

STAGE 1: SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

**PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 6 (3) OF THE HABITATS DIRECTIVE 92/43/EEC
ON PLANS & PROJECTS SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTING NATURA 2000 SITES.**

Plan or Project:

**AMENDED DRAFT CAVAN TOWN & ENVIRONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN
(2014 – 2020)**

On behalf of:

CAVAN COUNTY COUNCIL

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STAGE ONE: SCREENING

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA)

This Screening for Appropriate Assessment was prepared by Ecologists Ireland Consultants Ltd on behalf of Cavan County Council. It provides information on the potential for the proposed amended Draft Cavan Town & Development Plan 2014 – 2020 to impact on designated sites of conservation importance within a European context.

This document is an amended Draft version of the Screening for Appropriate Assessment and is submitted for consideration alongside the amended Draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 – 2020 and serves as a documented record of the process and objective criteria used to determine whether the plan poses any risks of having significant effects on Natura 2000 sites in view of their conservation objectives.

In accordance with the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010, Cavan County Council is required to develop a Development Plan and incorporate within that a Core Strategy. The purpose of the Core Strategy is to formulate a plan to meet the land use requirements within Cavan Town & Environs for the period of the County Development Plan in accordance with the requirements of the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2020.

In addition to incorporating a Core Strategy the amended Draft County Development Plan will also:

- Update the policies and objectives of the Council in accordance with the National Development Plan 2014 - 2020, National Spatial Strategy 2002 - 2020, Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022; National Policy; including national policy guidance issued under section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, as amended, the Water Framework Directive and respective River Basin District Management Plans; European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Water) Regulations 2009; and, the European Communities (Birds and Habitats) Regulations 2011. The planning authority has a duty to:
- Determine whether the proposal is directly connected with or necessary to site management for conservation; and if not,
- Determine whether the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the site either individually or in combination with other plans or projects; and if so,
- Make an appropriate assessment of the implications (of the proposal) for the site in view of the Natura 2000 site conservation objectives.

1.2 Legislative Background to Appropriate Assessment

European Directive 92/43/EEC (The Habitats Directive) requires competent authorities to carry out an Appropriate Assessment (AA) of plans and projects that, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects are likely to have a significant effect on European designated sites.

The preparation of the amended Draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan has regard to Article 6 of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21st May 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora (as amended). Hereafter referred to the Habitats Directive. This is transposed to Irish legislation under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 and the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010.

The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 lists priority habitats and species that are of European and International importance and require protection. This protection is afforded through the designation of areas that represent significant populations of listed species within a European context (Natura 2000 sites). Areas designated for bird species are classed as Special Protection Areas (SPA), and areas designated for other protected species and habitats are classed as Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Species that occur in SPAs (Annex I of Birds Directive) or SACs (Habitats listed on Annex I and/or Annex II Species listed on the Habitats Directive) in which they are designated features have full European protection. Species listed on Annex IV of the Habitats Directive are strictly protected wherever they occur in the country, whether inside or outside a Natura 2000 site. Habitats that are equivalent to those listed, but not within SACs are still classed as priority habitats of international and national importance and under Article 27 (4(b)), the planning authority has a duty to avoid the pollution or deterioration of Annex I habitats.

The Habitats Directive specifies scientific criteria on the basis on which Natura 2000 sites must be selected and sets out various procedures and obligations in relation to the conservation objectives of those sites.

Articles 6(3) and 6 (4) of the Habitats Directive set out the requirement for an assessment of proposed plans and projects likely to significantly affect Natura 2000 sites.

Article 6(3) establishes the requirement to screen all plans and projects for likely impacts (referred to as a Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment) and to carry out further detailed assessment if required (referred to as a Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment):

Article 6(3): "Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [Natura 2000] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or alone in combination with other plans and projects, shall be subjected to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of its conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to a plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public"

The fore mentioned paragraph 4 allows for proposed plans and projects to be approved in certain conditions, as follows:

Article 6(4): *“If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, Member States shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of any compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to the beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of over-riding public interest.”*

1.3 Stages in the Appropriate Assessment Process

The process of assessing the Amended Draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan is a structured exercise with a series of steps. The stages proposed in the European Commission guidance are:

Stage One: Screening — the process which identifies the likely impacts upon a Natura 2000 site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant;

Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment — consideration of the impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site’s structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts;

Stage Three: Assessment of alternative solutions — processes which examine alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan while avoiding adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site;

Stage Four: Where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain — an assessment of compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

This report provides a Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment and is intended to address all issues regarding the Amended Draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 - 2020 and the potential impacts on all Natura 2000 sites within 15km of Cavan Town and allow Cavan County Council as the “Competent Authority” to comply with Article 6 (3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.

1.4 Scope of the Appropriate Assessment.

The scope of the AA considers the following information:

Description of Amended Draft Development Plan

- Extent and influence of the Amended Draft Development Plan including spatial context of Natura 2000 sites in within 15km of Cavan Town;
- Projected Strategy, including: the population targets and housing demand allocation; and,
- Zoning policies and objectives relevant to the Natura 2000 network.

Potential Impacts on Natura 2000 sites with respect to their prescribed Conservation Objectives:

- The impact of the amended draft Development Plan 2014 - 2020 on the defining structure and function of Natura 2000 sites;
- Likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of proposed zoning policies and objectives on designated features of Natura 2000 sites;

Mitigation

- Details of policies within the Core Strategy of the Amended draft Development Plan that guide the protection and conservation of qualifying features within Natura 2000 sites;
- Details of the measures that could be employed to avoid the risk of impacts.

1.5 Main Sources of Formal Guidance

- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities;
- European Community Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) – The Habitats Directive;
- European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011;
- European Commission Environment DG (2001). Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;
- Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers: Ecology Series No. 7;
- Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers: Ecology Series No. 10; and,
- Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers: Ecology Series No. 11.

1.6 Main Sources of Consultation

- The Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment of the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan was carried out concurrently and with consideration of overlapping issues pertinent to the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the amended draft Plan with consultation and direction provided by the Executive Planner at Cavan County Council (Eve Harrison);
- Consultation with Heritage Council: Heritage Officers for County Cavan (Ann-Marie Ward);
- Consultation with National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS): Conservation Officers (John Matthews (Cavan West)); David McDonagh (Cavan East)).

1.7 Key Statutory Instruments Relevant to the Assessment Process

- The Water Framework Directive (WFD) 2000/60/EC
- European Communities Environmental Objectives on (Surface Waters) Regulations (2009) (S.I. No. 272 of 2009);
- European Communities Environmental Objectives Groundwater Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010).
- The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC

2.0 DESCRIPTION & FEATURES OF PLAN

2.1 Review of the County Cavan Development Plan 2014 - 2012

The Plan establishes a framework for the co-ordinated and sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental development of Cavan Town & Environs. The Plan details the policies and objectives of Cavan County Council's vision for the spatial and sectoral development of Cavan Town over the period from 2014 – 2020. The Plan also serves as a point of reference for statutory authorities, planners, developers and the general public on how development proposals are likely to be assessed. The Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 have indicated that Cavan Town, as a Hub Town, will grow from its 2006 population of 7,883 to 11,600 in 2016 and 12,800 by 2022. These population targets will be addressed in this Core Strategy document.

The Plan comprises 9 chapters detailing general policies and objectives for Cavan Town & Environs. The introductory chapter details the role, content and context of the Plan. Chapter 2 details the Settlement Strategy for the County, analysing how demographics and populations have changed during the life time of the previous Plan, and projecting population growth within a settlement hierarchy. Chapters 3 – 8 outline the development strategy for County Cavan on a thematic basis with each chapter outlining strategic themes, policies and objectives. Chapter 9 details zoning objectives.

2.2 Development Plan Screening Process

There is no restriction on when the screening of any plan or project likely to significantly effect Natura 2000 sites can take place. The screening is intended to provide a review of the plan and if the plan triggers the requirement for more detailed level of assessment (Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment) and which Natura 2000 sites will be affected. This screening process is undertaken during the preparation of the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan and serves to highlight particular impacts of policies and objectives on Natura 2000 sites and provides scope for amending policies that would have a direct conflict with the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites.

2.3 Proximity of Cavan Town to Natura 2000 sites.

ArcView software using Ordnance Survey maps and NPWS shapefiles were used to identify the boundaries of Natura 2000 Sites in Cavan Town and within 15km of the Town boundary. The location of Natura 2000 sites are shown in Figures 1.

2.4 Proposed Development Plan Policies and Objectives.

The following relevant information contained within the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 – 2020 provides the strategic direction and policy against which proposed developments are based. For the purposes of transparency, all policies and objectives in the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan are listed below. All policies and objectives that relate to changes in land use or natural resources for specific consideration within the Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment are marked in bold and are set in context (where applicable) to Natura 2000 sites and respective qualifying features in Table 1 below. Also of material consideration in that strategy and respective policy platform are regulatory and legal instruments protecting designated sites with a specific focus on the key conservation objectives of those sites. These are discussed in Section 4.3

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Chapter 1 describes context, content and aims of the plan. No policies or objectives within the amended draft Plan relevant to potential threats to Natura 2000 sites are detailed in this section.

Chapter 2: Settlement/Core Strategy

In order to encourage the growth of a sustainable Cavan Town, it is considered that development in the Town Core area and immediate lands should be supported in this Core Strategy. The Housing Land Availability Returns 2012, carried out by the Planning Department in Cavan County Council indicate that there is adequate housing stock in vacant and permitted developments (total 791 units vacant and un-commenced with 2 years left on planning permission) to meet the housing needs of Cavan Town and environs for this plan period (2014 - 2020).

The required area of land and housing units for the Cavan Town and Environs area for the Plan period, 2014 – 2020 is considered to be for 1170 housing units, the equivalent of 65 hectares of Residential Zoned land for the lifetime of the Plan.

CSP1: To encourage and promote residential development of existing Brownfield and infill sites located in Town Core and Phase 1 zoned lands of the Phasing Map. The phased management and release of existing residential units, over that of greenfields sites will take place within the life-time of the Plan.

CSP2: To permit residential development on Town Core and Phase 1 lands only during the plan period. Only on completion of 70% of lands included in Phase 1 and accompanied with a Justification Test and a Sequential Test shall subsequent phasing be considered for additional development.

Policy CSP3: Applications for extensions of time shall be assessed in terms of the requirements set out in Section 42 (as amended) of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2010 and shall be consistent with the Cavan Town and Environs Core Strategy.

Policy CSP4: Applications for the development of single detached or one-off houses on Phased lands 2, 3 and 4 will be considered, subject to the submission of a housing need justification test.

Policy CSP5: It is the policy of the Council to operate a pro-active approach, and to work with other relevant parties, towards achieving a sustainable resolution to the difficulties associated with unfinished/unoccupied estates within the County.

Policy CSP6: Encouragement will be given to proposals which improve the biodiversity value of sites and to the establishment of local nature areas where the nature conservation and landscape interest of the land will be protected and enhanced.

Policy CSP7: The Core Strategy shall be revised upon the completion of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Cavan Town and consideration will be given to the appropriate de-zoning/rezoning of Phase 2, 3 and 4 lands to take into account the requirements of flood risk management and the capacity of the existing infrastructure and the provision of alternative community/environmentally sustainable uses for some or all of the Phase 2,3 & 4 lands, where appropriate.

Chapter 3: Economic Development

Sustainable Economic Development seeks to achieve the balance of optimising the output from available resources to achieve modern day objectives in a way that enables future generations to meet their own needs and objectives in due course.

