

Armagh City, Banbridge &
Craigavon Borough Council

Local Development Plan 2035

Draft Plan Strategy

Draft Habitats Regulations Assessment

September 2026



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Armagh City
Banbridge
& Craigavon
Borough Council

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

Local Development Plan 2035

September 2026

Draft Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in relation to Regulation 43 and Regulation 64B of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended), for the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon LDP 2035 [draft] Plan Strategy.

Shared Environmental Service (SES) was established in 2015 as a shared service to support Councils in Northern Ireland in meeting their environmental responsibilities in connection with their role as planning authorities. SES provides support to Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and all other Councils in Northern Ireland on HRA in planning functions, including the preparation of the new Local Development Plans. SES has therefore, in conjunction with the Council, prepared this [draft] HRA to ensure the legal requirements of the Habitats Regulations (NI) are fully met.

The HRA remains in draft until the Plan Strategy is adopted. Following public consultation and independent examination of the draft Plan Strategy, the HRA will be updated and finalised as required. The final HRA will be adopted by the Council and published alongside the adopted Plan Strategy.

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Non-Technical Summary

Habitats Regulations Assessment

The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended), commonly referred to as ‘the Habitats Regulations (NI)’, transposed the requirements of the Habitats Directive¹ and Birds² Directive into domestic law in Northern Ireland. These Regulations establish the obligations of competent authorities to protect, conserve and restore the protected habitats and species of European sites. In the context of the Habitats Regulations (NI), Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (‘the Council’) is a competent authority.

Regulation 43 of the Habitats Regulations (NI) requires that competent authorities assess the potential impacts of plans or projects on European sites in Northern Ireland and European offshore marine sites to determine whether there will be any ‘likely significant effects’ on any European site as a result of the Plan’s implementation (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects); and, if so, whether these effects will result in any adverse effects on that site’s integrity with reference to the site’s conservation objectives. This is known as Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

Overview of the [draft] Plan Strategy

The [draft] Plan Strategy sets out the strategic direction for development and land use in the Council area over the Plan period and establishes the overall level of growth to be accommodated. It identifies, in broad terms, the locations where different types of development will be directed across the Borough up to 2035 and provides the framework for delivering the Council’s vision and objectives. It provides strategic and operational planning policies designed to guide future development and support the delivery of the Council’s Strategic Objectives.

Requirement for a HRA

The nature of the Plan Strategy is that it has the potential to have a significant effect on some European sites, therefore the Council is undertaking a HRA in its role as a competent authority to ensure the legal requirements of the Habitats Regulations (NI) are fully met.

Regulation 64B of the Habitats Regulations (NI) also makes specific provisions for the assessment of implications for European site(s) from a land use plan by the plan-making authority, before the plan is given effect.

In this report, the term ‘European sites’ is used to describe all sites protected by regional policy on HRA. These are:

- a Special Protection Area (SPA) or proposed Special Protection Area (pSPA);
- a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) or a Site of Community Importance (SCI); and
- a Ramsar site (either listed or proposed).

This [draft] HRA Report has been prepared in support of the [draft] Plan Strategy for the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Local Development Plan (LDP). It records the assessment of the [draft] Plan Strategy and its potential impacts on European sites.

The HRA remains in draft until the Plan Strategy is adopted. Following public consultation and independent examination of the draft Plan Strategy and the incorporation of any modifications to the draft Plan Strategy directed as being required by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), the HRA will be updated and finalised as required. The final HRA will be adopted by the Council and published alongside the adopted Plan.

¹ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 ‘on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora’. The Directive’s overall objective is to ensure that these species and habitat types are maintained, or restored, to a favourable conservation status within the EU.

² Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 ‘on the conservation of wild birds’. This Directive requires all Member States to protect all wild bird species and protect and restore their habitats.

European sites Overview

A total of 30 European sites that have a confirmed or theoretical connection to the Plan area were identified. Sites beyond the Council area with a potential hydrological, ecological or infrastructure connection were included. All sites within 15km of the Plan area were also considered for potential effects from aerial emissions.

At the conclusion of the screening stage, it was found that 25 European sites might be affected by the Plan Strategy:

- Lough Neagh & Lough Beg Ramsar site
- Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA
- Montiagh Moss SAC
- Peatlands Park SAC
- Belfast Lough Open Water SPA
- Belfast Lough Ramsar site
- Belfast Lough SPA
- Carlingford Lough Marine Extension proposed SPA
- Carlingford Lough Ramsar site
- Carlingford Lough SPA
- Derryleckagh proposed Ramsar site
- Derryleckagh SAC
- Dundrum Bay proposed Ramsar site
- East Coast (NI) Marine pSPA
- Eastern Mourne SAC
- Murlough SAC
- Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC
- Rostrevor Wood SAC
- Slieve Beagh-Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea SPA
- Slieve Gullion SAC
- Carlingford Lough SPA (ROI)
- Carlingford Shore SAC
- Dundalk Bay SAC
- Dundalk Bay SPA (ROI)
- Slieve Beagh SPA

Screening of the Plan

All of the [draft] Plan Strategy proposals and strategies were reviewed, from the LDP Vision and Strategic Objectives, the Strategic Policies, the Spatial Growth and other Strategies in Part 1, through to the General Policies, Operational Policies and Appendices in Parts 2-4. Following the screening of the complete Plan Strategy it was found that, in the absence of mitigation, there is potential for likely significant effects to arise from 90 Policies. These were all screened in for appropriate assessment.

Appropriate Assessment

The screened-in policies have been assessed in Section 5 of this report. It was found that measures were incorporated which can be considered to be mitigation to avoid the [draft] Plan Strategy having adverse effects on the integrity of European sites.

Conclusions of the HRA

On the basis of the analysis set out below, the Council can conclude the [draft] Plan Strategy will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

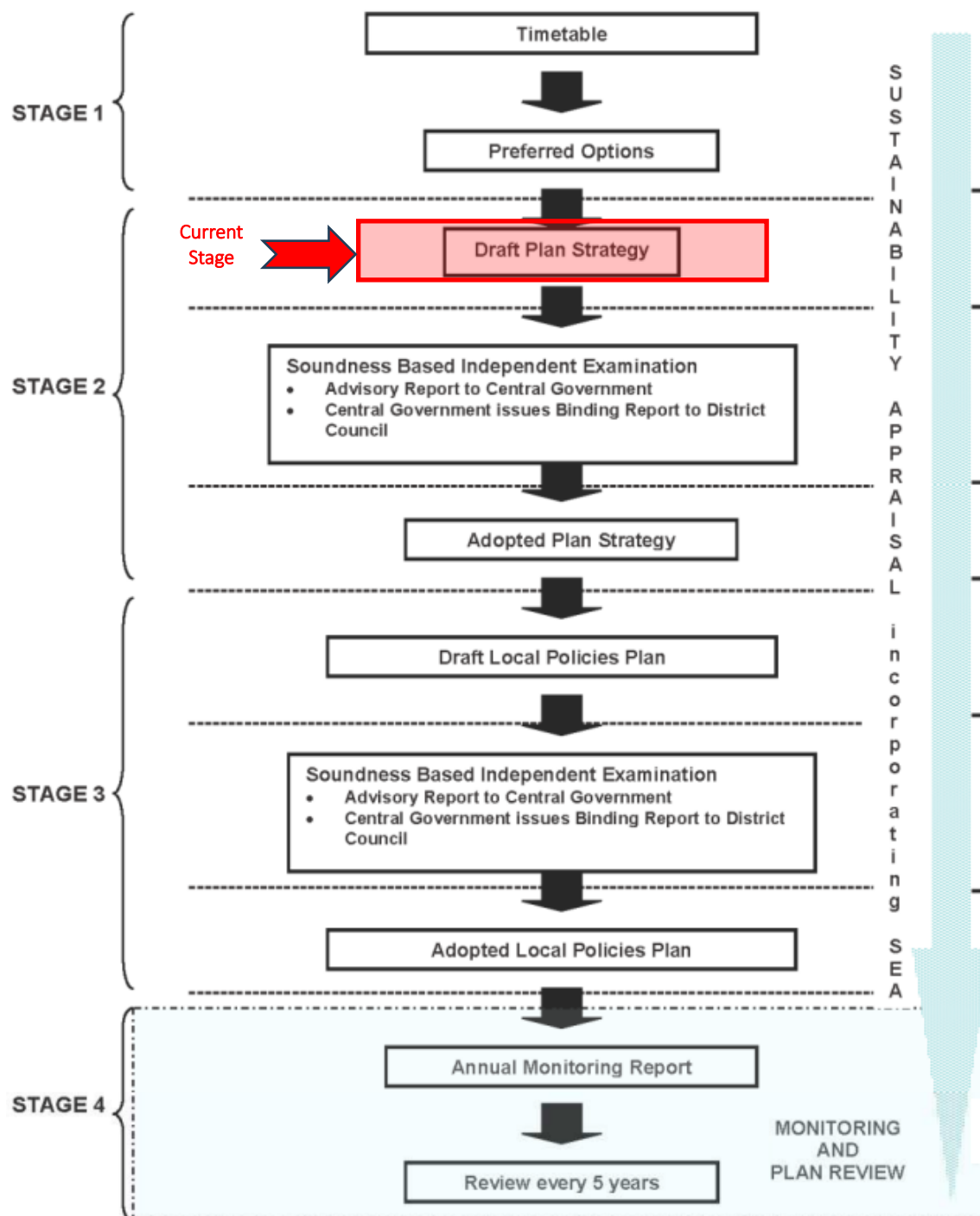
1 Introduction and Background

1.1 The Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council LDP 2035

- 1.1 Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council is preparing a new Local Development Plan (LDP) for the Borough. The LDP will set out the planning policy framework and land use proposals required to guide future development decisions within the Borough to 2035.
- 1.2 The LDP is also required to ‘take account of’ the Council’s current Community Plan throughout its preparation. It is therefore intended that the LDP will be the spatial reflection of the Community Plan, with both working towards the same vision for the Borough:

“Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough will be a place of choice to live, work and visit, with a vibrant and sustainable economy, healthy and connected communities and a high quality natural and historic environment.”
- 1.3 The LDP is being prepared in line with the requirements of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (‘the LDP Regulations’) and the 2011 Planning Act, which requires the preparation of two development plan documents:
 - **The Plan Strategy (‘the PS’)** - The purpose of the PS is to establish a clear vision and growth strategy for the Borough and provide a plan-led policy framework for making planning decisions that will assist the Council in the delivery of sustainable development.
 - **The Local Policies Plan (‘the LPP’)** - The LPP will be consistent with the adopted PS and will set out the Council’s detailed policies and proposals (zonings and designations) regarding the future development of the Borough. The LPP will detail settlement development limits, land use zonings and environmental designations as well as contain appropriate proposals for individual places.
- 1.4 The publication of the draft PS follows that of the Council’s Preferred Options Paper (POP) and the consultation on the POP which took place in 2018. Representations to the POP have been fully considered in the development of the draft Plan Strategy.
- 1.5 Once the PS is adopted, its strategic and subject planning policies will replace those regional operational policies currently retained within the various topic-based Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and the remaining provisions of A Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI) will no longer apply.
- 1.6 The adopted PS will also replace the strategic elements of the existing Development Plans relevant to the Borough (further details are included in Section 1.4 below).
- 1.7 Once both the PS and LPP are adopted, the LDP will replace the existing Development Plans that relate to the Borough. In accordance with the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, where, in making any determination under this Act, regard is to be had to the LDP, any determination must be made in accordance with the LDP unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Figure 1.1: Key Stages in the Local Development Plan Process



Adapted from Development Plan Practice Note 01³

³ Department of the Environment (2015) Development Plan Practice Note 01 Introduction: Context for Local Development Plans April 2015

1.2 Structure of the [draft] Plan Strategy

1.8 The [draft] Plan Strategy is set out in four parts with 20 chapters, shown in Figure 1.2:

Figure 1.2: Structure of the [draft] Plan Strategy

Part 1					
Introduction and Policy Context					
Borough Profile					
LDP Vision					
Social Objectives		Economic Objectives		Environmental Objectives	
Strategic Policies					
SP 1: Furthering Sustainable Development & Climate Change Resilience			SP 2: Design & Placemaking		
Spatial Growth Strategies					
SGS 1: Spatial Growth Strategy	SGS 2: Settlement Hierarchy	SGS 3: Strategic Housing Allocation	SGS 4: Management of Housing Supply	SGS 5: Strategic Economic Development Lands Allocation	SGS 6: Retail Hierarchy
SGS 7: Tourism Strategy	SGS 8: Transport Strategy	SGS 9: Open Space Strategy	SGS 10: Sustainable Development in the Countryside	SG 11: Strategic Landscape Policy Areas	SGS12: Heritage Strategy
Part 2 - Operational Policies					
General Policies					
General Policies for all Development GP 1-4			Design and Placemaking DES 1-5		
Social Theme		Economic Theme		Environmental Theme	
Housing HOU 1-19		Economic Development ECN 1-10		Historic Environment HE 1-14	
Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation OSR 1-8		Retailing and Town Centres RTC 1-6		Natural Heritage NH 1-9	
Community & Cultural Facilities CCF 1		Tourism TOU 1-7		Flood Risk and Drainage FRD 1-5	
		Mineral Development MIN 1-8		Renewable and Low Carbon Energy RLED 1	
		Telecommunications, Utilities and Infrastructure TUI 1-2		Waste Management WMT 1-5	
		Transportation TRAN 1-9		Environmental Protection EP 1-2	
Part 3 - Other Specialised Area					
Developer Contributions DC 1					
Part 4 - Monitoring Framework					

1.3 Overview of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough

- 1.9 The Borough Profile included in Chapter 2.0 of the [draft] PS indicates that with a population of 218,656, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough has the largest population of any local government council area in NI, outside of Belfast.
- 1.10 The Borough extends from the southern shores of Lough Neagh in the north to the foothills of the Mourne in the east, the Blackwater Valley in the west and South Armagh / the Monaghan border to the south. It is traversed by three main river corridors (the Blackwater, Lagan and Upper Bann).
- 1.11 Overall, the Borough covers an area of approximately 554 square miles. It adjoins the boundary of five neighbouring Council areas: Mid Ulster District Council, Newry Mourne and Down District Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (by Lough Neagh) and Monaghan County Council in the Republic of Ireland.

1.4 Existing Plans and Local Policies Plan

- 1.12 The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 sets out the transitional arrangements that apply until the Council adopts its Local Development Plan. These are outlined in Chapter 1 of the [draft] PS.
- 1.13 The extant Development Plans will continue to operate as the statutory development plans for the Borough until such time as they are fully replaced by the adopted Local Policies Plan. The legacy development plans that apply to the Borough are:
- Armagh Area Plan 2004 & Alteration No. 1: Armagh Countryside Proposals 2004
 - Craigavon Area Plan 2010
 - Craigavon Town Centre Boundaries and Retail Designation Plan 2010
 - Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015
 - Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan 2010.
- 1.14 Until the LPP is adopted, the adopted PS shall be read along with extant Development Plans for the area. Any policy conflict between the PS and extant Development Plans will be resolved in favour of the adopted Plan Strategy.
- 1.15 The LDP will replace these Area Plans when both the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan have been adopted.

1.5 Requirement for HRA

- 1.16 The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended), commonly referred to as 'the Habitats Regulations (NI)', implemented the requirements of the Habitats Directive⁴ and Birds⁵ Directive into domestic law in Northern Ireland. These Regulations establish the obligations of competent authorities for the protection of certain sites or species. In the context of the Habitats Regulations (NI), Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council is a competent authority.
- 1.17 Regulation 43 of the Habitats Regulations (NI) requires that competent authorities assess the potential impacts of plans or projects on European sites in Northern Ireland and European offshore marine sites to determine whether there will be any 'likely significant effects' on any European site as a result of the Plan's implementation (either alone or 'in combination' with other plans or projects); and, if so, whether these effects will result in any adverse effects on that site's integrity with reference to the site's conservation objectives. This is known as Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

⁴ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 'on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora'. The Directive's overall objective is to ensure that these species and habitat types are maintained, or restored, to a favourable conservation status within the EU.

⁵ Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 'on the conservation of wild birds'. This Directive requires all Member States to protect all wild bird species and protect and restore their habitats.

- 1.18 Regulation 64B of the Habitats Regulations (NI) also makes provisions for the assessment of implications of land use plans (as defined in the 2011 Planning Act) for European site(s) by Plan-making authorities.
- 1.19 In this HRA Report, the term ‘European sites’ is used to describe all sites protected by regional policy on HRA: a Special Protection Area (SPA) or proposed Special Protection Area (pSPA), a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC), a Site of Community Importance (SCI) and a Ramsar site (listed or proposed).
- 1.20 This [draft] HRA Report is prepared in support of the [draft] Plan Strategy for the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council LDP. It records the assessment of the [draft] Plan Strategy and its potential impacts on European sites.

1.6 Approach to the HRA

- 1.21 The overall approach of this assessment has been developed to accord with the Habitats Regulations (NI). It primarily follows guidance set out in The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook⁶ (‘the HRA Handbook’) but also takes account of other published guidance and information, listed in the ‘References’ section of Appendix 1 of this report.
- 1.22 The methodology for the assessment of the Plan implications is provided in Appendix 2 of this report and has followed the HRA Handbook’s step-wise approach. Case law relevant to HRA for Plans is also referenced in Appendix 2.
- 1.23 *Note on ‘the HRA Handbook’: The HRA Handbook was a definitive source of guidance for the assessment of plans and projects under the UK Habitats Regulations. In January 2026, the Handbook was withdrawn from publication in response to significant changes to HRA processes in England occurring through the introduction of the Planning and Infrastructure Act in December 2025. The Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 does not apply to Northern Ireland, and in the absence of any region-specific published guidance, it is considered that the HRA Handbook’s step-wise approach implements all current requirements of the Habitats Regulations (NI) and remains appropriate for the assessment of a LDP. Where copyrighted materials from the HRA Handbook are used in this assessment, they have been reproduced with reference to the source material and with the permission of DTA Publications.*

1.6.1 Deciding whether a Plan should be subject to HRA (Step 1)

- 1.24 The European Commission Guidance (European Commission *et al.* (2001)) does not specify the scope of a Plan which should be subject to the Directive and related transposing legislation, but it does state that the key consideration is whether it [the Plan] is ‘likely to have a significant effect’.
- 1.25 The HRA Handbook (section F.3) provides a series of questions to assist competent authorities in determining whether a document (including an emerging Plan) should be exempted, excluded or eliminated from further assessment under the Habitats Regulations.
- 1.26 Notwithstanding the requirements of Regulation 64B of the Habitats Regulations in respect of the assessment of land use plans, the [draft] Plan Strategy does not directly relate to the management of any European site therefore it cannot be exempted from the requirement of the Habitats Regulations. The [draft] Plan Strategy is part of the LDP and clearly represents a strategic and local development plan. The requirement for planning permission to be determined in light of the relevant land use plan, necessarily means that LDPs have considerable influence on development decisions and that, as such, they must be subject to HRA. The outcome of this step is that the [draft] Plan Strategy requires HRA as a strategic and local development plan.

