry heaths [4030], Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130], Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060], Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010], Calcareous and calcshist screes of the montane to alpine levels (<i>Thlaspietea rotundifolia</i>) [8120], Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220], Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210]
614	Cloonshanvill e Bog SAC	Active raised bogs [7110], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120], Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150], Bog woodland [91D0]
1919	Glenade Lough SAC	Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i> - type vegetation [3150], Slender naiad (<i>Najas flexilis</i>) [1833], White-clawed crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>) [1092]
592	Bellanagare Bog SAC	Active raised bogs [7110], Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]
516	Lackan Saltmarsh and Kilcummin Head SAC	Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation - grey dunes [2130], Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> - white dunes [2120], <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310], Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410], Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330]

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying features of interest
584	Cuilcagh - Anierin Uplands SAC	Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140], Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas - and submountain areas in Continental Europe [6230], Slender green feather-moss (<i>Hamatocaulis vernicosus</i>) [6216], Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220], European dry heaths [4030], Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220], Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) [8110], Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060], Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160], Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130], Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110], Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010]
2032	Boleybrack Mountain SAC	European dry heaths [4030], Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160], Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010], Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130], <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410]
191	St. John's Point SAC	Reefs [1170], Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230], Large shallow inlets and bays [1160], Alkaline fens [7230], Semi- natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) * important orchid sites [6210], Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330], <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410], Limestone pavements [8240], Marsh Fritillary (<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>) [1065]
2303	Dunmuckrum Turloughs SAC	Turloughs [3180]
1571	Urlaur Lakes SAC	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. [3140]
604	Derrinea Bog SAC	Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120], Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150], Active raised bogs [7110]
2338	Drumalough Bog SAC	Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150], Active raised bogs [7110], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]
SPAs within County Sligo and within a 15km Buffer Zone of the County		
4135	Ardboline Island and Horse Island SPA	Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017], Barnacle goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) [A045]
4133	Aughris Head SPA	Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188]
4234	Ballintemple and Ballygilgan SPA	Barnacle goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) [A045]
4129	Ballysadare Bay SPA	Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157], Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A674], Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141], Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149], Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162]
4035	Cummeen Strand SPA	Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130], Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A674]
4013	Drumcliff Bay SPA	Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144], Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying features of interest
4068	Inishmurray SPA	Barnacle goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>) [A045], Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018], Arctic tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194], Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184]
4036	Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SPA	Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141], Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140], Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149], Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160], Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157], Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144], Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137]
4050	Lough Arrow SPA	Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061], Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]
4048	Lough Gara SPA	Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395], Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038]
4151	Donegal Bay SPA	Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065], Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144], Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A674], Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>) [A003], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]
4105	Bellanagare Bog SPA	Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395]
4228	Lough Conn and Lough Cullin SPA	Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061], Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065], Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182], Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]
4115	Inishduff SPA	Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018]
4187	Sligo/Leitrim Uplands SPA	Peregrine falcon (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>) [A103], Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>) [A346]
Hydrologically Connected SACs		
607	Errit Lough SAC	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. [3140]
1626	Annaghmore Lough (Roscommo n) SAC	Geyer's whorl snail (<i>Vertigo geyeri</i>) [1013], Alkaline fens [7230]
612	Mullygollan Turlough SAC	Turloughs [3180]
463	Balla Turlough SAC	Turloughs [3180]
1818	Lough Forbes Complex SAC	Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150], Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120], Active raised bogs [7110], Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0]
440	Lough Ree SAC	Limestone pavements [8240], Bog woodland [91D0], Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355], Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120], Alkaline fens [7230], Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0], Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation [3150], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) * important orchid sites [6210], Active raised bogs [7110]

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying features of interest
216	River Shannon Callows SAC	Lowland hay meadows (Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis) [6510], Limestone pavements [8240], Alkaline fens [7230], Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinia caerulea) [6410], Otter (Lutra lutra) [1355], Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0]
2241	Lough Derg, North-East Shore SAC	Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130], Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0], Taxus baccata woods of the British Isles [91J0], Limestone pavements [8240], Alkaline fens [7230], Calcareous fens with Cladium mariscus and species of the Caricion davallianae [7210]
2165	Lower River Shannon SAC	Coastal lagoons [1150], Estuaries [1130], Large shallow inlets and bays [1160], Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410], Reefs [1170], Freshwater pearl mussel (Margaritifera margaritifera) [1029], Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310], Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time [1110], Sea lamprey (Petromyzon marinus) [1095], River lamprey (Lampetra fluviatilis) [1099], Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation [3260], Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinia caerulea) [6410], Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0], Atlantic salmon (Salmo salar) [1106], Atlantic salt meadows (Glaucopuccinellietalia maritima) [1330], Bottlenose dolphin (Tursiops truncatus) [1349], Brook lamprey (Lampetra planeri) [1096], Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220], Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Otter (Lutra lutra) [1355]
Hydrologically Connected SPAs		
4101	Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA	Greenland White-fronted Goose (Anser albifrons flavirostris) [A395]
4064	Lough Ree SPA	Coot (Fulica atra) [A125], Common tern (Sterna hirundo) [A193], Tufted Duck (Aythya fuligula) [A061], Common Scoter (Melanitta nigra) [A065], Teal (Anas crecca) [A052], Goldeneye (Bucephala clangula) [A067], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038], Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A050], Shoveler (Anas clypeata) [A056], Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A142], Little Grebe (Tachybaptus ruficollis) [A004], Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos) [A053], Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140]
4096	Middle Shannon Callows SPA	Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038], Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A050], Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179], Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156], Corncrake (Crex crex) [A122], Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140], Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A142], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying features of interest
4058	Lough Derg (Shannon) SPA	Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Common tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193], Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061], Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017], Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) [A067]
4077	River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA	Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050], Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056], Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038], Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140], Greenshank (<i>Tringa nebularia</i>) [A164], Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141], Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143], Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137], Scaup (<i>Aythya marila</i>) [A062], Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048], Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017], Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160], Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149], Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A674], Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054], Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162], Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142], Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179], Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156], Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]