E-P1: Promote the existence of an enterprise culture in Cavan Town and Environs, encourage start-up business and reduce barriers to success where possible.

E-P2: New employment will be focused in locations that reduce the demand for travel and be appropriate in density and type of activity to its location.

E-P3: Work in partnership with government agencies and the private sector to promote sustainable economic development and to provide employment opportunities for inhabitants.

E-P4: Seek to facilitate the availability of a range of business accommodation, including that suitable for small business.

E-O1: Provide for economic growth by ensuring that adequate and suitably located serviced employment zoned land is available at appropriate locations.

E-O2: Promotion of more mixed forms of development should be encouraged in the town centre. Town centre office employment shall be located above shopping developments along main streets.

E-O3: Encourage development that is likely to generate significant levels of freight traffic to locate at sites close to the existing national roads network.

E-O4: Support the development of high-end science and technology parks at appropriate locations within the Town and Environs in order to try to encourage and support the start up and incubation of innovation led, high growth, and knowledge based businesses.

E-O5: Generate stronger working relations between, relevant Institutes of Technology, Cavan Institute, industry, and the Cavan Innovation and Technology Centre.

E-O6: Local government reforms post the 2014 Local Elections will bring about streamlining of local development agencies with the proposed integration of the County Enterprise Board in to the Local Authority Structure and the replacement of the County Development Board with new Social Economic Committees. While it is as yet unclear as

to what structures will be in place it will be important to continue to work in partnership with the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, and other relevant agencies nationally and locally, to promote and facilitate the location of industry and enterprise (including the technology sector) and to ensure the provision of necessary infrastructure supports and that linkages are developed having regard to the need to ensure conservation and protection of the natural and cultural development of the county.

E-O7: To facilitate the re-use of dis-used industrial buildings for alternative uses.

EG-P1: To encourage the use of waste biomass in energy production.

EG-P2: To support the waste-to energy projects under REFIT scheme (Renewable Energy Feed In Tariff).

EG-P3: To support national and international initiatives for limiting emissions of greenhouse gases through energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources which makes use of the natural resources of the Town in an environmentally acceptable manner, where it is consistent with proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

EG-O1: To encourage the production of energy from renewable sources, including in particular that from biomass, waste material, solar, wave, hydro and wind energy, subject to normal proper planning considerations, including in particular, the potential impact on areas of environmental or landscape sensitivity.

EG-O2: To support the National Climate Change Strategy and, in general to facilitate measures which seek to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

RPP -01: Applicants shall be required to demonstrate their proposals are in-line with the objectives of the settlement hierarchy; Regional planning and guidelines and core strategy;

RPP-02: Provide a map which defines the boundaries of the core shopping areas of the town centre and proximity to any existing district or neighbourhood centre;

RPP- 03: Identify sites which can accommodate the needs of modern retail formats that maintain the essential character of the Shopping area;

RPP-04: Provide detailed proposals for mobility management measures to improve accessibility new retail areas while aiming to develop a pedestrian and cycle friendly urban environment and vibrant street-life;

RPP-05: Demonstrate how public-realm interventions aimed at improving the retailing experience through high quality civic design, provision of attractive street furnishings lighting and effective street-cleaning/business improvement district type initiatives can be delivered.

RPP-06: Demonstrate how the scale and location of retail development is appropriately located to support the settlement hierarchy, including where appropriate sites which are suitable and available and which match the future retailing needs of the area.

PGS-O1: Retail shops provided as part of petrol filling stations shall be of a scale appropriate to the location and the floor space shall not exceed 100m².

R-P1: To support the continued expansion of Cavan Town as the primary retail and service centre in the County and to promote, strengthen and protect the retail function of the town

R-P2: To ensure that the retail needs of the County's residents are met within the county.

R-P3: To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict buildings for retail uses.

R-O1: To review the Retail Strategy for County Cavan during the life of the plan 2014-2020.

R-O2: To encourage high standards and innovative design in terms of architecture, materials and layout in order to make a positive contribution to the streetscape of Cavan Town.

R-O3: To adhere to Retail Planning –Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DoECLG, 2012 in the assessment of all new retail developments.

R-O4: Retail Warehousing shall not be less than 700m2 in out of centre locations and shall never exceed 6,000m2.

TC-P1: To facilitate new town centre development to include a mix of shopping, commercial, community and residential uses in appropriate density development around pedestrian friendly streets and squares with high quality urban design.

TC-P2: Forge a link between planning and design to produce better living environments for people.

TC-P3: Seek to maintain a good mixture of retail units within town core areas in order to ensure the vitality and viability of the town centre.

TC-O1: To ensure a new expanded town centre will create strong physical and functional links with the existing town centre.

TC-O2: Public safety will be promoted through the provision of pedestrian-oriented street-level uses, sufficient footpath widths, adequate visibility from adjacent buildings and primary pedestrian access from buildings to adjacent footpaths.

TC-O3: Protect historic fabric through conservation, preservation and redevelopment.

TC-O4: Provide sufficient, safe and accessible parks, plazas and greenways for active and passive enjoyment.

TC-O5: To promote mixed use developments comprising retail, commercial and housing within the Town Centre Area.

TC-O6: The scale, layout, form and design of all new town centre development must respect and enhance the existing town character.

MA-P1: To ensure that proposed new establishments or modifications of existing establishments classified under Seveso II Directive shall not present an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of existing populations.

MA-P2: To ensure that development in the vicinity of Seveso II sites shall be assessed having regard to the Major Accidents Directive, the potential risks to health and safety and the need to maintain a suitable separation distance between such sites and new developments.

MA-P3: To reduce and to limit the consequence of major accidents involving hazardous substances by consulting with the Health and Safety Authority in respect of all proposals for development involving Dangerous Substances or for development in the vicinity of such establishments.

Chapter 4: Physical Infrastructure

LU&TP-O1: It is a strategic aim of this Development Plan to co-ordinate transport and land use planning. This places a requirement on both the transport and settlement strategies to be mutually consistent, not only with each other, but with national direction as per the National Spatial Strategy and the Smarter Travel policy.

LU&TP-O2: Cavan Local Authorities aim to continue to implement the recommendations of the Transportation Plan for Cavan Town.

PT-OBJ 1: It is an objective of Cavan Local Authorities to co-operate with the relevant transport bodies and authorities to secure improvements and further developments of the public transport system.

W&C-O1: To promote and facilitate the development of cycling and walking facilities in the Cavan Town and Environs Plan area.

W&C-O2: To support the recommendations of the National Cycle Network Study (2010) - Cavan Lakelands Cycle Loop which proposes extending the route from Cavan Town to Killeshandra Village via Killykeen Forest Park.

W&C-O3: To promote the development of cycling by the development of cycle links.

W&C-O4: To encourage the provision of secure bicycle parking facilities in Cavan Town, at neighbourhood centres, at public facilities such as schools, libraries and in all new developments - refer to car and bicycle parking standards.

W&C-O5: To comply with the 'European Charter of Pedestrian Rights' in order to improve facilities for pedestrians and access to such facilities for people with disabilities.

W&C-O6: Increase commuting on foot and by bike among children and adults and to increase the health benefits of same.

W&C-O7: Increase road safety for pedestrians and cyclists;

W&C-O8: Increase walking and cycling related tourism in Cavan Town and Environs area

W&C-O9: Reduce car dependency for trips to work and education; and

W&C-O10: Reduce traffic volumes and speeds where pedestrian and cyclist volumes are high.

RI-O1: To improve all Council roads to an appropriate standard subject to the availability of resources.

RI-O2: To improve road safety for all road users and reduce fatalities/accidents on Cavan Roads.

RI-O3: To improve the capacity of the road infrastructure within County Cavan in accordance with national/regional policy.

RI-O4: To have a well maintained road network basis.

RI-O5: To improve access for mobility impaired people.

RI-O6: To provide safer routes to educational establishments within the plan area.

RI-O7: To preserve free from development proposed road realignment/improvement lines and associated corridors where such development would prejudice the implementation of Council plans.

RI-O8: To ensure that access to buildings and public spaces are accessible to people with mobility needs. Car parking shall generally be provided in accordance with 'Buildings for Everyone –a Universal Design Approach', 2012 published by the National Disability Authority and other relevant documentation.

RI-O9: To promote road safety measures in conjunction with Government Departments and other agencies to avoid the creation of traffic hazards and to ensure traffic management and safety issues are adequately addressed at pre-planning and planning application stage.

RI-O10: To have regard to the Local Action Biodiversity Plan for County Cavan in the provision of any new Council roads.

RI-O11: To ensure that all new developments are assessed with regard to their impact on the operation of the public road network and where appropriate to require a Traffic & Transport Assessment in accordance with standards set out in the 'Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines' published by the National Roads Authority.

RI-O12: To ensure that all new developments within the zone of influence of existing public roads or new public roads provide suitable protection against traffic noise in accordance with the requirements of S.I. No. 140 (2006) Environmental Noise Regulations. The costs of implementing any additional noise mitigation measures shall be borne by the developer.

RI-O13: To have regard to the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines'.

D/RR-O1: To assess the need for and the economic benefits of distributor/relief roads or new streets in the town and environs area.

RS-O1 To continue to identify and implement a programme of Traffic Calming Schemes and Low Cost Safety Remedial Schemes on roads throughout the Town and Environs area, in association with the National Roads Authority.

RS-O2 To ensure that Road Safety is an integral part of all new planning applications and to ensure that formal Road Safety Audits are included in Planning Conditions where appropriate and to ensure that formal Road Safety Audits are an integral part of the design process for all new public road re-alignment schemes.

PP – 01: Ensure that all new developments shall provide on-site parking and appropriate layout and design standards for the safe manoeuvring of vehicles and pedestrians. New developments shall comply with the parking and servicing standards.

PP–02: Ensure that where proposals for multiple land uses (such as office and retail) which function concurrently on the site, the combined calculations based on the Parking Standards, shall apply.

PP–03: To encourage the use of electrically operated cars and bicycles, in line with Council and National Policy. Any non-residential developments shall be encouraged to provide facilities for battery operated cars to be recharged in accordance with [standards as detailed in the CDP].

PP–04: In circumstances where the applicant cannot provide the dedicated parking spaces, the Council may accept a financial contribution in respect of the shortfall in the number of spaces.

PP-05: In exceptional circumstances, the Council may at their discretion accept a reduced car parking requirement, where the applicant can clearly demonstrate that this would not impact on traffic safety and where it is considered to be in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development.

PP-06: Where a retail/commercial or other development proposed requires the development of car parking facilities, provision will also be made for the provision of parking dedicated for parents; disabled car parking space and spaces for the secure parking of bicycles and motorcycles.

PP-07: Proposals for all commercial/retail developments shall incorporate planting and landscaping of car parks.

WS-P01: The future development of available lands within the plan area shall be evaluated in terms of requirements of the EIA, Habitats Directive; Water Framework Directive and the Floods' Directive, to ensure that there are no negative impacts on water quality.

WS-01: To ensure that no further development is permitted until the appropriate provision of water and wastewater infrastructure capacity for Cavan Town & Environs is provided in-line with the population projections for Phase 1 lands, as stated in Chapter 2 of the Plan – Core Strategy.

F-01: To ensure that all new developments are assessed with respect to their potential cause of flooding and that appropriate control measures are applied through development management conditions.

F-02: To ensure that all significant developments impacting on flood risk areas shall submit a Flood Impact Assessment at planning application stage to identify potential loss of flood plain storage and how it is to be offset in order to minimise the impact on the river flood regime at application stage.