⁶ Tyldesley, D., and Chapman, C., (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, December 2024 edition, UK DTA Publications Ltd.

1.7 Other Regulations

- 1.27 An assumption is made that existing regulations and legislation that are independent of planning are implemented and enforced by the relevant authority. Relevant examples are the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, Water Abstraction and Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 and the Drainage (Northern Ireland) Order 1973 (all as amended). In addition, the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 ('the WANE Act') places a statutory duty on public bodies to conserve biodiversity.

1.8 Consideration of Mitigation

- 1.28 A ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) in 2018, known as 'People over Wind' clarified how mitigation should be taken into account through HRA (see Appendix 2, A 2.3). In light of this, measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been adverse effects on the integrity of European sites are not taken into account in Stage 1 and are assessed at Stage 2, Appropriate Assessment.
- 1.29 Stage 1 Assessment does consider the essential features and characteristics of the Plan and takes account of regional policy and strategic context and other regulatory controls that will apply to development under the Plan.

1.8.1 HRA at other Stages of Plan Making and Development Management

- 1.30 The LPP will be subject to HRA, at which stage revised or new zonings and local policies will be assessed. The need for HRA will also be considered for individual projects at the development management stage, and assessment carried out where required.

1.9 Climate Change

- 1.31 In Northern Ireland, the predicted impacts of climate change include changing weather patterns: hotter, drier summers and milder, wetter winters along with increasing severe and more frequent weather events resulting in flooding and storm damage⁷.
- 1.32 It is acknowledged that the level of growth and new development that the LDP aims to deliver has the potential to add to anthropogenic drivers of climate change. However, the causes of climate change are global, and much of the action required must take place at national and international levels as well as at the local level.
- 1.33 The Conservation Objectives for SPAs do not refer to climate change. The objectives for SACs address climate change as follows: "*Northern Ireland faces changes to its climate over the next century. Indications are that we will face hotter, drier summers, warmer winters and more frequent extreme weather events*". The action recommended is "*When developing SAC management plans, the likely future impacts of climate change should be considered and appropriate changes made*". Therefore, while climate change is acknowledged, specific measures have not been addressed in the conservation objectives.

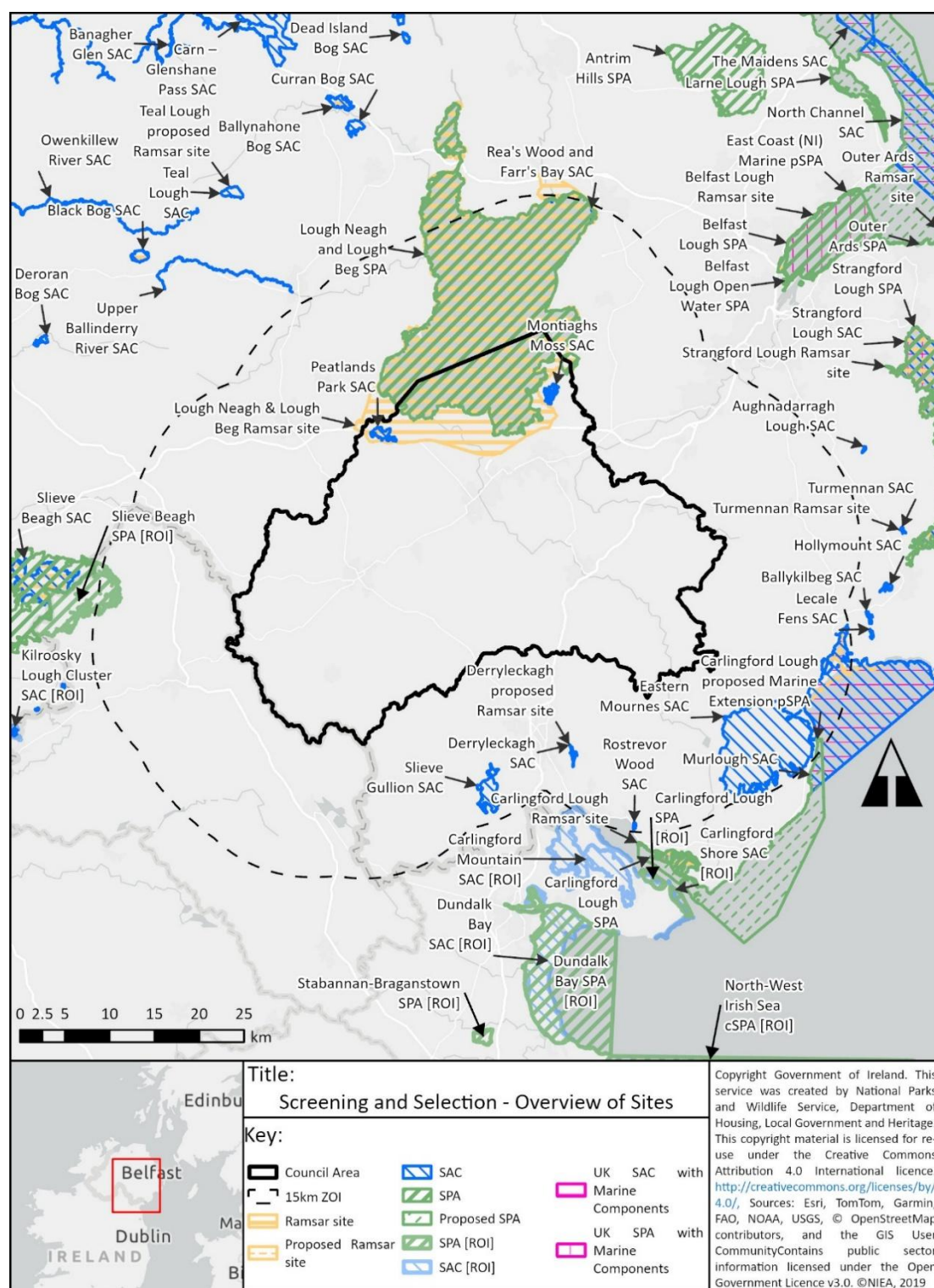
⁷ DAERA (2025d) Third Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme (NICCAP3) [Public Consultation Document](#)

2 Identification of European sites potentially affected

2.1 Step 2A: Scanning, screening and site selection

- 2.1 Figure 2.1 shows a summary overview of European sites and Ramsar sites within and surrounding the Council area. All sites were screened for possible interaction with the [draft] Plan Strategy using a Geographical Information System (GIS). Summary information on the sites scanned and selected (and sites considered but excluded) is provided in Appendix 3, Table A 3.1 (page 79).

Figure 2.1: Overview of European sites considered (Scanning and Selecting)



2.2 Long-list' of European sites

- 2.2 The Plan area is the Council area. The Council boundary is therefore the starting point for the spatial identification and selection of sites.
- 2.3 To enable an efficient approach to the assessment reporting, the criteria in Table A 3.1 for which potentially-affected sites have been identified are grouped and summarised below. Potential impact pathways will be identified and assessed in the next step.
- **Sites within/adjacent to the Plan area.** All European sites wholly or partly within the Plan area are selected, to screen for potential direct impacts.
 - **Sites with a Hydrological link (aquatic and/or marine) to the Plan area.** The HRA Handbook recommends scanning for sites upstream or downstream of the Plan area. Where there are hydrological linkages or other pathways to the aquatic or marine environment, all sites with relevant hydrological links should be considered, irrespective of distance from the Plan area.
 - **Sites with an Ecological link (via mobile qualifying features) to the Plan area.** These are European sites outside the Plan area, for which habitats within the Plan area may form part of a wider network of habitat used by mobile qualifying species. This might include habitat for foraging and/or breeding (and/or roosting, for ornithological features) and is known as a functional linkage. Potentially linked sites are identified based on current knowledge (see also paragraph 2.5 below).

'Guidance for Marine Protected Area Assessments' (DAERA, 2023) recommends screening ranges of 50 or 100km for European sites which have marine mobile species as a site selection feature. The Council area does not share a boundary with the marine area and consequently there is no viable pathway for the LDP 2035 to directly impact marine mobile species. However, the Council area does have indirect connectivity with the marine area via its watercourses and river systems. European sites with marine components that have a viable hydrological connection to the Plan area are identified and selected under the hydrological pathway/category.
 - **Sites with an Infrastructure link to the Plan area.** These are European sites that have a linkage with the Plan area via infrastructure (e.g. water abstraction, wastewater treatment, other waste management streams) that may be affected by an increased amount of development.
 - **Sites potentially affected by aerial emissions.** The Revised Operational Protocol for Assessing Ammonia and Air Pollution Impacts on the Natural Environment (DAERA, 2025) establishes 'Zone of Influence' (Zoi) distance criteria for identifying European sites that require further consideration for effects from ammonia and other air pollution. As the current maximum Zoi for a proposal identified in the UK Air Pollution Information System (APIS) (UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology [Online]) is 15km, all European sites within 15km of the Plan area are selected for screening for impacts from aerial emissions.
 - **Sites with a Recreation link to the Plan area.** These are European sites that could be impacted by increased recreational pressure. All sites within the Plan area are selected, but at this strategic level, there are no identifiable links with any European site(s) outside the Plan area.
- 2.4 Effects of disturbance (including light or noise pollution), displacement, mortality and introduced species are considered within the above pathway groups; no additional sites have been identified as specifically/separately requiring selection for these effects only.
- 2.5 For 'sites with an Ecological link via mobile features', consideration was given to the extent of SPAs to include in the Zone of Influence. Theoretically, all SPAs in the UK and Ireland which host wintering or breeding bird species that are cited features of the SPAs intersecting the Plan area could be considered as connected. As this is a Plan-level assessment for a land use Plan, it focuses on those European sites within the Zone of Influence for the direct and hydrological impact pathways (approx.