Sligo County Council

Climate Action Plan 2024 - 2029

Screening for Appropriate Assessment on the Chief Executives Recommendations

29th January 2024

Sligo County Council

Climate Change Action Plan 2024 - 2029

Screening for Appropriate Assessment on the Chief Executive Report Modifications

Document Stage	Document Version	Prepared by
Final	1	Pat Doherty MSc, MCIEEM

This report has been prepared by DEC Ltd with all reasonable skill, care and diligence. Information report herein is based on the interpretation of data collected and has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid.

This report is prepared for Sligo County Council and we accept no responsibility to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

Table of Contents

<u>1.1 INTRODUCTION</u>	1
<u>1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT</u>	2
<u>2.0 SCREENING OF PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO THE DRAFT SLIGO COUNTY COUNCIL CAP</u>	2
<u>3.0 SCREENING CONCLUSION & DETERMINATION</u>	6

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Sligo County Council has prepared a Draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. The Draft Plan sets out mitigation, adaptation and other climate action measures, to help deliver on the national climate obligations and the Government's overall National Climate Objective, which seeks to pursue and achieve, by no later than the end of 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy.

The Draft Plan includes a range of actions across the three theme areas of *Future Proof our Council*, *Future Proof our Place* and *Future Proof our Community*.

Pursuant to Section 16 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, notice of the preparation of the Sligo County Council Draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. Submissions or observations with regard to the Draft Plan were invited for a period of 6 weeks from the 9th November to the 21st December 2023.

A total of 18 valid submissions were received during the period of statutory and public consultation.

Following a review of the submissions received during the statutory and public consultation, Sligo County Council have amended the draft CAP. These amendments are set out in the Chief Executives Report which summarises and details the outcome of the Public Consultation process on the Draft Climate Action Plan, as follows:

- lists the persons, organisations or bodies who made submissions or observations on the Draft Climate Action Plan;
- summarises the issues raised by the persons, organisations or bodies in the submissions or observations;
- gives the response and recommendation of the Chief Executive to the issues raised; and
- outlines any proposed modifications to the Draft Plan, on foot of the Public Consultation process.

PURPOSE OF THIS APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

The purpose of this AA Screening report is to evaluate the requirement for AA to be undertaken on the proposed modifications to the draft CAP as set out in the Chief Executive's Report.

The conclusions of this Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment of the proposed modifications to the draft CAP should be read in conjunction with the Chief Executive report and all other associated documents including the:

- SEA Environmental Report for the draft Sligo County Council CAP;
- Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report and Natura Impact Statement for the draft Sligo County Council draft CAP.
- SEA Screening Report for the Chief Executive's Recommendations.

SCREENING OF PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO THE DRAFT SLIGO COUNTY COUNCIL CAP

Table 2.1 below lists all proposed modifications to the draft CAP as set out in the Chief Executive's Report. Each of these changes are screened for their potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites. A conclusion is provided following the examination of the proposed modifications outlined in Table 2.1.