F-03: To ensure that development that is sensitive to the effects of flooding will generally not be permitted in flood prone or marginal areas.

F-04: That, where considered necessary, the Council will require a Flood Impact Assessment and proposals for the storage or attenuation of runoff discharges (including foul drains) to ensure the development does not increase the flood risk in the relevant catchment. This must accompany applications for planning permission for development.

F-05: Prevent the alteration of natural drainage schemes and in the case of development works, require the provision of acceptable mitigation measures in order to minimise the risk of flooding and negative impacts to water quality.

F-06: To have regard to the *“To ensure that the “Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities” (DoEHLG/OPW, 2009) are fully implemented as appropriate* through the use of the sequential approach and application of the Justification Tests for Development Management and Development Plans, during the period of this Plan.

F-07: To ensure that a flood risk assessment is carried out for any development proposal, where flood risk may be an issue in accordance with the *“Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities” (DoECLG/OPW, 2009)*. This assessment shall be appropriate to the scale and nature of risk to the potential development.

F-O8: To ensure that all new developments are designed and constructed to meet the following minimum flood design standards:- where streams, open drains or other watercourses are being culverted, the pipework shall be designed to adequately accommodate the maximum anticipated flows.

F-O9: To give adequate allowance for climate change in designing surface water proposals a multiplication factor of 1.2 shall be applied to all river return periods of up to 100 years except in circumstances where the OPW have provided advice specifying the particular multiplication factor for return periods of up to 100 years. In the case of rainfall, a multiplication factor of 1.1 shall be applied to rainfall intensities to make allowance for climate change requirements.

F-O10: To ensure that all Greenfield developments the limitation of surface water run-off to pre-development levels will be required. Where a developer can clearly demonstrate that capacity exists to accommodate run-off levels in excess of Greenfield levels, then the Planning Authority shall give consideration to such proposals on a case-by-case basis.

F-O11: To ensure that, in the case of brownfield developments, whilst existing surface water drainage measures will be taken into account, some attenuation measures for surface water may be required at the discretion of the Planning Authority, in the interests of balanced and sustainable development.

FO-12: To ensure that in the case of proposed developments for larger schemes, the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) design, construction and maintenance will be favoured by the Planning Authority.

PSS-P1: To require that the septic tanks and proprietary effluent treatment systems comply in full with the requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency Wastewater Treatment EPA Code of Practice 2009 or any subsequent Guidelines/Code of Practice.

PSS-P2: To require that all site assessments are carried out by persons that have a completed the FETAC Cert and that confirmation of same and professional indemnity insurance cover is submitted with all site assessments.

WQ-O1: To participate in the implementation and promote compliance with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive through the River Basin Management Plans and associated programmes of measures.

WQ-O2: To co-operate with relevant stakeholders the implementation of the River Basin Management Plans and the associated programmes of measures.

WQ-O3: To ensure the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and ground waters throughout the county by implementing the EU Water Framework Directive, and any other associated legislation.

WQ-O4: To work in co-operation with all organisations and all major stakeholders to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the protection and improvement of the water resources.

WQ-O5: To continue to improve water quality and maintain water quality which is already at Good and High Ecological Status.

WM-O1: To have regard to the following in the assessment of planning applications for waste management facilities:

WM-O2: To facilitate the implementation of the North East Region Waste Management Plan 2005-2010, which has been extended to 2014 and any subsequent Waste Management Plan relevant to the Town and County.

WM-03: To ensure the provision of recycling facilities in the form of a kerbside type collection, civic amenity sites and/or bring bank-recycling facilities in accordance with the implementation of the Regional Waste Management Plan.

WM-04: To encourage waste prevention, minimisation, reuse, recycling and recovery as methods of managing waste. Where waste management is not being carried out properly, the Waste Management Acts, 1996 (as amended) will be used as a means of ensuring specific national policies and regulations are being adhered to.

WM-05: To encourage recycling facilities (i.e. bottle banks, bring centres etc) in close proximity to large scale commercial/residential developments.

WM-06: To adhere to document 'Waste Requirements for Apartments and Housing Developments in Cavan Town and County' or as may be amended, refer to Appendix 1.

WM-07: To promote and facilitate communities to become involved in environmental awareness activities, community based recycling initiatives or environmental management initiatives that will lead to local sustainable waste management practices.

WM-08: To ensure the provision of an adequate residential and commercial waste collection service within Cavan Town and Environs Area.

UT-01: All new multiple residential developments and industrial/commercial developments shall as a minimum requirement provide the physical infrastructure necessary within their site to accommodate the provision of Broadband connections throughout the development.

T&IT-P1: Ensure and facilitate the promotion and provision of broadband and ICT facilities.

T&IT –P2: Support the infrastructural development of ESB networks.

T&IT-01: Ensure that all new developments are served with adequate public lighting and other available public utilities.

T&IT- 02: Facilitate the provision of utilities, such as electricity and telecommunications, to serve the projected population growth and consumer demand within the area.

T&IT –03: Co-ordinate with utility providers, particularly in the early stages of major projects, to limit the proliferation of lines, aerials and/or antennae, and to limit continuous disruption to public roads from the alternate provision of infrastructure by different companies.

T&IT-04: Require the provision of electricity cables underground, especially in the urban environment and in areas of public open space.

Chapter 5: Housing

HP1: To ensure the provision of accommodation for all those who require it and who are unable to obtain it through their own means.

HP2: To implement the provisions of the Housing Strategy.

HP3: To ensure that undue social segregation does not occur.

HP4: To comply with the Department of the Environment, Heritage (Community) and Local Government Publications; 'Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities, Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes and Sustaining Communities' and 'Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities, Statement on Housing Policy'.

HP5: To ensure that development is linked to the provision of adequate and appropriate critical infrastructure in advance of permission being granted for any further housing development.

HO1: Require that all new residential developments include a mix of house types and sizes to cater for different needs including families, single persons, the elderly and mobility impaired.

HO2: All new residential developments must submit, at planning application state, a design brief which demonstrates clear compliance with the Department of the Environment, Heritage (Community) and Local Government Publications; 'Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities, Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes and Sustaining Communities' and 'Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities, Statement on Housing Policy'.

HO3: Ensure that all new dwellings are reasonably accessible for older people, the very young and people with disabilities. Dwellings shall be designed so as to be lifetime adaptable and so fit to cater for the changing needs of families and changing circumstances of individuals.

HO4: To support the concept of independent living for older people and people with disabilities and require, where possible, that such housing is integrated with main stream housing within existing communities. Such housing shall be located close to existing or committed community and convenience retail facilities.

HO5: Ensure that new residential developments are integrate into the existing urban fabric both physically and socially.

HO6: Promote energy efficiency both during construction and during the lifetime of dwellings by sensitive design and layout taking into account topography, orientation and surround features.

HO7: Co-operate with approved Voluntary and Co-operative housing association through the life of the Development Plan in identifying opportunities for their participation in the provision of social housing.

HO8: Support the use of unfinished dwellings and existing Local Authority housing for current and future housing needs.

HO9: Support the Implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme to ensure the provision of adequate and suitable accommodation in consultation with persons from the Travelling community, the general public, and the local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.

HO10: Work in conjunction with other statutory and voluntary bodies to encourage social integration of minority groups into Cavan Communities.

HO11: Require, as provided for under Section 95 of the Act, as amended, that 20% of land zoned for residential use or for a mixture of residential and other uses shall be reserved for the provision of housing.

HO12: Ensure the development of social and affordable housing units is carried out in consultation with the applicant/developer.

Chapter 6: Social Strategy and Community Facilities

Policies or objectives relating to Social Inclusion, Gender, Older Persons, Disabilities, Ethnic Minorities, certain Educational, Arts and Culture, Museums, Childcare, Healthcare within the amended draft Plan are considered not relevant to potential threats to Natura 2000 sites and have been omitted.

SI –P1: Seek to improve equality of access to and provision of community infrastructure in the county.

SI-P2: Counteract social exclusion.

SI-P3: Ensure staff of Cavan Local Authorities are aware of social inclusion issues and that all members of society have access to services and information provided by the Authorities as well as the opportunity to help shape policy and service delivery.

SI-O1: Promote equality of access to community infrastructure for all members of society.

SI-O2: Promote the provision of community infrastructure in areas which may experience a deficit.

SI-O3: Promote local employment opportunities to enable people to live and work locally.

SI-O4: Facilitate equality of access to education and childcare facilities so as to remove barriers to participation in the workforce and provide for full participation in society.

SI-O5: Support and promote the work of the Social Inclusion Unit in tackling issues of social exclusion within the County Council as well as within the County.

OP-P1: Recognise the amenity, leisure and social importance of the provision of attractive useable open space and amenity areas.

OP-O1: Ensure the protection of existing areas of open space in residential estates and to encourage the promotion and inclusion of new and where possible, interconnected areas of open space in any proposed residential developments.

OP-O2: Ensure the protection of areas of amenity, leisure and social value within our towns and villages.

OP-O3: Ensure new open space is useable and of leisure and amenity value.

OP-O4: Encourage the provision of facilities at amenity areas such as public seating and toilets to make them fully assessable.

R–P1: Seek to ensure the provision of recreation facilities to cater for different abilities, ages and interests within the County, as far as is practical.

R-P2: Support a partnership approach to increase the participation in sports and physical activity.

R-O1: To meet the recreational needs of all communities in the county.

R-O2: To ensure all communities (rural/urban) and communities of interest have access to recreational facilities and opportunities.

E-O5: To promote, support and develop opportunities to expand existing school buildings to wider community use.

E-06: Facilitate the provision of schools by ensuring that suitable lands are zoned for the establishment, improvement and expansion of current facilities, as appropriate.

E-07: Encourage and facilitate the development of suitable recreational and amenity space in the vicinity of schools.

H-01: To ensure that adequate lands and services are available for the improvement, establishment and expansion of health services.

Chapter 7: Built Heritage and Archaeology

BH-01: To protect, preserve and enhance the architectural heritage of County Cavan by taking into consideration the advice contained in the 'Architectural Protection, Guidelines for Planning Authorities', 2004.

BH-02: To encourage the sympathetic retention, reuse and rehabilitation of Protected Structures and their settings and to promote their sensitive adoption to accommodate modern requirements.

BH-03: To actively encourage and promote the conservation of Cavan's built heritage. To promote best practice conservation in works to protected structures and to encourage the use of tradesmen and professionals trained in the use of traditional skills, materials and building techniques.

BH-P1: To continue to develop the Council's advisory/educational role with regard to Heritage matters and to promote awareness and understanding of the architectural heritage. To continue to administer conservation grants/structures at risk fund for owners /occupiers of protected structures.

BH-P2: Review and maintain the Record of Protected Structures on an on-going basis and to add structures of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest as appropriate, including modern structures. To have regard to the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage as appropriate.

BH-P3: To protect the architectural heritage of Cavan and to include all structures, or parts of structures, considered to be of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest in the RPS.

BH-P4: To promote cultural tourism in Cavan and to fully recognise the potential of the Town's and County's architectural heritage in this role.

BH-P5: Prohibit development in gardens or landscapes which are deemed to be an important part of the setting of Protected Structures or where they contribute to the character of an Architectural Conservation Area.

BH -P6: To identify and retain good examples of historic street furniture and other non-structural elements that contribute to the character of an area and help create a distinctive sense of place or are in themselves unique elements of our built heritage. These should be retained in situ, where appropriate. Such items include water pumps, signage, lamp standards, post boxes, milestones, paving, street lighting, kerbing, plaques, statues, other monuments and stone walls etc.