15-20km), as there is no viable mechanism for the Plan to affect more distant sites. More detailed discussion is included in Appendix 3, Table A 3.1, however, in summary:

- The only viable pathway for effects from the Plan on breeding or wintering birds from other European sites is if they use the sites in the Zone of Influence of the Plan. There is no viable pathway for additional effects on more distant sites
- Any policy-based measures employed to avoid or mitigate effects on features from sites within the Zone of Influence will also safeguard the same or similar features associated with more distant European sites.

2.6 Application of the HRA Handbook's 15 criteria (and sub-criteria) for scanning, screening and site selection as detailed in Appendix 3 captured 30 sites with the potential to be affected by the Plan.

Table 2.1: [Long List of] European Sites that could potentially be affected by the Plan

Site Name	Site Reference	Distance (km)	Hydrological Distance (km) approx.	Initial Scanning / Selection Category (* hypothetical link)							
				Direct Effects (Within / Adjacent to)	Hydrological (pollution and/or hydrodynamic)	Ecological (Supporting Mobile Features)	Development Growth- Infrastructure (water supply)	Development Growth- Infrastructure (sewage)	Development Growth- Aerial Emissions	Recreation	Further assessment required following Step 2B
Lough Neagh & Lough Beg Ramsar site	UK12016	0.0	0.0	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Yes
Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA	UK9020091	0.0	0.0	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Yes
Montiaghs Moss SAC	UK0030214	0.0	0.0	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Yes
Peatlands Park SAC	UK0030236	0.0	0.0	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Yes
Bann Estuary SAC	UK0030084	66.6	70		*			*			No
Belfast Lough Open Water SPA	UK9020290	25.7	46		•	•		•			Yes
Belfast Lough Ramsar site	UK12002	25.0	45		•	•		•			Yes
Belfast Lough SPA	UK9020101	25.0	45		•	•		•			Yes
Carlingford Lough proposed Marine Extension pSPA	UK9020160	13.9	28		•	•		•	•		Yes
Carlingford Lough Ramsar site	UK12004	16.1	28		•	•		•			Yes
Carlingford Lough SPA	UK9020161	16.1	28		•	•		•			Yes
Derryleckagh proposed Ramsar site	UK12006	9.5	NA						•		Yes
Derryleckagh SAC	UK0016620	9.5	NA						•		Yes
Dundrum Bay proposed Ramsar site	UK12007	10.8	NA						•		Yes
East Coast (NI) Marine pSPA	UK9020320	25.7	46		•	•		•			Yes
Eastern Mourmes SAC	UK0016615	5.2	NA						•		Yes
Murlough SAC	UK0016612	10.8	NA						•		Yes
North Channel SAC	UK0030399	35.5	62		*			*			No
Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC	UK0030244	13.1	14.6		•				•		Yes
Rostrevor Wood SAC	UK0030268	14.0	NA						•		Yes
Skerries and Causeway SAC	UK0030383	70.8	83		•						No
Slieve Beagh Ramsar site	UK12020	17.5	upstream		*						No
Slieve Beagh SAC	UK0016622	17.5	upstream		*						No
Slieve Beagh-Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea SPA	UK9020302	15.8	upstream		*	•					Yes
Slieve Gullion SAC	UK0030277	9.0	NA						•		Yes
Carlingford Lough SPA (ROI)	IE004078	19.1	35		•			•			Yes
Carlingford Shore SAC	IE002306	14.4	20		•			•	•		Yes
Dundalk Bay SAC	IE000455	23.2	38		•			•			Yes
Dundalk Bay SPA (ROI)	IE004026	23.4	37		•			•			Yes
Slieve Beagh SPA	IE004167	12.6	NA			•			•		Yes

2.3 Step 2B: 'Short-list' of sites that should be considered in the HRA

- 2.7 As the 'long-list' of European sites has taken a precautionary approach and captured all European sites within potential Zones of Influence, more detailed screening was carried out to determine those sites likely to be significantly affected through the implementation of the [draft] Plan Strategy.
- 2.8 Taking account of the 'long-list' of sites identified in Section 2, the discussion of potential impacts of development in Section 3 and the site information gathered, a further scan was carried out to determine the effects that could potentially affect European sites as a result of the plan. This step is recorded in Appendix 3 (Table A 3.2); the outcome is summarised above in Table 2.1. In this step, the screening process focused on realistic risks, based on the source- pathway- receptor model and the conservation objectives, rather than on hypothetical risks.
- 2.9 Five sites identified in the initial capture were eliminated from further assessment, as it was determined that there is no viable source- receptor pathway for effects that would undermine the conservation objectives and implementing the Plan Strategy could have no conceivable effect.
- 2.10 An additional impact mechanism was identified for one site, resulting in the selection of Slieve Beagh-Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea SPA for mobile species impacts.
- 2.11 This results in a short-list of 25 sites to be further assessed. These are listed in Table 2.2.
- 2.12 Given the broad definition of direct effects used in the HRA Handbook, there is the potential for negative effects on all sites which have been screened in for further assessment. Table 2.2 also identifies the potential mechanism(s) through which impacts could occur on the European sites.
- 2.13 The broad mechanisms are summarised below and are described in more detail in Section 3.

Impact mechanism	Potential effects
Direct Impacts	Habitat loss, disturbance, displacement, introduction of invasive, non-native, competitive or predatory species, collisions, Effects from waterborne pollution, airborne pollution, alteration of drainage, engineered structures.
Aquatic Environment & Marine Environment Development Growth- Wastewater	Effects from waterborne pollution, alteration of drainage. Effects from discharges of urban waste water (sewage and commercial effluent).
Mobile Species	[Supporting/functionally linked] habitat loss, disturbance, displacement Effects from waterborne pollution, airborne pollution, alteration of drainage.
Development Growth- Water Supply	Effects from increased water abstraction.
Development Growth- Aerial Emissions	Effects from airborne pollution.
Recreational Pressure	Habitat loss, disturbance, displacement Effects from pollution, litter.

2.4 Step 3: Gathering information on European sites required for assessment

- 3.1 For each site identified at Step 2A, information was compiled on selection features, conservation objectives, conservation status and potential threats to site integrity from planning related development. The location of each European site relative to any Plan designations was also considered.
- 3.2 Summary information is contained in Appendix 3, and the Conservation Objectives for each site have been provided as separate Annex A.

Table 2.2: European Sites to be further assessed following Step 2B

Site Name	Qualifying Feature Habitat/Species	Potential Impact pathways
Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA	JNCC record: Common tern (r) Whooper swan (w) Tundra swan (Bewick's swan) (w) Common pochard (w) Tufted duck (w) Common goldeneye (w) DAERA Conservation Objectives add: Great crested grebe (b) (w) (p) Golden plover (w) Scaup(w) Waterfowl Assemblage wintering population (Component species: Whooper Swan, Bewick's Swan, Golden Plover, Great Crested Grebe (wintering) Pochard, Tufted Duck, Scaup, Goldeneye, Little Grebe, Cormorant, Greylag Goose, Shelduck, Wigeon, Gadwall, Teal, Mallard, Shoveler, Coot, Lapwing) ¹Habitat extent. Roost site locations. [Conservation status requires sufficiently large habitat to maintain its population on a long-term basis.]	Potential Impact pathways include: Habitat loss (including ex-situ loss and through recreation) Disturbance / Displacement (including ex-situ loss and through recreation) Introduction of invasive, non-native, competitive or predatory species Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution Aquatic Hydrodynamic effects – alterations to drainage Aquatic Hydrodynamic effects – new engineered structures Growth - increased water abstraction Growth – discharges of waste water
Lough Neagh & Lough Beg Ramsar site	<u>Criterion 1</u> A particularly good representative example of natural or near-natural wetlands. Wetland habitat [comprising]: Freshwater lakes: permanent, Other, Peatlands (including peat bogs swamps, fens), Shrub-dominated wetlands, Forested peatland <u>Criterion 2</u> Assemblage of rare, vulnerable or endangered species or sub-species (vascular plants, invertebrates). <u>Criterion 3</u> Special value for maintaining the genetic and ecological diversity of a region. <u>Criteria 4, 5 & 6</u> Special value as the habitat of plants or animals at a critical stage of their biological cycles. Assemblage of international importance. Breeding Great crested grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>, Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i>, Pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i>, tufted duck <i>Aythya fuligula</i>, Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i> and Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>. Other important breeding wetland species include shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>,	Potential Impact pathways include: Habitat loss (including ex-situ loss and through recreation) Disturbance / Displacement (including ex-situ loss and through recreation) Introduction of invasive, non-native, competitive or predatory species Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution Aquatic Hydrodynamic effects – alterations to drainage Aquatic Hydrodynamic effects – new engineered structures Growth - increased water abstraction Growth – discharges of waste water