Table 2.2: Screening of Proposed Modifications to the Draft CAP

No.	Draft CAP Section	Proposed Modification
1	Theme 5 - environment & Biodiversity Actions. Pg. 48	Action No. 35 to be edited to include “community gardens and allotments” as examples of nature-based solutions.
Appropriate Assessment Screening Examination: The above modification is minor in nature. This modification will not have the potential to to trigger land use activities, that could in turn, conceivably trigger likely significant effects to European Sites. The above proposed modification outlined in this Chief Executive’s report does not require Stage II Appropriate Assessment.		
2	Section 3. Climate Action - Vision & Mission Statements. Pg. 9	The mission statement will be amended to include the following text “to adapt to the impacts of climate change and”
Appropriate Assessment Screening Examination: The above modification is minor in nature and does not have the potential to trigger land use activities over and above those set out in the draft CAP. This modification will not have the potential to to trigger land use activities, that could in turn, conceivably trigger likely significant effects to European Sites. The above proposed modification outlined in this Chief Executive’s report does not require Stage II Appropriate Assessment.		
3	Theme 6 – Transport & Mobility Actions. Pg. 49	The text of Action 42 will be amended to include ‘in relation to the draft Local Transport Plan’
Appropriate Assessment Screening Examination: The above modification is minor in nature. This modification will not have the potential to to trigger land use activities, that could in turn, conceivably trigger likely significant effects to European Sites. The above proposed modification outlined in this Chief Executive’s report does not require Stage II Appropriate Assessment.		
4	DZ Action – Pg. 55	The text in Action 3 in the DZ Actions will be amended by including the text “with at least one of these being in the area of active travel and decarbonisation of transport”.
Appropriate Assessment Screening Examination: Action 3 requires that at least 3 pilot projects that demonstrate practical decarbonisation in different aspects of the DZ be identified. The modifications now requires that at least one of these three is in the area of active travel and decarbonisation. The Natura Impact Statement of the draft CAP identified Actions within the draft CAP (e.g. Action No. 36 & 38) that relate to the provision of future active travel projects as having the potential to result in adverse effects to European Sites. The inclusion of the modification text in this DZ Action No. 3 will not have the potential to trigger further land use activities and adverse effects to European Sites over and above those contemplated for the draft CAP. Mitigation measures have been set out in the Natura Impact Statement for the draft CAP that will ensure active travel projects facilitated by the CAP will be progressed in a manner that		

will avoid adverse effects to European Sites. These mitigation measures will apply for this DZ Action no. 3 as modified, the implementation of these mitigation measures will ensure that the proposed modification will not have the potential to trigger adverse effects to European Sites.		
5	Theme 4 – Community Resilience & Transition Actions. Pg. 46	The text of Action 28 will be amended to include “ and promotion of the other related funding streams, including the Creative Climate Action Fund ”
Appropriate Assessment Screening Examination: The above modification is minor in nature and does not relate to land use activities. This modification will not have the potential to to trigger land use activities, that could in turn, conceivably trigger likely significant effects to European Sites. The above proposed modification outlined in this Chief Executive’s report does not require Stage II Appropriate Assessment.		
6	Theme 5 – Environment & Biodiversity. Pg. 47	The text of Action 30 will be amended to include ‘ operations & ’ before ‘developments’.
Appropriate Assessment Screening Examination: The above modification is minor in nature and does not relate to land use activities. This modification will not have the potential to to trigger land use activities, that could in turn, conceivably trigger likely significant effects to European Sites. The above proposed modification outlined in this Chief Executive’s report does not require Stage II Appropriate Assessment.		
7	Theme 3 - Built Environment & Energy - Action 17. Pg. 43	Remove the wording “ and having due regard to the impact on biodiversity ” and replace with “ to avoid and/or mitigate for impacts on natural habitat and biodiversity ”
Appropriate Assessment Screening Examination: The above modification strengthens the safeguards for biodiversity built into the CAP and is representative of a mitigation measure with respect to the safeguarding of European Sites.		
8	Theme 5 – Environment & Biodiversity. Action 33. Pg. 47	NPWS and Biodiversity will be included as partners.
Appropriate Assessment Screening Examination: The above modification is minor in nature and does not relate to land use activities. This modification will not have the potential to to trigger land use activities, that could in turn, conceivably trigger likely significant effects to European Sites. The above proposed modification outlined in this Chief Executive’s report does not require Stage II Appropriate Assessment.		
9	Theme 5 – Environment & Biodiversity. Action 36. Pg. 48	LAWPRO and Biodiversity will be included as partners
Appropriate Assessment Screening Examination: The above modification is minor in nature and does not relate to land use activities. This modification will not have the potential to to trigger land use activities, that could in turn, conceivably trigger likely significant effects to European Sites. The above proposed modification outlined in this Chief Executive’s report does not require Stage II Appropriate Assessment.		

10	Section 5 - Climate Action in other Corporate Policies - Pg. 19.	Text to be amended to read "County Sligo Heritage & Biodiversity Strategy 2023-2030".
Appropriate Assessment Screening Examination: The above modification is minor in nature and does not relate to land use activities. This modification will not have the potential to trigger land use activities, that could in turn, conceivably trigger likely significant effects to European Sites. The above proposed modification outlined in this Chief Executive's report does not require Stage II Appropriate Assessment.		

9.0 SCREENING CONCLUSION & DETERMINATION

All modifications proposed by the Chief Executive Report have been subject to screening for Appropriate Assessment. All modifications have been found not to have the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites. The inclusion of these modifications in the CAP will not have the potential to result in negative effects to the Conservation Objectives of European Sites occurring within the zone of influence of the CAP and an Appropriate Assessment of these modifications is not required.

In light of the findings of this report it is the considered view of the authors of this Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment that it can be concluded by Sligo County Council that the proposed modifications to the draft CAP as set out in the Chief Executives Report, will not, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, have a significant effect on any European Sites in view of their Conservation Objectives and on the basis of best scientific evidence and there is no reasonable scientific doubt as to that conclusion.