OB-01: To encourage the retention of original windows, doors, renders, roof coverings and other significant features and fabrics of historic buildings, whether protected or not.

OB-O2: To encourage the retention, rehabilitation and reuse of older buildings that are not Protected Structures in recognition of their contribution both individually and collectively to the unique character, heritage and identity of local areas and the County.

OB-O3: To seek the retention of original and early fabric of older buildings, including windows, doors, roof material, glazing and render or external finishes. The Planning Authority will encourage reinstatement of known original or early features where possible.

VA- O1: Protect vernacular architecture, such as thatched cottages, farmhouses and old school houses in the Town and Environs for the benefit of future generations

SF-O1: Seek the repair and retention of traditional timber and/or rendered shop fronts and pub fronts, including, where appropriate, those that may not be Protected Structures.

SF-O2: To seek to promote the maintenance and repair of the traditional timber, Vitrolite and rendered shopfronts and pub fronts.

IH-O1: To protect our industrial architecture and to encourage appropriate new uses for vacant structures.

ACA-O1: Produce and publish, subject to resources, character appraisals and area specific policies for each ACA, in order to preserve, protect and enhance the character of these areas.

ACA-O2: Ensure all planning applications in an ACA or proposed ACA should be referred to the prescribed bodies prior to a decision being made.

AH-O1: To protect and enhance archaeological monuments, their settings and zones of archaeological potential.

AH-O2: To facilitate appropriate guidance in relation to the protection of the archaeological implications of a proposed development.

AH-O3: To promote public awareness of the rich archaeological heritage in the area.

AH-O4: To secure the preservation of sites and features of historical and archaeological interest.

AH-P1: Ensure the preservation in-situ of any part of our archaeological heritage is to be undertaken by Archaeological assessment which is to be carried out by a suitably qualified professional archaeologist.

AH-P2: The avoidance, as far as possible, of developmental impacts on the archaeological heritage of the County. The preservation in-situ of archaeological monuments and sites as a preferred option.

AH-P3: Cognisance will be taken of the 'Code of Practice between ESB National Grid and the Minister of the Environment Heritage and Local Government in relation to Archaeological Heritage.'

RM-P1: To protect and enhance archaeological monuments, their settings and zones of archaeological potential.

RM-P2: To promote public awareness of the rich archaeological heritage in the area.

RM-P3: To secure the preservation of sites and features of historical and archaeological interest.

RM-O1: To facilitate appropriate guidance in relation to the protection of the archaeological implications of a proposed development.

RM-O2: To promote pre-planning consultations in relation to the archaeological heritage with the Planning Authority and with the Department of the Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht in its capacity of being charged with the implementation of the National Monuments Acts.

RM-O3: To endeavour to ensure the dissemination of the results of archaeological excavation in a timely and appropriate manner.

Chapter 8: Natural Heritage

NH&EN-P1: To conserve, protect and manage Cavan Local Authorities natural heritage assets for future generations while encouraging appreciation / understanding and enjoyment of the amenity value for the present generation.

NH&EN-P2: To maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits that may be derived from conservation and management of Cavan's Natural Heritage and green infrastructure.

NH&EN-P3: To promote an understanding and awareness of Cavan's unique natural heritage and elements of this heritage which should be conserved, managed and enhanced.

NH&EN-P4: To implement, in partnership with Cavan County Heritage Forum, relevant stakeholders and the wider community, Cavan County Heritage and Biodiversity Plans and any revisions thereof.

NH&B-P1: To protect, manage and conserve and seek to enhance the County's biodiversity.

NH&B-P2: To integrate biodiversity consideration into all Cavan Local Authorities activities through the County Biodiversity Action Plan process.

NH&B-P3: To ensure the protection of species of flora and fauna afforded legal protection under Irish and European Legislation.

NH&B-P4: To assess the impact on biodiversity of proposals for large developments, particularly those on greenfield sites, or in environmentally sensitive areas. Any such developments where they do occur must include measures for enhancement of biodiversity.

NH&B-P5: To increase public participation in biodiversity conservation through community-led initiatives.

NH&B-O1: To consider *implement* the aims, objectives and actions identified in Cavan County Heritage and Biodiversity Plans and any revisions thereof during the lifetime of Cavan Town and Environs Development Plans.

NH&B-O2: To promote the conservation of biodiversity outside of designated areas, including features such as wetlands, woodlands, hedgerows and uplands.

NH&B-O3: To Protect and enhance important landscape features including streams, rivers, canals, lakes, and associated wetlands such as reedbeds and swamps; ponds, springs, bogs, fens, trees, woodland and scrub, wildlife and riparian corridors, hedgerows and other boundary types such as stone walls and ditches which are of importance for wild flora and fauna.

DS-P1: Development on or adjacent to National or European designated sites or proposed designated sites during the lifetime of this plan will be permitted only where an assessment has being carried out to the satisfaction of Cavan Local Authorities, in consultation with National Parks and Wildlife Service and indicates that the overall integrity of the site will not be compromised or adversely affected.

DS-P2: To have regard to the views of the National Parks and Wildlife Service in respect of proposed development where such development may have an impact on a designated National or European site or proposed site for designation.

DS-P3: To continue to undertake surveys and collect data that will assist Cavan Local Authorities in building its knowledge base and meeting its obligations under Article 6 of the Habitat Directives.

DS-O1: To ensure an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, and in accordance with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009* and relevant EPA and European Commission guidance documents, is carried out in respect of any Plan or Project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have significant effect on a Natura 2000 site(s), either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, in view of the site's conservation objectives.

DS-O2 : To protect and conserve the conservation value of Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas as identified by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and any other sites that may be proposed for designation during the lifetime of this plan.

GH-P1: To have regard to the geological and geomorphological heritage values of County Cavan geological heritage sites and to avoid inappropriate development, through consultation with the Geological Survey of Ireland.

GH-O1: To undertake an audit of geological heritage sites within County Cavan during the lifetime of this plan.

GH-O2: To raise awareness of the importance of the geological heritage of the county and to disseminate information on sites of geological heritage value in County Cavan, when this information becomes available.

GP-P1: To conserve and manage the geological resources of a discrete area to develop sustainable tourism, enterprise and community life.

GP-O1: To increase the geotourism and recreational potential of Cavan Town & Environs and County Cavan through increased social use of the landscape, with attendant conservation, economic, social and community benefits within the region.

GP-O2: To co-ordinate the continuing development of strategic walking routes, trails and other countryside recreational opportunities.

GP-O3: To enhance the geodiversity, biodiversity and natural environments of the region including additional measures to conserve geosites and natural habitats where appropriate.

GP-O4: To develop knowledge and understanding of geology, related Earth Sciences, endangered habitats and associated environmental issues through education and research programmes.

GP-O5: To encourage enquiry through fieldwork and inspire scientific research through education and research programmes.

INS-P1: To support initiatives, which reduce the risk of invasions, help control and manage new and established invasive species, monitor impacts and raise public awareness.

INS-P2: To encourage the use of native species in amenity planting and stocking and related community actions to reduce the introduction and spread of non-native species.

INS-O1: To initiate a study to establish the range and extent of invasive species currently established within, and adjacent to the Plan Area, within the lifetime of the current plan.

WL-P1: To protect existing wetlands from destruction, infilling, fragmentation and degradation.

WL-O1: To resist development that would destroy, fragment and degrade wetlands.

WL-O2: To support the management, protection and where appropriate, the enhancement of wetlands and associated ecosystem services within the Plan area.

WTHS-P1: To encourage the retention of mature trees and the use of tree surgery rather than felling where possible when undertaking, approving or authorising development.

WTHS-P2: To protect Champion and Heritage Trees where identified on the Tree Register of Ireland and Heritage Tree Database when undertaking, approving, or authorising development.

WTHS-P3: To encourage the use of native species wherever possible in Cavan Local Authorities own landscaping work, and on Council property.

WTHS-P4: To promote and encourage planting of native hedgerow species of local provenance.

WTHS-P5: To encourage the retention of hedgerows and stone walls and other distinctive boundary treatments in rural areas and prevent loss and fragmentation, where possible. Where removal of a hedgerow or stone wall is unavoidable, mitigation by provision of the same type of boundary will be required.

WTHS-O1: To continue to co-operate with relevant stakeholders to improve public access to State forests for amenity purposes and consider development which will enhance the amenity provided by existing trees and woodlands.

WTHS-O2: To promote awareness, understanding and best practice in the management of Cavan's woodland, tree, hedgerow and stone wall resource.

PRW-P1: To preserve and protect for the common good, existing public rights of way which give access to places of natural beauty or recreational utility.

PRW-P1: It is an objective of Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan: To seek to identify and protect over the lifetime of the plan further existing rights of way which give access to places of natural beauty or recreational utility.

GI-P1: To undertake a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Cavan Town and County Cavan during the lifetime of this Development Plan and to ensure that County Cavan's Natura 2000 sites are central to this strategy.

GI-P2: To protect existing green infrastructure in the county and to provide additional green infrastructure, where possible.

GI-P3: To require that all Land Use Plans protect, manage and provide where possible green infrastructure in an integrated and coherent manner.

GI-O1: To develop and support the implementation of a Green Infrastructure Strategy for County Cavan during the lifetime of this plan.

GI-O2: To implement the aims and recommendations of the Green Infrastructure Strategy, once developed, within the lifetime of the plan and future development plans.

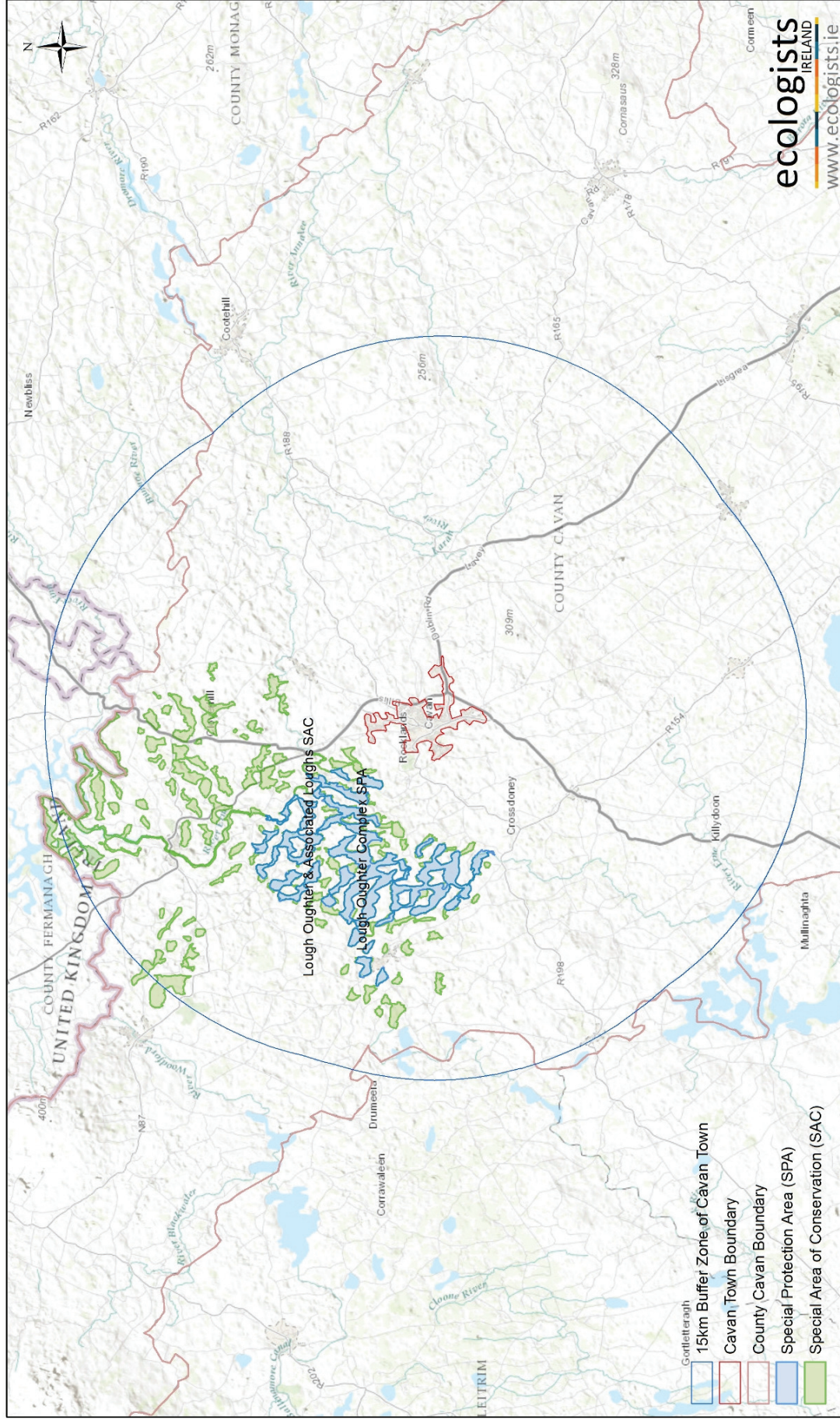
GI-O3: To identify sites of local biodiversity value in County Cavan over the lifetime of this plan.