Site Name	Qualifying Feature Habitat/Species	Potential Impact pathways
	Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>, Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> and Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>. Species occurring at levels of international importance: regularly supports ≥1% of population of: Tundra swan, <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>, Whooper swan, <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>, Common pochard, <i>Aythya ferina</i>, Tufted duck, <i>Aythya fuligula</i>, Greater scaup, <i>Aythya marila marila</i>, Common goldeneye, <i>Bucephala clangula</i> <u>Criterion 7</u> Population of pollan <i>Coregonus autumnalis</i>.	
Montiaghs Moss SAC	Marsh Fritillary Butterfly <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>	Potential Impact pathways include: Habitat loss (including ex-situ loss and through recreation) Introduction of invasive, non-native, competitive or predatory species Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution Aquatic Hydrodynamic effects – alterations to drainage Growth - increased water abstraction Growth – discharges of waste water
Peatlands Park SAC	Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration Active raised bogs Bog woodland Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles	Potential Impact pathways include: Habitat loss (including through recreation) Introduction of invasive, non-native, competitive or predatory species Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution Aquatic Hydrodynamic effects – alterations to drainage Growth - increased water abstraction Growth – discharges of waste water
Belfast Lough Open Water SPA	Great Crested Grebe wintering population. ¹Habitat extent, roosting/loafing sites. [Conservation status requires sufficiently large habitat to maintain its population on a long-term basis.]	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water
Belfast Lough Ramsar site	<u>Ramsar Criterion 6</u> Common redshank , <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i> Black-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> Wetland habitats: Rocky shores, Tidal flats, Coastal brackish / saline lagoons.	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water
Belfast Lough SPA	JNCC record: Bar-tailed godwit (w) Common redshank (w) Common tern (r) Arctic tern (r) Black-tailed godwit(w) DAERA published COs Common redshank (w) Great Crested Grebe wintering population. ¹Habitat extent, roosting/loafing sites. [Conservation status requires sufficiently large habitat to maintain its population on a long-term basis.]	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water
Carlingford Lough SPA	Common tern (r) Sandwich tern (r) Light-bellied brent goose (w)	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution

Site Name	Qualifying Feature Habitat/Species	Potential Impact pathways
	¹ Habitat extent, roost site locations. [Conservation status requires sufficiently large habitat to maintain its population on a long-term basis.]	Growth – discharges of waste water
Carlingford Lough proposed Marine Extension pSPA	As for Carlingford Lough SPA. The proposed marine extension has been defined for foraging Sandwich and Common Tern originating from the tern colony within the site.	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water
Carlingford Lough Ramsar site	<u>Criterion 2</u> (nationally important breeding populations) Common tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> <u>Criterion 6</u> (species/population at level of international importance) Light-bellied brent goose, <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> RIS [2015 update] indicates Criterion 4 to be included in next update. Sandwich tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i> currently occurring at levels of national importance; regularly supported during breeding season	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water
Derryleckagh SAC	Transition mires and quaking bogs Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution
Derryleckagh proposed Ramsar site	<u>Criterion 1</u> Representative example of rare, or unique example of a natural or near-natural wetland type: mire in a transitional stage between fen and bog.	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution
Dundrum Bay proposed Ramsar site	Not known (not published).	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution
East Coast (NI) Marine pSPA	Great Crested Grebe (w) Red-throated Diver (r) Sandwich Tern (r) Common Tern (r) Arctic Tern (r) Manx Shearwater (r) Eider Duck (r) ¹ Habitat extent. Roosting / Loafing sites [Conservation status requires sufficiently large habitat to maintain its population on a long-term basis.]	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water
Eastern Mourne SAC	Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> European dry heaths Alpine and Boreal heaths Siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands Blanket bogs (* if active bog) Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution
Murlough SAC	Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (<i>Calluno-Ulicetea</i>) Atlantic salt meadows (<i>GlaucoPuccinellietalia maritimae</i>) Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>Argentea</i> (<i>Salicion arenariae</i>) Embryonic shifting dunes	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution

Site Name	Qualifying Feature Habitat/Species	Potential Impact pathways
	Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) Marsh Fritillary <i>Euphydryas Aurinia</i> Harbour (Common) Seal <i>Phoca vitulina</i>	
Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC	Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>)	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water
Rostrevor Wood SAC	Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion alvae</i>)	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution
Slieve Beagh-Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea SPA	Hen Harrier (r) ¹ Habitat extent, habitat quality	Ecological pathway through the site's interconnected relationship and shared feature / interest with the Slieve Beagh SPA (ROI) which is within the ZOI for effects from aerial emissions. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution.
Slieve Gullion SAC	European dry heaths	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution
Carlingford Lough SPA (ROI)	A046 Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> A999 Wetlands	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water
Carlingford Shore SAC (ROI)	Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water
Dundalk Bay SAC (ROI)	Estuaries [1130] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410]	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water
Dundalk Bay SPA (ROI)	A005 Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> wintering A043 Greylag Goose <i>Anser anser</i> wintering A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> wintering A048 Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> wintering A052 Teal <i>Anas crecca</i> wintering A053 Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> wintering A054 Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> wintering A065 Common Scoter <i>Melanitta nigra</i> wintering A069 Red-breasted Merganser <i>Mergus serrator</i> wintering A130 Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> wintering A137 Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> wintering A140 Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> wintering	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water

Site Name	Qualifying Feature Habitat/Species	Potential Impact pathways
	A141 Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> wintering A142 Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> wintering A143 Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i> wintering A149 Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i> wintering A156 Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i> wintering A157 Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i> wintering A160 Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i> wintering A162 Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> wintering A179 Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> wintering A182 Common Gull <i>Larus canus</i> wintering A184 Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i> wintering A999 Wetlands & Waterbirds	
Slieve Beagh SPA (ROI)	Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) [A082]	Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution

2.5 Step 4: Discretionary discussions on method and scope

- 3.3 The Statutory Nature Conservation Body for sites in Northern Ireland is represented by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). DAERA is responsible for publishing the Conservation Objectives for European sites in Northern Ireland.
- 3.4 DAERA has been invited to comment on this [draft] HRA during the [draft] Plan Strategy formal consultation period. Any representation(s) received will be considered and will inform the final HRA.
- 3.5 The Statutory Nature Conservation Body for European sites in Ireland is represented by the National Parks and Wildlife Service who hold published Conservation Objectives for SACs and SPAs, which have been taken into account.

3 Potential Impacts of Development

- 3.1 In its Strategic Housing Allocation (SGS 3), the Council has identified an indicative allocation figure of 16,409 new homes for settlements and the countryside up to 2035. Over 60% of the total expected housing allocation over the LDP period is to the Main Settlements and Small Towns, with over 53% to the Main Settlements alone. This approach aims to reflect the sustainability of these locations, the existence of services and their capacity to accommodate future growth.
- 3.2 The [draft] PS indicates that settlement boundaries will be reviewed and identified at draft LPP stage and the current Settlement Development Limits within the extant Development Plans relevant to the Borough will remain in place until the LPP is adopted. The draft LPP will involve a detailed analysis of the settlement roles and functions, environmental issues, availability of services, community facilities, infrastructure and spare capacity, taking into account current development pressures and constraints.
- 3.3 The [draft] PS indicates that the Strategic Housing Allocation for the Main Settlements and Small Towns will be delivered by protecting zoned housing land, in accordance with Policy HOU 1 Protecting Zoned Housing Land, and managing the housing supply with phasing as set out in Strategic Policy SGS 4: Management of Housing Supply. This land will be zoned at Local Policies Plan stage and released in two phases. The approach varies in the Borough's villages and small settlements. Land is generally not zoned within these settlement tiers to allow for flexibility in meeting local development needs. The Countryside Strategy and operational policies for residential development in the countryside have been designed to continue to provide opportunities for sustainable residential development in the countryside.
- 3.4 The [draft] PS allocates 340 hectares of economic development land within the Borough to support sustainable economic growth and to facilitate the creation of new jobs, as set out in SGS 5: Strategic Economic Development Lands Allocation. The allocated economic development land will be distributed across Armagh City, Banbridge Town, Craigavon Urban Area and the six small towns. Existing zoned Economic Development / Industrial lands identified in the Armagh Area Plan 2004, Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 and the Craigavon Area Plan 2010 are carried forward under the transitional arrangements and will be subject to review at draft LPP stage. Consideration will also be given to the identification of additional lands as necessary, in accordance with regional policy and guidance. The Council will continue to facilitate sustainable economic development of an appropriate nature, scale and location in the countryside, in accordance with relevant operational policies.
- 3.5 Population, economic and spatial growth and associated development all have the potential to influence European sites directly and indirectly through changes in land use, activities and emissions.
- 3.6 Table 2.1 has identified the potential mechanisms through which the Plan might exert an influence over European sites. Table 2.2 has identified how the sites could be affected by each impact.
- 3.7 This section discusses the potential for each of these effects to arise from the [draft] Plan Strategy and informs Sections 4 and 5.

3.1 Direct Effects

- 3.8 There are four European sites within the Council area, all of which are potentially vulnerable to direct impacts.
- 3.1 The main potential impact mechanisms are summarised as:
- **Habitat Loss.** Development occurring within (or immediately adjacent to) a European site resulting in removal of site habitat. This includes the removal of habitat that is cited as a qualifying feature, or habitat that has a function in maintaining a qualifying feature species population on a long-term basis. For features of the SPA intersecting the Council area, this would include adjoining

habitat which is particularly important for swans and geese and roost locations, in addition to breeding sites and foraging habitat. The marsh fritillary butterfly, (the qualifying feature of Montiagh's Moss SAC) is reliant on habitats in which its larval food plant, devil's-bit scabious, occurs (most commonly purple moor-grass and rush pasture). Linked metapopulations are important in sustaining the core population.