ODS -P1: To review Derelict Sites Register annually and to proactively work within the legislation to remedy same.

Chapter 9: Development Management

This chapter provides descriptions of zoning and masterplan during the lifetime of project with relevant land uses permitted in principle as per previous Chapters in the Development Plan.

Figure 1. Natura 2000 Network included in the Screening for Appropriate Assessment.



3.0 NATURA 2000 SITES

3.1 Natura 2000 sites within 15km of Cavan Town

All Natura 2000 sites entirely or partially within a 15km buffer from Cavan Town have been included in this assessment in accordance with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidance (DoEHLG, 2010). This distance was deemed to be sufficient to cover all likely significant effects which may arise from the implementation of the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan on Natura 2000 sites. ArcView software using Ordnance Survey maps and NPWS shapefiles were used to identify the boundaries of Natura 2000 Sites.

Table 1. Qualifying Features of Natura 2000 Sites.

Sources: NPWS (2013) *The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Habitat Assessments Volume 2; NPWS (2013) The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Species Assessments Volume 3; Colhoun & Cummins (2013) Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 2014–2019; Selection threshold figures from Stroud et al., (2001) The*

UK SPA Network: its scope and content. JNCC.

NATURA 2000 Site	Qualifying Features	Extent and Character	Threats to Site Integrity
<p>Lough Oughter & Associated Loughs Special Area of Conservation [000007] Site Area: 4757.9ha Lough Oughter and its associated loughs occupy much of the lowland drumlin belt in north and central Cavan between Upper Lough Erne, Killashandra and Cavan town consisting of some 90 inter-drumlin lakes and 14 basins in the course of the Erne River.</p>	<p>Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition-type vegetation [3150] Natural eutrophic lakes have nutrient levels that are higher than those of oligotrophic, dystrophic or mesotrophic lakes, resulting in higher natural productivity, and are typically species-rich. However, many such lakes have been damaged by over-enrichment with nutrients, resulting in hypertrophic conditions and a reduction in species-richness.</p>	<p>The range of the habitat in the Member State is concentrated in the Shannon catchment and drumlin belt of Cavan, Monaghan and Leitrim. This habitat represents c.67% of the land cover within the SAC (3187.8ha). This habitat occurs in 79% of suitable 10km squares in Ireland. 11 SACs are designated for this habitat type. Lough Oughter & Associated Loughs represent % of the total SAC contribution within the Member State. The trends for structure and functions and future prospects within SACs are currently considered as stable.</p>	<p>Undoubtedly the most serious threat facing the site at present is the reduction in water quality in many of the lakes within the complex. Long-term reduction in water quality is primarily due to intensive cattle-based agricultural activities in the surrounding land (Connaghan, 1999). Water quality and pollution; Arterial drainage; Water abstraction; Loss of fringe vegetation to development; Illegal dumping; and, Introduction of non-native invasive species.</p>

	<p>Bog woodland [91D0] is a very distinctive habitat consisting of coniferous and broadleaved forests on humid to wet peaty substrate, with a water level permanently high and even higher than the surrounding water table. The water is always very poor in nutrients. In Ireland this habitat is dominated by downy birch (<i>Betula pubescens</i>) and <i>Sphagnum</i> species. Three distinct sub-types can be recognised according to their location: on raised bogs; on cutaway; within sessile oak (<i>Quercus petraea</i>) woodlands.</p> <p>Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355] The otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> is a semi-aquatic mammal, which occurs in a wide range of ecological conditions, including inland freshwater and coastal areas.</p>	<p>Overall, bog woodlands have been assessed as being in Favourable Conservation Condition (Cross & Lynn, 2013). 11 SACs are designated for this habitat type. This habitat occurs in 52% of suitable 10km squares in Ireland. Lough Oughter & Associated Loughs represent 36.5% of the total SAC contribution within the Member State.</p> <p>Overall, the otter is considered to be in good conservation status and currently widespread throughout Ireland in a wide variety of habitat types with estimates suggesting a very healthy adult female population of between 7,000 and 10,000. 47 SACs are designated for this species in the Member State. Otter are currently known to occur in 73% of suitable 10km squares in Ireland. The otter population within the SAC network has been estimated on the basis of available otter habitat to be between 1,588 and 2,241 breeding females.</p>	<p>Arterial drainage and over-grazing are the main threats to site integrity.</p> <p>Policies and Objectives potentially impacting on 91D0:</p> <p>FO-12: To ensure that in the case of proposed developments for larger schemes, the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) design, construction and maintenance will be favoured by the Planning Authority.</p> <p>Vehicular induced mortality; and, Entanglement in fixed fishing nets or pot traps (unlikely in Lough Oughter complex, more applicable in a coastal context). Diffuse and point source pollution of freshwaters and coastal waters is likely to have indirect effect on otters through impacts on prey abundance.</p> <p>Policies & Objectives potentially impacting on Otter: LU&TP-O2: Cavan Local Authorities aim to continue to implement the recommendations of the Transportation Plan for Cavan Town.</p>
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<p>Lough Oughter Complex Special Protection Area [004049] Site Area: 1466.5ha</p> <p>The Lough Oughter Complex SPA is of ornithological importance for its wintering waterbird populations. Of particular note is the internationally important population of Whooper Swan that is based in the area. The site also supports nationally important populations of a further two wintering species and, notably, holds the highest breeding concentrations of Great Crested Grebe in the country.</p>	<p>Great Crested Grebe [A005] is a widespread breeder across much of Europe, which accounts for less than half of its global breeding range. Its European breeding population is large (>300,000 pairs). The species breeds on fresh or brackish waters with abundant emergent and submerged vegetation showing a preference for non-acidic eutrophic waterbodies with flat or sloping banks and muddy or sandy substrates usually 0.5-5 m deep and with large areas of open water. Suitable habitats include small pools or lakes, backwaters of slow-flowing rivers and artificial waterbodies.</p>	<p>Ireland supports in excess of 1,000 breeding pairs. Lough Oughter is at the centre of the Irish breeding range of Great Crested Grebe and the site supports in excess of 5% of the estimated national breeding total of this species. Ireland supports approximately 3,500 wintering Great Crested Grebe. It is estimated that c.40% occur in SPAs. Lough Oughter Complex support an average peak count of 85 individuals each year, equivalent to 2.4% of the wintering population in the Member State, and c.6 % of the SPA contribution for this species respectively.</p>	<p>RI-O3: To improve the capacity of the road infrastructure within County Cavan in accordance with national/regional policy.</p> <p>Great Crested Grebe: Human intrusions and disturbances; outdoor sports and leisure activities; recreational activities and watersports; and, Diffuse and point source pollution of freshwaters and coastal waters is likely to have indirect effect on otters through impacts on prey abundance.</p>
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	<p>Whooper Swan [A038] Four discrete populations of the Whooper Swan have been identified in western Eurasia. Icelandic breeding stock winters in Iceland, Britain and Ireland comprising of c.16,000 birds.</p>	<p>Ireland supports approximately 14,530 wintering Whooper Swan. Lough Oughter supports 318 roosting Whooper Swan (five year mean peak 1995 – 2000), equivalent to 2% of the wintering population. The Icelandic population is believed to be stable or declining slightly.</p>	<p>Whooper Swan: Collision with utility, service lines and wind turbines. Loss of foraging and roosting sites due to windfarm development; or changing land use from agricultural to forestry; shooting; human intrusions and disturbances; outdoor sports and leisure activities; and, recreational activities and watersports.</p>
	<p>Wigeon [A050] In winter, Wigeon are highly gregarious, and occur in large, mobile flocks. Wigeon is largely a coastal species, feeding on mud-flats, coastal flooded grassland and saltmarsh pastures, however are also widespread on inland flooded grasslands.</p>	<p>Ireland supports approximately 62,980 wintering Wigeon. Lough Oughter Complex supports 903 (five year mean peak 1995 – 2000) Wigeon, equivalent to 1.5% of the wintering population in Ireland.</p>	<p>Wigeon. Shooting; Projected human induced climate change (secondary impacts on habitat quality in breeding grounds and shifts in migration phenology).</p>
	<p>Wetland & Waterbirds [A999]</p>	<p>The E.U. Birds Directive pays particular attention to wetlands and, as these form part of this SPA, the wetlands and its associated waterbirds are of special conservation interest for Wetland & Waterbirds.</p>	<p>Policies & Objectives with potential to impact on site integrity: EG-O1: To encourage the production of energy from renewable sources.. [wind energy] W&C-O1: To promote and facilitate the development of cycling and walking facilities in the Cavan Town and Environs Plan area. W&C-O3: To promote the development of</p>

			<p><i>cycling by the development of cycle links.</i></p> <p><i>OP-03: Ensure new open space is useable and of leisure and amenity value.</i></p> <p><i>OP-04: Encourage the provision of facilities at amenity areas such as public seating and toilets to make them fully assessable.</i></p>
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3.2 Conservation Objectives

To maintain the annexed habitats and species for which the Natura 2000 sites have been designated at a favourable conservation status. The maintenance of habitats and species within Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level. The 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;

The 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.

4.0 SCREENING OF POTENTIAL LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

4.1 Assessment Criteria

4.1.1 Description of the Elements of the Project likely to give rise to Impacts on Natura 2000 sites.

Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site.

The amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 – 2020 is a robust strategic document developed in combination with a range of European, National and Regional legislation; and, planning guidelines and policy documents pertinent to environmental management. The plan is guided by, and operates within the context of the National Plans and Guidance documents, notably the Border Regional Authority Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022 and Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010.

A key requirement within the planning guidelines is that the amended draft Development Plan is subject to a Strategic Environmental Screening Report and Assessment, and to be consistent with the Habitats Directive, subject to an Appropriate Assessment. The amended draft Plan serves to clarify and strengthen the core strategy for planning and sustainable development within Cavan Town & Environs, detailing the locations and projected spatial extent of development and the required provision of key amenities.

The strategic development proposals in the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan are:

- To consolidate the Core Strategy through the provision of appropriate land use objectives in accordance with Regional and National spatial and economic policy; and,
- To ensure that high level strategic spatial policy and more specific objectives potentially impacting on the environment are a material legal and procedural consideration in the planning process, including the potential for significant impacts on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites.

The Core Strategy determines the level of residential zoning, changes to zoning and the expected or desired land use targets during the lifetime of the Plan. Projected population growth within Cavan Town from its 2006 population of 7,883 to 11,600 in 2016 and 12,800 by 2022 provides an evidence base for the requirement for 65ha of land to be made available for residential development.

4.1.2 Description of the Likely Impact of the Plan on the Natura 2000 sites.

Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the Plan (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 site by virtue of:

Size, scale, area and land take:

The total area of land cover subject to land use zoning objectives in the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 – 2020 is 65ha. These lands areas are allocated to meet the projected demand for residential development on the basis of trends in population growth. The amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan does not propose any zoning of land within Natura 2000 sites. Notwithstanding this zoning, the Council shall take appropriate steps to avoid the deterioration of these designated sites in accordance with the

policies and objectives set out in the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan (please refer to Section 4.2 below). The protection of the Natura 2000 network of sites is further strengthened by the additional policies and objectives of the Council relating to Flood Risk Management, the Water Framework Directive and the EU Habitats Directive.

The promotion and development of cycle links will provide improved resources for recreation and tourism within the Town & Environs. However, it is important that this infrastructure is delivered in an environmentally sensitive way. The delivery of new cycle pathways shall be subject to an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC).

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts upon the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites, having regard to their conservation objectives, arising from their size, scale, area and land take, shall be permitted on the basis of the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 - 2020 (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).

Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site:

The policies and objectives in the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 – 2020 relevant to the Core Strategy; those conforming to National Strategies, Policies and Guidance; and, the expansion of industry sectors do not apply to any specific location and are considered applicable to the entire Cavan Town & Environs.

Cavan Town is located within close proximity to Lough Oughter & Associated Loughs SAC and Lough Oughter Complex SPA. The main potential impacts to these sites are changes in hydrology, drainage and deterioration of water quality through nutrient enrichment from agricultural surface water run-off and wastewater treatment.

Emission (disposal to land, water or air):

The level of water supply and extraction has been considered within the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 - 2020. It is anticipated that population growth will continue and the demand for water resources will increase. As detailed in Chapter 3 of the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan, water conservation and network management is now an integral component of the Water Services Investment Programme – Assessment of Needs 2009 – 2015 and is key to the sustainable use of water resources. The Water Framework Directive has set procedures and obligations for managing water resources at River Basin District level and has expedited a comprehensive assessment of water quality within the region and its catchment area. Accordingly, the updated policy in respect of implementation of the recommendations of the River Basin District Plans as set out in the amended draft Plan will assist in securing good water quality standards and associated habitats within the region.

Duration:

The period of the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan extends to 2020 and will not continue or be applicable beyond this date.

4.1.3 Description of Likely Changes to the Natura 2000 sites.

Describe any likely changes to the designated sites arising as result of:

- *Reduction of habitat area*

The amended draft Plan does not propose any additional land take within Natura 2000 sites. Cavan Town & Environs require the development of 65ha during the lifetime of the Plan and due to the proximity of the settlement to the Lough Oughter & Associated Loughs SAC and Lough Oughter Complex SPA there likely to be pathways of risk to this site via changes in land use within zoned development areas in the absence of appropriate policies and objectives regarding environmental protection. Prior to any proposed plans or projects commencing each shall be subject to an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC).

- *Disturbance to key species*

No specific plans or proposals in the amended draft Plan are considered to represent any significant impacts to key species through disturbance. The Council shall take appropriate steps to avoid the disturbances of key species within designated sites in accordance with the policies and objectives set out in Chapter 8 of the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 - 2020.

- *Habitat or species fragmentation*

No specific plans or proposals in the amended draft Plan are considered to represent any significant impacts to habitat or species through fragmentation. The Council shall take appropriate steps to avoid the fragmentation of habitat or isolation of populations of annexed species within designated sites in accordance with the policies and objectives set out in Chapter 8 of the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 - 2020.

- *Reduction in species density*

No specific plans or proposals in the amended draft Plan are considered to represent any decline to species distribution or abundance within Natura 2000 sites. The Council shall take appropriate steps to avoid the reduction in species density within designated sites in accordance with the policies and objectives set out in Chapter 8 of the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 - 2020.

- *Changes in key indicators of conservation value (e.g., water-quality, etc.).*

Cavan County Council is involved in the management and monitoring of four River Basin Districts (RBDs) each include specific River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) for the Neagh Bann International River Basin District (NBIRNBF), the Eastern River Basin District (ERBD), Shannon International River Basin District (SIRBD) and the North Western International River Basin District (NWIRBD). Under the Water Framework Directive it is an objective for all waters to achieve at least good water quality status within prescribed timeframes. Cavan County Council is required to meet the environmental objectives of these River Basin Management Plans and the amended draft Plan incorporates these principles/targets through the spatial planning process by way of specific development management policies and objectives.

Intrinsically linked to meeting the objectives of the four River Basin Districts is Regulation 42(21(f)) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 which requires Cavan County Council to consider for Appropriate Assessment consents / licences for Waste Water Treatment Plants. Potential impacts on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites from discharges through deterioration in water quality shall be considered for each Waste Water Discharge Authorisation and that operational discharges conform to the Emission Limit Values (ELVs).

The legal provision of the Water Framework Directive, the European Communities (Birds & Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 overlap with the requirement of the Planning & Development Acts (as amended) 2010 and the basic measures undertaken by Statutory Authorities to ensure linkages between planning, water services and the environment achieve the objectives of the RBDs.

The implementation of these requirements during the timeline of the Amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan will assist in improving and securing good water quality standards; the favourable extent and condition of habitats dependant on water quality; and, the maintenance of designated species associated with these habitats in the region.

4.1.4 The Likely Impacts on the Natura 2000 sites as a whole.

Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 as a whole in terms of:

- *Interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site.*

The Amended draft Plan does not propose any development, plan or projects within any specific Natura 2000 site and therefore it is considered that there will be no potential negative impacts on the relationships that define the structure of Natura 2000 sites.

- *Interference with key relationships that define the function of the site.*

The Amended draft Plan does not propose any development, plan or projects within any specific Natura 2000 site and therefore it is considered that there will be no potential impacts on the relationships that define the structure of Natura 2000 sites.

4.1.5 Indicators of Significance of the Impacts.

Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:

- *Loss*
- *Fragmentation*
- *Disruption*
- *Disturbance*
- *Change to key elements of the site (e.g., water quality etc.)*

The Amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 - 2020 has been formulated to ensure that uses, development and effects arising from permissions based upon this amended draft (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) shall not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site. Cavan County Council shall take appropriate steps to avoid the

deterioration of these designated sites in accordance with the policies and objectives set out in Chapter 8 of the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan.

4.1.6 Likely Significance of Potential Impacts

Describe from above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above potential impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale of magnitude of impacts are not known:

The screening process identified all impacts and relevant significance indicators of the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 – 2020. A significant weighting on the conclusions of no significant impacts is based on the following rationale:

That in implementation of the Plan, no areas of habitat that are important for the survival of the designated habitats or species within the Natura 2000 will be:

- Modified or fragmented, destroyed or isolated. No key biogeochemical processes necessary for the survival of the designated features will be impacted, directly or indirectly or in the short to long term.

No ecologically meaningful proportion of habitat, or designated feature dependant on that habitat within the Natura 2000 sites examined in this screening will be:

- Seriously impacted (either through loss, damage or deterioration in water quality).

4.2 Screening Matrix

A Screening Matrix is provided below which shows the rationale under which the conclusions in section 4.1.6 were reached. Section 2.4 has detailed all policies (with the exception of certain social devoid of any developmental context) within the amended draft plan. Section 3 described the Natura 2000 sites within the sphere of influence of the amended draft plan, why these sites are designated and the actions that represent potential threats to site integrity. Section 4 has assessed the amended draft plan in regard to the network described in Section 3. The screening matrix in Table 2 below ties in these sections, linking sites, threats policies and assessment conclusions.

It is not generally considered best practice to justify conclusions of no significant impacts of policies and objectives in development plans through the premise of other policies and objectives so devised to off-set those impacts, albeit through valid legislative means in the planning process. It is important to consider however, that the vast majority of policies and objectives pertaining to development in the amended draft plan are all caveated by a central objective and requirement to implement Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive, (by subjecting any plan or project likely to have significant adverse effects on the integrity of Natura 2000 or European Sites (SACs, SPAs), whether directly (in situ), indirectly (ex-situ) or in combination with other plans or projects, to an appropriate assessment in order to inform decision making). This caveat is also supplemented by policies and objectives ensuring compliance with regulation standards and promoting positive reinforcement for the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services. The evaluation of the amended draft plan in this screening adopts a “*conservation feature*” led assessment of relevant policies and objectives. This serves to avoid repetitious appraisal of generic policies and objectives that have no conceivable pathways of risk to Natura 2000 sites.

Table 2. Significance of Impacts Matrix

Interest feature	Conservation objective	Specific Threats from the Plan.	Relevant Development Plan Policy or Objective	Effect on site integrity?
<p>Lough Oughter & Associated Loughs Special Area of Conservation [000007]</p> <p>Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition-type vegetation [3150]</p>	<p>- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and</p> <p>- 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</p> <p>- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.</p>	<p>Water quality and pollution; Arterial drainage; Loss of fringe vegetation to development.</p>	<p>PSS-P1: To require that the septic tanks and proprietary effluent treatment systems comply in full with the requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency Wastewater Treatment EPA Code of Practice 2009 or any subsequent Guidelines/Code of Practice.</p> <p>WQ-O1: To participate in the implementation and promote compliance with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive through the River Basin Management Plans and associated programmes of measures.</p> <p>WQ-O3: To ensure the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and ground waters throughout the county by implementing the EU Water Framework Directive, and any other associated legislation.</p> <p>WQ-O5: To continue to improve water quality and maintain water quality which is already at Good and High Ecological Status.</p>	<p>No significant impacts. General policy statements and none detailing any industrial pressures (abstraction). Policy for over-arching compliance with EPA Code of Practice on any development.</p> <p>Positive impacts. General policy statement.</p> <p>Policy for the protection of the natural environment including (WS-P01), by extension, the integrity of Natura 2000 sites within the amended draft Plan area as a consequence of maintenance or improvement of water body status.</p>

Interest feature	Conservation objective	Specific Threats from the Plan.	Relevant Development Plan Policy or Objective	Effect on site integrity?
Bog woodland [91D0]	General conservation objectives for habitats as above.	Arterial drainage and over-grazing	FO-12: To ensure that in the case of proposed developments for larger schemes, the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) design, construction and maintenance will be favoured by the Planning Authority.	No significant impacts. General policy statement which is too general to predict accurately where potential effects may occur. No specific proposed development or larger scheme detailed in the Plan. Agricultural related policies not relevant within the Cavan Town & Environs Plan.
Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355]	General conservation objectives for annexed species as above.	Vehicular induced mortality.	LU&TP-O2: Cavan Local Authorities aim to continue to implement the recommendations of the Transportation Plan for Cavan Town. RI-O3: To improve the capacity of the road infrastructure within County Cavan in accordance with national/regional policy.	No significant impacts. General policy statement which is too general to predict accurately where potential effects may occur. No specific scheme detailed in the Plan. Proposed infrastructure improvements subject to ecological survey and assessment for Otter adhering to National Roads Authority Guidance (NRA, 2009).