- **Disturbance / Displacement.** Development causing disturbance of the species for which the site is classified, designated or listed within the boundary of a European site, in a manner which reduces the site's ability to maintain its population on a long-term basis.
 - Naturescot (2022) reports how human disturbance may directly affect bird behaviour (e.g. disrupting foraging activity while the bird alarm calls, or forcing the bird to fly away from the source of disturbance, etc). This change in behaviour brought about by the disturbance event may mean that birds are disturbed from their initial activity and/or are displaced from their initial chosen location. The effect of disturbance and displacement on birds may change their energy intake/expenditure, alter their breeding success and ultimately impact their survival; some of these changes include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Changes to breeding location, timing of breeding, breeding strategy and success;
 - Changes to foraging location, time spent foraging, food source, energy intake and daily energy budgets;
 - Changes to roosting location and time spent at rest; and
 - Changes to migration routes, stop-over locations and seasonal energy expenditure.
 - Commercial and recreational boating are notable potential pressures on the features of Lough Neagh. Great crested grebe construct a floating nest in reeds or other aquatic vegetation. The main nesting locality for breeding Common terns is the torpedo platform near Antrim, but they also nest on small islands and gravel rafts elsewhere.
- **Alteration of habitat quality.** Favourable conservation status requires sufficiently large habitat to maintain population on a long-term basis.
 - Emissions/discharges of pollutants directly into a European site can lead to alterations in vegetational composition and structure which in turn may affect the function and supporting processes of habitats.
 - The introduction of **invasive, non-native, competitive or predatory species** can negatively affect the distribution, structure and function of a site's habitat, as well as the long-term survival of its typical species. The greatest risk is from construction activity which can introduce invasive or non-native plant species to a site, or cause their spread to other sites, if imported soils or construction machinery are contaminated with seeds, plant fragments or rhizome (root) material. Other activities can influence or result in a shift in balance of species utilising a site (e.g. landfill operations).
- **New overhead power cables (or other tall structures)** may disrupt flight lines and are specifically a problem in relation to swans and geese.

3.2 Alteration of habitat quality and extent may through other abiotic, or physical, changes. These sources are addressed under their own categories, namely:

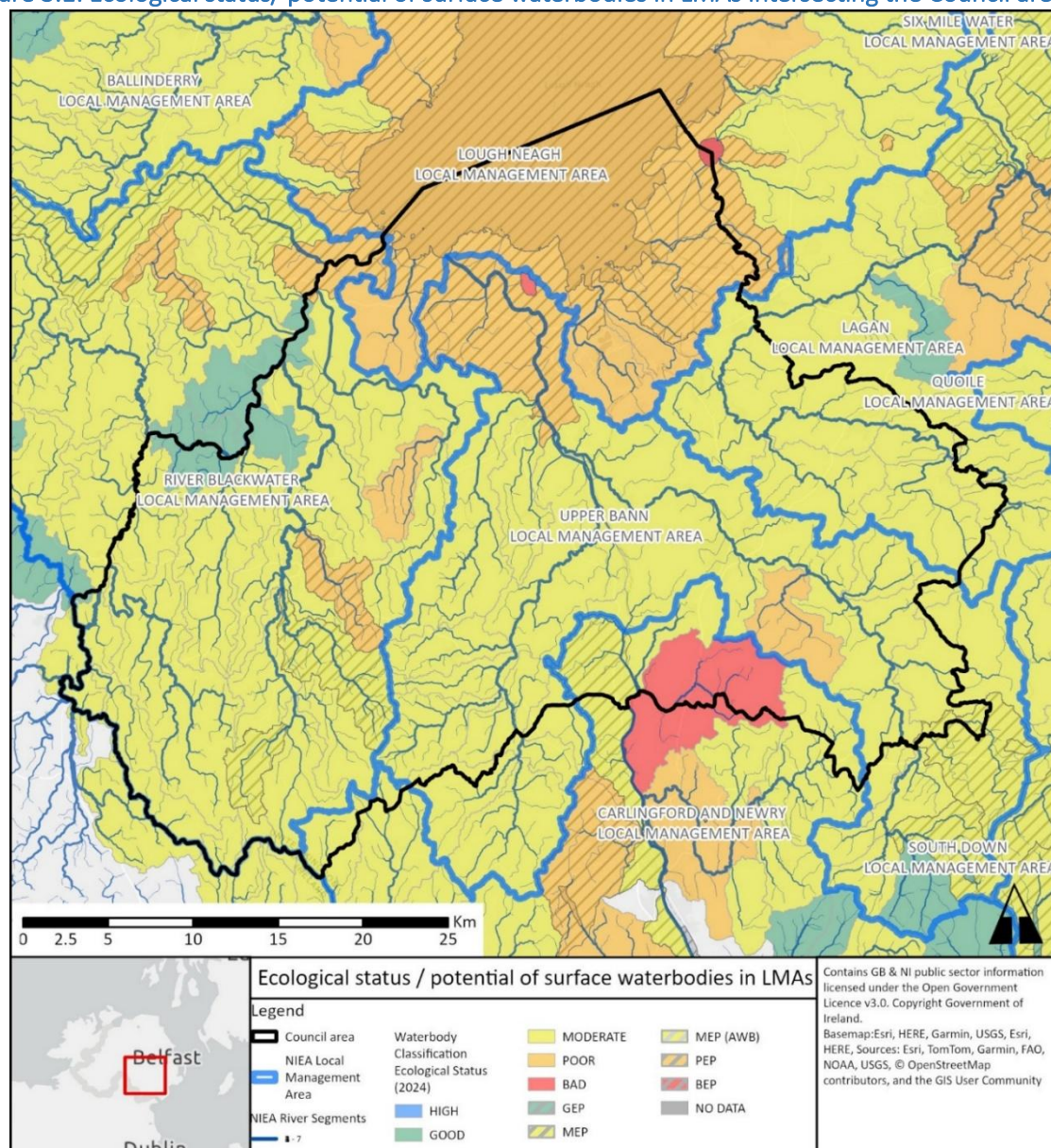
- Changes in hydrology or flows affecting aquatic or water-dependent features (see 3.2 and 3.5),
- Erosion and habitat damage from increased recreation pressure (see 3.4)
- Nitrogen deposition can favour the growth of competitive plants and lead to changes in ecosystem structure or function. These effects can occur at considerable distance from a source and are considered separately at 3.7.

- 3.9 Direct effects on European sites will be considered in screening the [draft] Plan Strategy in Section 4 and will also be considered at LPP when reviewing or allocating zoned land.

3.2 Effects upon the aquatic (and marine) environment

- 3.10 In addition to the four sites intersecting the Council area, there are a further 13 European sites with a downstream hydrological linkage, of which 11 are sites with marine components. There are no European sites with qualifying features that could possibly be affected upstream of the Council area.
- 3.11 Northern Ireland's water resources are managed and protected using a catchment-based approach which includes rivers, lakes and groundwater as well as coastal and transitional water bodies. The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 ('the WFD Regulations') require the production and implementation of a River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) every six years. The RBMP takes an integrated approach, identifying those water bodies which can be classified as being at 'good or better' ecological status. It also sets the objectives and a programme of measures for the next six-year cycle to help improve those water bodies which are classified as below 'good' status.

Figure 3.1: Ecological status/ potential of surface waterbodies in LMAs intersecting the Council area



Source: DAERA (2025c), GIS files provided under DAERA Water Science & Evidence Unit information request.

- 3.12 While the RBMP provides for the management of all water resources and encompasses waterbodies not linked with any European site(s), all European sites in NI are recognised as ‘protected areas’ requiring specific consideration under the WFD Regulations. For European sites that are water-dependent, the objectives of the WFD Regulations (aiming for good ecological/chemical status) often directly support the achievement of "favourable conservation status" under the Habitats Regulations.
- 3.13 The ‘Significant Water Management Issues’ identified as part of the development of the fourth cycle RBMP indicates an overall deterioration in surface waterbody status since 2021, with 29 % of NI surface water bodies achieving good or better ecological status in 2024 (compared to 31 % in 2021). Within the Council area, only one of the waterbodies within (or immediately downstream of) the Council area achieved ‘good’ status in the most recently published classification data (DAERA (2025c), shown in Figure 3.1).
- 3.14 The most frequently identified pressures in the Local Management Areas are summarised in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Pressures affecting ecological status / potential in LMAs intersecting the Council

Local Management Area	Most frequently identified pressures in the LMA:
Lough Neagh LMA	Agricultural, septic tanks, urban waste water, hydromorphology and industry.
River Blackwater LMA	Agricultural, invasive species, septic tanks, industry and other*.
Carlingford and Newry LMA	Agricultural, other*, urban waste water, septic tanks and industry.
Upper Bann LMA	Agricultural, hydromorphology, urban waste water, septic tanks and other*.
Lagan LMA	Hydromorphology, agricultural, invasive species, urban waste water and septic tanks.

**'other' encompasses local issues such as waste disposal sites and storm overflows - whose impacts are yet to be fully assessed - as well as instances where the source of the impact remains unidentified.*

Source: (DAERA, 2025c)

3.2.1 Water Quality Effects

- 3.15 All surface catchments in the Council area have European site(s) downstream (see Appendix 4, Map 4). There may be hydrological pathways for pollutant release from development of housing land or economic/industrial land to reach European sites. Operational phase pathways arising from development growth are separately considered in section 3.5.
- 3.16 Non-native invasive species can be spread over considerable distance via water if released as a result of development (see 3.8).
- 3.17 Habitat quality has a relationship with water quality in the selected sites. Pollutants can cause changes to vegetational composition and structure, affecting habitat balance, or can have a toxic impact on feature species, or their prey items.
- 3.18 Significant effects on sites with aquatic or wetland features are within, adjacent to, or hydrologically linked to the Plan area can occur through contamination of surface water/groundwater and **waterborne pollution** which can contribute to deterioration of (or failure to improve) water quality. Excluding operational discharges, such effects are generally limited to proposals in close proximity to a European site.
- 3.19 The main potential sources of impact are silt / sediment, fuel or oil, cement and concrete, paints, chemicals and solvents and waste materials which can all present potential risk to the aquatic environment. The redevelopment of a site with previous industrial use(s) or development of a site in proximity to potentially polluting industrial or commercial activities may also present potential risks, if contaminants are present in the soil and/or groundwater.