Interest feature	Conservation objective	Specific Threats from the Plan.	Relevant Development Plan Policy or Objective	Effect on site integrity?
Lough Oughter Complex Special Protection Area [004049]				
Great Crested Grebe [A005]	<p>- 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, and</p> <p>- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and</p> <p>- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.</p>	<p>Human intrusions and disturbances to breeding birds; outdoor sports and leisure activities; recreational activities and watersports; and, Diffuse and point source pollution of freshwaters.</p>	<p>W&C-O1: To promote and facilitate the development of cycling and walking facilities in the Cavan Town and Environs Plan area.</p> <p>W&C-O2: To support the recommendations of the National Cycle Network Study (2010) - Cavan Lakelands Cycle Loop which proposes extending the route from Cavan Town to Killeshandra Village via Killykeen Forest Park.</p> <p>W&C-O3: To promote the development of cycling by the development of cycle links.</p>	<p>No significant impacts. General policy statement which is too general to predict accurately where potential effects may occur.</p> <p>Policy for the protection of the natural environment including (WS-P01), by extension, the integrity of Natura 2000 sites within the amended draft Plan area. Any proposed routes subject to an Appropriate Assessment.</p>

Interest feature	Conservation objective	Specific Threats from the Plan.	Relevant Development Plan Policy or Objective	Effect on site integrity?
Whooper Swan [A038]	General conservation objectives for annexed species as for Great Crested Grebe (above).	Collision with utility, service lines and wind turbines. Loss of foraging and roosting sites due to windfarm development; shooting; human intrusions and disturbances; outdoor sports and leisure activities; and, recreational activities and watersports	EG-O1: To encourage the production of energy from renewable sources...[wind energy]...subject to normal proper planning considerations, including in particular, the potential impact on areas of environmental or landscape sensitivity. T&IT –P2: Support the infrastructural development of ESB networks. T&IT- O2: Facilitate the provision of utilities, such as electricity and telecommunications, to serve the projected population growth and consumer demand within the area. As above for Great Crested Grebe: Objectives relating to promoting the development of cycle routes. W&C-O1 W&C-O2 W&C-O3	No significant impacts. General objective which is not deemed to have any effect on Natura 2000 sites within / adjacent the amended draft Plan area. General policy statement which is too general to predict accurately where potential effects may occur.
Wigeon [A050]	General conservation objectives for annexed species as for Great Crested Grebe (above).	Shooting as a secondary impact of increased access.	As above for Great Crested Grebe: Objectives relating to promoting the development of cycle routes. W&C-O1 W&C-O2 W&C-O3	No significant impacts. Lough Oughter is a Wildfowl Sanctuary and exclusion from Open Season Order enforced by National Parks & Wildlife Service.
Wetland & Waterbirds [A999]	General conservation objectives for annexed species as above.			As above.

4.3 Policies and Objectives protecting Natura 2000 sites

A material consideration in defining the strategy and policies within the Amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 – 2020 is the regulatory and legal instruments protecting designated sites and their respective conservation objectives. The Plan contains numerous policies and measures which contribute to the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites and compliment Cavan County Council’s obligation to ensure that the Plan complies with the requirements of the Habitats Directive. All relevant policies within the Amended draft Plan, and those that support the ecological coherence and protection of the Natura 2000 network are detailed below.

General Biodiversity Policies & Objectives:

Policy CSP6: Encouragement will be given to proposals which improve the biodiversity value of sites and to the establishment of local nature areas where the nature conservation and landscape interest of the land will be protected and enhanced.

RI-O10: To have regard to the Local Action Biodiversity Plan for County Cavan in the provision of any new Council roads.

WQ-O3: To ensure the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and ground waters throughout the county by implementing the EU Water Framework Directive, and any other associated legislation.

WQ-O5: To continue to improve water quality and maintain water quality which is already at Good and High Ecological Status.

NH&EN-P1: To conserve, protect and manage Cavan Local Authorities natural heritage assets for future generations while encouraging appreciation / understanding and enjoyment of the amenity value for the present generation.

NH&EN-P2: To maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits that may be derived from conservation and management of Cavan’s Natural Heritage and green infrastructure.

NH&EN-P3: To promote an understanding and awareness of Cavan’s unique natural heritage and elements of this heritage which should be conserved, managed and enhanced.

NH&EN-P4: To implement, in partnership with Cavan County Heritage Forum, relevant stakeholders and the wider community, Cavan County Heritage and Biodiversity Plans and any revisions thereof.

NH&B-P1: To protect, manage and conserve and seek to enhance the County’s biodiversity.

NH&B-P2: To integrate biodiversity consideration into all Cavan Local Authorities activities through the County Biodiversity Action Plan process.

NH&B-P4: To assess the impact on biodiversity of proposals for large developments, particularly those on greenfield sites, or in environmentally sensitive areas. Any such developments where they do occur must include measures for enhancement of biodiversity.

NH&B-O2: To promote the conservation of biodiversity outside of designated areas, including features such as wetlands, woodlands, hedgerows and uplands.

NH&B-O3: To Protect and enhance important landscape features including streams, rivers, canals, lakes, and associated wetlands such as reedbeds and swamps; ponds, springs, bogs, fens, trees, woodland and scrub, wildlife

and riparian corridors, hedgerows and other boundary types such as stone walls and ditches which are of importance for wild flora and fauna.

Designated Sites Policies & Objectives:

WS-P01: The future development of available lands within the plan area shall be evaluated in terms of requirements of the EIA, Habitats Directive; Water Framework Directive and the Floods' Directive, to ensure that there are no negative impacts on water quality.

NH&B-P3: To ensure the protection of species of flora and fauna afforded legal protection under Irish and European Legislation.

DS-P1: Development on or adjacent to National or European designated sites or proposed designated sites during the lifetime of this plan will be permitted only where an assessment has been carried out to the satisfaction of Cavan Local Authorities, in consultation with National Parks and Wildlife Service and indicates that the overall integrity of the site will not be compromised or adversely affected.

DS-P2: To have regard to the views of the National Parks and Wildlife Service in respect of proposed development where such development may have an impact on a designated National or European site or proposed site for designation.

DS-P3: To continue to undertake surveys and collect data that will assist Cavan Local Authorities in building its knowledge base and meeting its obligations under Article 6 of the Habitat Directives.

DS-O1: To ensure an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, and in accordance with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009 and relevant EPA and European Commission guidance documents, is carried out in respect of any Plan or Project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have significant effect on a Natura 2000 site(s), either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, in view of the site's conservation objectives.

DS-O2 : To protect and conserve the conservation value of Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas as identified by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and any other sites that may be proposed for designation during the lifetime of this plan.

As detailed above the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 – 2020 has many policies and objectives that serve to pre-emptively avoid and minimise risks to Natura 2000 sites. Many of these policies and objectives reinforce the statutory authorities' obligation to comply with environmental legislation and serve to promote the importance of other areas designated for conservation interest and strengthen the protection of ecologically important networks within the County.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

This Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment of the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 – 2020 has been conducted in accordance with the “Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC” as published by the European Commission and “Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities” published by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. In view of the information presented for consideration from the statutory consultees, and on implementation of the Amended draft Core Strategy and, Zoning policies, it is objectively concluded that there are likely to be no significant effects on the Natura 2000 sites and that appropriate protection and mitigation, where necessary, in respect of Natura 2000 Network has been formulated within the amended draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan (as outlined in 4.1) to ensure that changes in land utility, development and the potential impacts from permissions based on policies and objectives detailed in the Plan conform to the requirements of the European Communities (Birds & Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011.

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STAGE 1 SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS REPORT MATRIX (FONSE)

In accordance with Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC

Development Type	Amended Draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 - 2020
Development Location	Cavan Town including surrounding lands within 15km.
Natura 2000 site(s) within impact zone *Sites listed in bold within County Cavan	Lough Oughter & Associated Loughs Special Area of Conservation [000007] Lough Oughter Complex Special Protection Area [004049]
Qualifying interests of Natura 2000 site(s)	Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i> -type vegetation [3150] Bog woodland [91D0] Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355] Wetland & Waterbirds [A999] Great Crested Grebe [A005] Whooper Swan [A038] Wigeon [A050]

1.0 Name of project or plan: Amended Draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 - 2020	
Name and location of Natura 2000 site:	The Amended Draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan does not relate to any one Natura 2000 site and considers all sites within a recommended 15km buffer zone.
Description of the project or plan	The Plan establishes a framework for the co-ordinated and sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental development of Cavan Town and surrounds. The Plan details the policies and objectives of Cavan County Council's vision for the spatial and sectoral development of Cavan Town over the period from 2014 – 2020. The Plan also serves as a point of reference for statutory authorities, planners, developers and the general public on how development proposals are likely to be assessed.

<p>Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (provide details)?</p>	<p>The Amended Draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 - 2020 is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the Natura 2000 Network. The Plan provides the strategic direction and policy against which proposed developments are based. A material consideration in that strategy and respective policy platform is the regulatory and legal instruments protecting designated sites with a specific focus on the key conservation objectives of those sites.</p>
<p>Are there other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could affect the site (provide details)?</p>	<p>This Amended Draft Plan once adopted will form the Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan. The Plan sets the framework for the sustainable development of the Town over a six year period. It is the primary document for the setting out of the councils aim, policies and objectives in terms of land use planning. In doing so it must be consistent with, and ensure the implementation of National and Regional Plans and Guidelines as well as a host of other European, National and Regional Legislation, in terms of the management of the environment.</p>
<p>2.0 The assessment of significance of effects</p>	
<p>Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 Site.</p>	<p>The policies and objectives detailed in Amended Draft Plan will have the effect of strengthening the management of and enhancing the protection of Natura 2000 sites.</p>
<p>Explain why these effects are not considered significant.</p>	<p>Specific policies and objectives have been formulated within the Amended Draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 - 2020 to allow the Council to take appropriate steps to avoid the deterioration of Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>The legal provisions of the Water Framework Directive and the European Communities (Birds & Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 overlap with the requirement of the Planning & Development Acts (as amended) 2010 and ensure linkages between planning and environment legislation in achieving the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 Network.</p> <p>The Amended Draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 – 2020 has many amendments within policies and objectives that serve to pre-emptively avoid and minimise risks to Natura 2000 sites. Many of these policies and objectives reinforce the statutory authorities’ obligation to comply with environmental legislation and serve to promote the importance of other areas designated for conservation interest and strengthen the protection of ecologically importance networks within the County.</p> <p>The implementation of these policies and objectives during the timeline of the Amended Draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan therefore serve to provide a proactive approach to environmental legislation, promote awareness of environmental issues within the County; and protect the favourable extent and condition of habitats within and out-with Natura 2000 sites.</p>

<p>List of agencies consulted: provide contact name and telephone or email address</p>	<p>National Parks & Wildlife Service John Matthews (West Cavan) John.Matthews@ahg.gov.ie</p> <p>David McDonagh (East Cavan) David.McDonagh@ahg.gov.ie</p> <p>Heritage Council Anne-Marie Ward (Cavan Heritage Officer) amcurley@cavancoco.ie</p>
<p>Response to consultation:</p>	<p><i>Provision of information relating to existing and potential future threats to Lough Oughter & Associated Loughs SAC and Lough Oughter Complex SPA.</i></p>

3.0 Data collected to carry out the assessment			
Who carried out the assessment?	Sources of data	Level of assessment completed	Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed
<p>Ryan Wilson-Parr B.Sc (Hons) M.Res CMIEEM ESAS MMO PSO Managing Director Ecologists Ireland Consultants Ltd</p> <p>For and on behalf of Cavan County Council.</p>	<p>National Parks and Wildlife Service; Heritage Council; Amended Draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014-2020; The Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report for the Amended Draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 – 2020.</p>	<p>Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment.</p>	<p>This report titled: Wilson-Parr, 2013. Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment pursuant to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC on Plans & Projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites. Amended Draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 – 2020.</p>

Overall Conclusions

The screening process identified all impacts and relevant significance indicators of the Amended Draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 – 2020.