3.2.2 Hydrodynamic Effects

- 3.20 The rate at which rainfall enters surface watercourses and drains can alter the hydrological properties of receiving waterbodies.
- 3.21 Indirect (operational phase) impacts arising from intensification of water supply requirements or disposal of wastewater associated with development growth are considered separately at 3.5.1 and 3.5.2 below.
- 3.22 **Alterations to drainage** can affect the aquatic environment in respect of the flooding regime. Such effects can potentially be significant in relation to adjoining habitat, if it leads to reduction in traditional areas of flooding and wetland habitat. The hydrology of peatland is vulnerable to lowering of the water table which causes drying of the surface peat.
- 3.23 Dynamic systems in aquatic habitats can be affected by many factors, but especially **new engineered structures**. Changes may include alteration in sediment grade or shifts in patterns of erosion and deposition. Ongoing sand exploitation could alter substrate and influence near shore sediment mobility in Lough Neagh.

Effects upon the aquatic environment will be considered in screening the [draft] Plan Strategy in Section 4 and will also be considered at LPP when reviewing or allocating zoned land.

3.3 Effects on mobile species

- 3.3 Most animal species range beyond the European sites for which they are selection features. Land which is outside the boundary of a European site but which provides functional support for those selection features is referred to as 'supporting habitat', or 'functionally linked habitat'.
- 3.4 Both on-site and off-site activities can potentially affect mobile features associated with SPA and Ramsar sites. Adjoining habitat can be particularly important for geese as well as providing roost locations. Significant changes in land management and disturbance are key considerations.
- 3.5 SPA qualifying feature species with ecological links to the Council area include breeding and wintering waders, seabirds, waterfowl and hen harrier. Waterfowl tend to roost on open water, while waders feed on mudflats at low tide and move to high-tide roosts when the water covers their food source. Inland lagoons and freshwater ponds may be used by waders for feeding and roosting. Upland moorlands are typical habitat for Hen harrier, however evidence suggests that the population in this area favours managed forest for nesting. Individuals can have a foraging range in excess of 10km.
- 3.6 The only non-marine mobile SAC qualifying feature species where a potential functional linkage might be present is the Marsh fritillary butterfly. As this species is a cited feature of a European site within the Council area, potential effects are already captured under direct effects (3.1).
- 3.7 When screening for European sites in the inshore (marine) region, specific ranges must be taken into consideration to identify sites which have marine mobile species (harbour porpoise, grey seal and common seal) as a site selection feature (DAERA, 2023). Site scanning and screening has identified two European sites with a marine mobile species (harbour porpoise) within the recommended screening distance of 100km (measured hydrologically). However, as the Council does not share a boundary with the marine area, there is no pathway for features to be directly impacted by underwater noise or other disturbance.
- 3.8 The main potential impact mechanisms for effects on mobile qualifying feature species of linked SPAs are:
- **Ex-situ habitat loss.** New development leading to loss of supporting habitat, e.g. important feeding / foraging / roosting sites. Roosting sites are an essential component of sites hosting waders. There is potential for features to be affected by drainage and change of land use of wetland or marshy areas.

- **Ex-situ disturbance.** Ongoing disturbance to supporting habitat through new/increased noise, activity or movement, or the presence of disturbing features that could be brought about by the Plan. Commercial and recreational boating are a noted source of disturbance, especially to particularly sensitive areas.
- **Enhanced bird competition-** Activities onsite or offsite that influences or results in a shift in balance of species utilising a site (e.g. landfill operations).
- **New overhead power cables (or other tall structures)** which may disrupt flight lines and are specifically a problem in relation to swans and geese.

3.9 The main potential impact mechanism for effects on mobile qualifying feature species of linked SACs are:

- **Ex-situ habitat loss-** New development leading to loss of habitat(s) which provide the larval food plant, devil's-bit scabious.
- **Alteration of habitat quality through diminution of water quality** - Contaminants entering the surface water environment (including persistent, manufactured or processed solid materials and litter) may negatively affect marine feature habitats and the food chains that support mobile marine feature species.

Effects on mobile species will be considered in screening the [draft] Plan Strategy in Section 4. Functionally linked land or pathways that may be used by mobile species will also be a consideration at LPP when reviewing or allocating any zoned land.

3.4 Effects of recreational pressure

- 3.10 This impact mechanism is directly related to general increases in housing development and associated increases in recreational pressure from new residents moving into an area. It may also arise where there are specific proposals to focus recreational development. There is considerable overlap with the Direct Effects (3.1) and Mobile Species pathways (3.3) already discussed above.
- 3.11 Recreation has the potential to have a significant effect, if it is intensified to a degree that it causes erosion, habitat damage, disturbance of breeding sites, persistent levels of disturbance, or if the water sports season is extended to when wintering birds are present.
- 3.12 The [draft] PS acknowledges that water-based sports are becoming an increasingly popular activity in the Borough. As such, Lough Neagh, alongside the Borough's rivers, reservoirs, canals and lakes are important recreational resources. Popular water sports range from tranquil uses such as angling, sailing, canoeing, rowing and sailboarding to powered activities such as water-skiing, jet-skiing and other powerboat uses.
- 3.13 Breeding birds are particularly vulnerable to disturbance. Cumulative disturbance impacts (e.g. boating, sand dredgers, wildfowling, walkers, dogs, etc.) may also be a significant factor for wintering bird populations. Hiking and walking trails can increase risk of trampling and erosion with the potential to cause direct habitat loss. Recreational uses may increase other risks, such as fire or fly-tipping.
- 3.14 The main potential impact mechanisms for effects on the linked European sites are:
- **Habitat Loss** [erosion, habitat damage] through increased use of a site for recreation.
 - **Disturbance** through increased use of a site for recreation, especially recreational boating / powered watersports.

Effects of recreational pressure will be considered in screening the [draft] Plan Strategy in Section 4 and will be a consideration at LPP when reviewing or allocating zoned land.

3.5 Effects of development growth

- 3.15 This impact mechanism is directly related to general increases in housing and economic development and associated increases in demand for water and treatment of wastewater from new residents or businesses moving into an area or expansion of existing businesses.
- 3.16 The LDP aims to provide 16,409 new homes over the Plan period up to 2035 and to ensure there is an ample supply of suitable and available land within the Borough to meet economic development needs.

3.5.1 Water Supply

- 3.17 NI Water is the appointed statutory undertaker for the supply of water (and sewerage services) to the population of Northern Ireland. The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) within DAERA regulates drinking water quality for both public and private supplies, ensuring compliance with standards.

3.5.1.1 Public Supply

- 3.18 The Drinking Water Quality Annual Report 2024 (NI Water, 2025a) identifies eight water supply zones wholly or partially within the Council area (see Appendix 3, A 3.5). Drinking water is abstracted from the raw water source (under the terms of an abstraction licence from NIEA, see below), passed through a Water Treatment Works and the treated water supplied via service reservoirs. At the time of writing, the raw supplies for these drinking water zones are drawn from Clay Lake, Gentle Owens, Seagahan dam, Lough Neagh, Spelga and Fofanny reservoirs and Shimna River. The raw water source of Lough Neagh and the Castor Bay WTW is associated with European sites.
- 3.19 The main potential source of impact on the linked European sites is:
- **Increased water abstraction** [by NI Water] to meet demand/growth, causing hydrological change to European sites at raw water abstraction sites.
- 3.20 NI Water's Water Resource & Supply Resilience Plan (WR&SR Plan) (NI Water, 2025b) sets out how NI Water plans to manage and develop water resources to make sure there is enough water to meet future supply needs throughout NI. As part of the supply assessment for the WR&SR Plan, Lough Neagh is deemed an 'infinite source of supply' and abstraction licence arrangements are not currently subject to any regulatory pressure to reduce abstraction. However, the WR&SR Plan identifies uncertainties from the impacts of climate change on resource availability and customer demand patterns responding to more extreme weather events. The WR&SR Plan recognises the potential for abstraction licences to become subject to reductions to protect or enhance the environment and the population forecasts.
- 3.21 Where a shortfall of supplies available to meet potential demands for water is identified, the WR&SR Plan has developed options to restore the balance between supplies and water demands. HRA of the WR&SR Plan (NI Water, 2025c) has identified that options in the South Water Resource Zone (which includes the Council area) has potential LSEs on European sites. The implementation of the WR&SR Plan is likely to proceed irrespective of whether the [draft] Plan Strategy is adopted. Any projects required to meet NI Water's obligations as a statutory undertaker will be taken forward by NI Water and will be subject to their own project-level assessment(s).

Effects of development growth will be considered in screening the [draft] Plan Strategy in Section 4 and will be a consideration at LPP when reviewing or allocating zoned land.

3.5.1.2 Private Supply

- 3.22 Any development that requires non-mains water supply could have a localised effect (i.e. private water supplies, typically in the form of a borehole, well or spring). The bedrock quantitative status (2021) for groundwater bodies in the Council area is 'good'. The Department for the Economy (DfE) has advised that *"The prospects for groundwater abstraction within the council area are significant... It is important that the rate of abstraction from an aquifer does not exceed the rate of recharge minus the*

ecological flow requirements of terrestrial water bodies such as rivers and lakes. If it does exceed it, groundwater levels will decline, resulting in mining of groundwater.”⁸

- 3.23 Any new development which intends to use a non-mains supply and its intended usage would abstract over 10m³/day requires further consultation with the NIEA Abstractions and Licencing Team under the Water Abstraction and Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, as an abstraction and impoundment licence may be required. All abstractions of groundwater over 20m³/day require an abstraction licence from the NIEA to operate.
- 3.24 The DWI regulates the use of non-mains water supplies used for human consumption. An abstraction licence is not required in this circumstance. If the non-mains water supply serves two or more domestic properties, is used in a commercial manner or provided to the public, it is subject to registration and monitoring by DWI, regardless of the volume used.
- 3.25 At the time of writing, the DWI Public Register records 24 registered current private drinking water supplies (plus 13 historic records) within the borough and the DAERA Abstractions records 84 abstractions. These are shown in Appendix 3, A 3.5. Of the abstraction records, 61 are from groundwater and 22 are from surface water (1 other). Agriculture (23%), Food and Drink (19%) Industrial (18%) and Quarrying/Mineral Washing (17%) are the most common uses.
- 3.26 The main potential source of impact on the linked European sites is:
- **Increased water abstraction** to meet demand/growth, causing hydrological change to European sites.