No areas of habitat that are important for the survival of the designated features/species within the Natura 2000 sites will be:

- Modified or fragmented, destroyed or isolated. No key biogeochemical processes necessary for the survival of the designated features will be impacted, directly or indirectly or in the short to long term.

No ecologically meaningful proportion of the habitat of designated feature of the Natura 2000 sites will be:

- Seriously impacted (either through loss, damage or deterioration in water quality).

It can be objectively concluded that there are not likely to be significant effects on the Natura 2000 site(s) arising from the Amended Draft Cavan Town & Environs Development Plan 2014 – 2020.

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH OUGHTER AND ASSOCIATED LOUGHS

SITE CODE: 000007

Lough Oughter and its associated loughs occupy much of the lowland drumlin belt in north and central Cavan between Upper Lough Erne, Killeshandra and Cavan town. The site is a maze of waterways, islands, small lakes and peninsulas including some 90 inter-drumlin lakes and 14 basins in the course of the Erne River. The area lies on Silurian and Ordovician strata with Carboniferous limestone immediately surrounding.

This site is a candidate Special Area of Conservation for natural eutrophic lakes and bog woodland, two habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive and for the otter, a species listed on Annex II of the same Directive. The site also contains areas of dry woodland, marsh, reedbed and wet pasture.

Drainage within the area is inefficient and the water levels prone to natural fluctuation as a result. The regularly flooded areas still accommodate a variety of specialist plant species such as Amphibious Bistort (*Polygonum amphibium*) and Marsh Foxtail (*Alopecurus geniculatus*), as well as rarer species such as Needle Spike-Rush (*Eleocharis acicularis*) and Lesser Marshwort (*Apium inundatum*).

The lakes and basins are shallow, and the water well mixed and nutrient rich (eutrophic). The aquatic flora is varied with several pondweed species such as Blunt-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton obtusifolius*), Shining Pondweed (*Potamogeton lucens*), Broad-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*), Reddish Pondweed (*Potamogeton alpinus*) and Various-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton gramineus*). Typical in the zone of aquatic plants are Yellow Water-lily (*Nuphar lutea*), Canadian Pondweed (*Elodea canadensis*), Mare's Tail (*Hippuris vulgaris*), Water Milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), Brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*), Water Dropwort (*Oenanthe spp.*) and Starwort (*Callitriche sp.*). The aquatic community includes species of limited distribution in Ireland such as the Duckweed species *Lemna gibba* and *Spirodela polyrhiza*.

Around much of the shoreline there are well developed swamp and marsh communities, typically with a zone of Bulrush (*Schoenoplectus lacustris*) in front of a zone of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) which is in turn backed by a more species rich zone of sedges, grasses and herbs, particularly Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*), Common Sedge (*Carex nigra*), Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Marsh Helleborine (*Epipactis palustris*), Water Plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*), Rough Horsetail (*Equisetum hyemale*), Water Horsetail (*Equisetum fluviatile*) and Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*). Less widespread species also occur on the wet lake margins; species such as Water Dock (*Rumex hydrolapathum*), Greater Water-parsnip (*Sium latifolium*), Cowbane (*Cicuta virosa*), Tufted Sedge (*Carex elata*), Water Soldier (*Stratiotes aloides*), Arrowhead

(*Sagittaria sagittifolia*), Flowering Rush (*Butomus umbellatus*) and Greater Spearwort (*Ranunculus lingua*) may be locally prominent.

There are many variations on this typical zonation of sheltered shores with species such as Reedmace (*Typha* spp.), Branched Bur-Reed (*Sparganium erectum*) and Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) gaining local prominence. More exposed shores lack the extensive swamp zones, here smaller species such as Common Spike Rush (*Eleocharis palustris*) can be found.

Level, wet pastures tend to be dominated by Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) and Rush species (*Juncus* sp.) with a scattering of marshland and wet grassland plants such as Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*), Water Forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpiodes*) and Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*). Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*) is most abundant with frequent Hard Rush (*Juncus inflexus*) and Sharp-Flowered Rush (*Juncus acutiflorus*) and less widespread Conglomerate Rush (*Juncus conglomeratus*) also occurring.

Where a general lack of grazing pressure or a particular slope has allowed it, deciduous woodland has re-established itself behind the reedbeds. Two species of Willow (*Salix caprea* and *Salix cinerea*) are common constituents along with Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). Along submerged margins Alder and Willow are most commonly found with a flooded understorey typically containing Reed Canary-grass, Meadow Sweet, Yellow Flag and in places Tufted Sedge (*Carex elata*) and Greater Tussock Sedge (*Carex paniculata*). Downy Birch occurs along lake edges and also forms stands of wet woodland on cutover bog with varying degrees of wet and dry peat. Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*), Marsh Cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*) and Bog Moss (*Sphagnum* sp.) occur in areas with pools and dry areas. Where there is dry peat, Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and Gorse (*Ulex* sp.) occur under the Birch canopy. Birch dominated wood is also found in association with Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) bog.

In areas of wet bog with good *Sphagnum* cover, bog woodland has developed. Downy Birch characterises this habitat; other typical species include Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*) and Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*).

Dry broad-leaved woodland is characterised by Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Hazel, Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and Oak (*Quercus* spp.), while shrubs include Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) and Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*). The Red Data Book species Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*) has also been recorded from the site. The clayey soils have a characteristic flora, including Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*), Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*) and Wood Sedge (*Carex sylvatica*).

The site supports a substantial population of water birds including internationally important numbers of Whooper Swan (average peak 231) and nationally important numbers of Tufted Duck (average peak 247) and Cormorant (average peak 130) as well as important numbers of species such as Greenland White-fronted Goose, Great Crested Grebe, Wigeon, Teal and Pochard. Lapwing, Snipe and Golden Plover also

utilise the wet grassland areas. Wildfowl Sanctuaries exist at Inchin Lough, Derrygid Lough, Farnham Lough, Derrybrick Lough, Derrinishbeg Lough and Annagh Lough. Part of the site is designated an SPA under the EU Birds Directive.

Otter, a species listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive occurs at the site. Irish Hare has also been recorded. Both of these species are listed in the Irish Red Data Book and are legally protected under the Wildlife Act 1976.

The main threats to the quality of the site are water polluting activities such as run-off from fertiliser and slurry application and sewage discharge which have raised the nutrient status of some lakes to hypertrophic. Housing and boating developments are on the increase, adjacent to and within the site respectively. There is also significant fishing and shooting pressure on and around the lakes. Increased afforestation has resulted in some loss of wetland habitat and also loss of feeding ground for wintering birds such as Greenland White-fronted Geese.

The Lough Oughter area contains important examples of two habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive and supports a population of the Annex II species, otter. The site as a whole is the best inland example of a flooded drumlin landscape in Ireland and has many rich and varied biological communities. Nowhere else in the country does such an intimate mixture of land and water occur over a comparable area, and many of the species of wetland plants, some considered quite commonplace in Lough Oughter and its associated loughs, are infrequent elsewhere.

27.11.2002

Conservation Objectives for Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC [000007]

The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives and Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas are designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. These two designations are collectively known as the Natura 2000 network.

European and national legislation places a collective obligation on Ireland and its citizens to maintain habitats and species in the Natura 2000 network at favourable conservation condition. The Government and its agencies are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of regulations that will ensure the ecological integrity of these sites.

The maintenance of habitats and species within Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- 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.

The 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, and
- 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.

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:

- ◆ [1355] *Lutra lutra*
- ◆ [3150] Natural eutrophic lakes with *Magnopotamion* or *Hydrocharition*-type vegetation
- ◆ [91D0] * Bog woodland

Citation:

NPWS (2011) Conservation objectives for Lough Oughter and Associated Loughs SAC [000007]. Generic Version 3.0. Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht.

For more information please go to: www.npws.ie/protectedsites/conservationmanagementplanning

SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: LOUGH OUGHTER COMPLEX SPA

SITE CODE: 004049

Lough Oughter and its associated loughs occupy much of the lowland drumlin belt in north and central Co. Cavan between Belturbet, Killashandra and Cavan town. This area comprises a maze of waterways, islands, small lakes and peninsulas. Lough Oughter, the largest lake in the site, is relatively shallow (maximum depth of 10 m) and considered to be a naturally eutrophic system. Its main inflowing rivers are the River Erne and the Annalee River, whilst the main outflow is the River Erne, which connects the lake to Upper Lough Erne and Lower Lough Erne to the north.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Great Crested Grebe, Whooper Swan, and Wigeon. The E.U. Birds Directive pays particular attention to wetlands and, as these form part of this SPA, the site and its associated waterbirds are of special conservation interest for Wetland & Waterbirds.

The Lough Oughter Complex is of importance for a range of wintering waterfowl. Of particular note is an internationally important population of Whooper Swan (318) that is based in the area and which uses the lakes as a roost - all figures are five year mean peaks for the period 1995/96 to 1999/2000. A population of Greenland White-fronted Goose (75) of regional importance also roosts on the lakes and feeds mainly on agriculturally improved grassland nearby. The site supports nationally important wintering populations of two species, Great Crested Grebe (89) and Wigeon (903). Other species which occur regularly include Mute Swan (139), Teal (220), Mallard (336), Pochard (58), Tufted Duck (105), Goldeneye (117), Lapwing (381), Curlew (33), Little Grebe (8), Cormorant (81) and Black-headed Gull (311). A small colony of Common Tern occurs (10 pairs recorded at Farnham Lough in 1995).

Lough Oughter is at the centre of the Irish breeding range of Great Crested Grebe and the site supports in excess of 10% of the estimated national breeding total of this species (115 individuals in 1986-88).

The Lough Oughter Complex SPA is of ornithological importance for its wintering waterbird populations. Of particular note is the internationally important population of Whooper Swan that is based in the area. The site also supports nationally important populations of a further two wintering species and, notably, holds the highest breeding concentrations of Great Crested Grebe in the country. Two of the species which occur regularly are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, i.e. Whooper Swan and Greenland White-fronted Goose.

29.9.2010



Conservation Objectives for Lough Oughter Complex SPA [004049]

The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives and Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas are designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. These two designations are collectively known as the Natura 2000 network.

European and national legislation places a collective obligation on Ireland and its citizens to maintain habitats and species in the Natura 2000 network at favourable conservation condition. The Government and its agencies are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of regulations that will ensure the ecological integrity of these sites.

The maintenance of habitats and species within Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- 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.

The 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, and
- 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.

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| ◆ <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> | [wintering] |
| ◆ <i>Cygnus cygnus</i> | [wintering] |
| ◆ <i>Anas penelope</i> | [wintering] |
| ◆ Wetlands | [] |

Citation:

NPWS (2011) Conservation objectives for Lough Oughter Complex SPA [004049]. Generic Version 4.0.
Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht.

For more information please go to: www.npws.ie/protectedsites/conservationmanagementplanning