Further consideration of potential effects from abstraction is not required. NIEA is the competent authority for assessing applications for new or increased abstraction under the Water Abstraction and Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.

3.5.2 Wastewater Treatment

3.5.2.1 Mains wastewater treatment and disposal (NI Water)

- 3.27 The provision of wastewater treatment within the Council area is the responsibility of NI Water. In the Plan area, all discharges from Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) and all wastewater storm overflows are hydrologically connected to European sites, either directly or indirectly. As previously stated in section 3.2, water quality is an important factor of habitat quality in sites with water-dependent features.
- 3.28 NI Water provides an annual update to each Council on the headroom capacity of each WwTW and the Catchment / Network planning status for the settlements and WwTWs in that Council area. NI Water also provides regular updates on Wastewater System Capacity Information on its website. The most recent excerpt is shown in Figure 3.2 and identifies several capacity issues in the Borough.
- 3.29 NI Water’s most recently provided annual update to the Council (August 2025) states: “*NI Water has identified parts of the network where storm overflows are classified as Unsatisfactory Intermittent Discharges (UIDs). These storm overflows act as safety valves to prevent out of sewer flooding during rainfall events which may cause internal flooding of houses and business and environmental pollution. When storm overflows are operating more frequently than they should, they are classified as UIDs*”.

⁸ DfE (Online) Local Development Plans – Input on Minerals - Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (found at <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/topics/local-development-plans-input-minerals> [DfE response published 09/02/18, accessed 25/06/2026])

Figure 3.2: Wastewater System Capacity Information Council Areas (October 2025)

Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council	
The following wastewater treatment works within the council area do not have any available capacity:	
Name	
Blackwatertown WwTW	Mountnorris WwTW
Darkley WwTW	Moy WwTW
Lawrencetown WwTW	Poyntzpass WwTW
Markethill WwTW	Rathfriland Drumlough WwTW
Moneyslane WwTW	Tamnamore WwTW
Monteith WwTW	Waringstown WwTW
Moy WwTW (which is located in Mid Ulster District Council area) is currently at capacity and serves part of the Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Council area.	
The upgrade of the Robinsonstown Wastewater Treatment Works is currently under construction within the PC21 Price Control period. NI Water is working closely with the Department for Infrastructure on the funding required to facilitate the delivery of our capital investment programme for the remainder of the PC21 Price Control period (2025 – 2028).	
NI Water's sewer network capacity mapping tool and sewer network modelling activities have identified capacity issues in parts of the Armagh City, Ballynacorr, Dromore, Gilford, Markethill, Mountnorris, Moy, Rathfriland Drumlough, Richhill, Tandragee and Waringstown wastewater networks. As a result, negative planning responses may be provided by NI Water in parts of these catchments.	

Source NI Water [Online] Wastewater System Capacity Information (found at <https://www.niwater.com/capacity-information> [accessed 25/06/2026])

- 3.30 The main potential impact mechanism for effects on the linked European sites is:
- **Waterborne pollution – discharges of urban waste water (sewage and commercial effluent).**
 Diminution of water quality and/or eutrophication can alter habitat quality and change vegetational composition and structure, affecting habitat balance. The presence of pollutants in the water environment can have a toxic impact on feature species, or their prey items.
- 3.31 Policy GP 2 in the [draft] Plan Strategy seeks to ensure new development has the infrastructure needed to facilitate its orderly completion and to effectively serve its needs into the future. The policy will require that a proposal includes suitable new or upgraded provision for all water, wastewater and drainage infrastructure needed to facilitate the development. Applicants are encouraged to undertake a predevelopment enquiry with NI Water (NIW) to ascertain the availability and capacity of mains infrastructure.
- 3.32 It is essential that all planning applications that indicate mains sewage treatment are referred to NI Water to check and advice on the capacity of the WwTW and the sewage network, especially in areas experiencing significant growth.
- 3.5.2.2 Non mains wastewater treatment and disposal*
- 3.33 The Water Utility Regulation Group of DAERA regulates discharges to the water environment and is a competent authority under the Habitats Regulations.
- 3.34 Policy GP 2 establishes that in cases where mains wastewater infrastructure is not available or cannot be provided, the applicant will be required to provide a suitable non-mains wastewater arrangement (including management and maintenance provision) as part of the planning application. The applicant will be required to demonstrate that the proposal will not create or add to a pollution problem, nor have an unacceptable adverse impact on public health, amenity or the character of the area.

In light of the NIW capacity constraints in the Council area, it is considered that the demand for wastewater treatment arising as a result of the level of growth enabled by the [draft] Plan Strategy could result in such pressures that could undermine conservation objectives of a European site. Potential impacts of wastewater will also be a consideration at LPP when reviewing or allocating any zoned land.

3.6 Effects from Aerial Emissions (All Types of Development)

- 3.35 Certain aerial emissions can cause harm to habitats and species through direct toxic effects or through nitrogen deposition and nutrient enrichment which can alter the species diversity and condition of a habitat. Deposition of particulates (dust) may coat vegetation and interfere with photosynthesis.
- 3.36 DAERA's '*Revised Operational Protocol for Assessing Ammonia and Air Pollution Impacts on the Natural Environment*' (ROP) provides guidance on the assessment of such harmful emissions. The ROP establishes screening distances for many emission sources, which have a ZoI of up to 10km. The ROP also references the Air Pollution Information System (APIS). APIS indicates that the ZoI for large-scale combustion sources is up to 15km.
- 3.37 High ammonia concentrations in the air are directly harmful in contact with plant tissue; however, habitats can experience damage through the process of nitrogen deposition, which occurs when nitrogen compounds (including ammonia) are deposited to the ground, often in rainfall. Deposition effects can happen at long distances from the original ammonia source. The Trends Report 2022 (*Rowe et. al. (2022)*) reports that 98% of SACs and 83.3% of SPAs in NI had nitrogen deposition rates exceeding their Critical Load.
- 3.38 Growth of housing and economic development tends to be linked with increased traffic. Emissions from road transport have been shown to be linked to impacts on vegetation within 200 metres of the road edge. Beyond 200 metres, significant vegetation level effects associated with traffic emissions (including deposition) have not been observed in scientific studies.
- 3.39 The main potential impact mechanism for effects on the linked European sites is:
- **Aerial emissions** of Nitrogen oxides (NO, NO₂), particulate matter, ammonia or other emissions. The ROP advises that the types of development that most commonly give rise to potentially significant air pollution impacts on designated sites and priority habitats are livestock installations. Anaerobic Digester plants where feed materials are stored are also a source of ammonia emissions. Important sources of nitrogen oxides include road transport (exhaust emissions) as well as industrial combustion processes.
- 3.40 Developments with potentially harmful emissions will be subject to a project level HRA and assessed in accordance with the ROP.
- 3.41 Effects of aerial emissions on European sites will be considered in screening the Plan Strategy in Section 4 and will also be a consideration at LPP when reviewing or allocating any zoned land.

3.7 Effects from Disturbance (Other)

- 3.42 **Emissions of noise, light, vibration** or a change in the scale of an existing activity or use during construction and operation can negatively affect sensitive species. Such disturbance from construction or additional built development can occur within or adjacent to European sites or functionally-linked land. It may create barrier effects to species; result in changes in species breeding, roosting, commuting and foraging behaviour; or increase predation. Construction can be planned to avoid causing disturbance at critical times and development can be designed or located to avoid disturbance to sensitive species during operation.
- 3.43 The main sources of such effects have already identified and described under Direct Effects (3.1) Effects on mobile species (3.3) and Effects of Recreational pressure (3.4). There are no additional sites or features to consider.

Potential effects of disturbance on European sites will be considered in screening the Plan Strategy in Section 4 and will also be a consideration at LPP when reviewing or allocating any zoned land.

3.8 Effects from Introduced Species

- 3.44 New development has the potential to introduce **invasive or non-native species** or cause their spread to other sites. The introduction of invasive species, non-native, competitive or predatory species can adversely affect distribution, structure and function of habitat as well as the long-term survival of its typical species. Watercourses are prone to the spread of invasive species such as giant hogweed and Himalayan balsam which are easily transferred by water if released as a result of development. Invasive species may also be transported to new sites by machinery. Development that extends navigable waters or which introduces new boating activities may also increase the potential for spread of invasive species or waterborne diseases of protected species to waters where they are not currently present. Introduced species on peatlands can displace habitats for which a site has been designated.

- 3.45 The introduction and spread of invasive non-native species affecting European sites with marine components is primarily associated with aquaculture and can therefore be excluded.

Potential effects of introduced species on European sites will be considered in screening the Plan Strategy in Section 4 and will also be a consideration at LPP when reviewing or allocating any zoned land.

4 Screening [draft] Plan Strategy for Likely Significant Effects

4.1 Overview of Screening (Step 5)

- 4.1 All parts of the draft Plan Strategy were reviewed, the approach to screening is detailed in Appendix 2 while Appendix 5 presents the full screening review. The outcome of the screening of the Plan is summarised below and informed by the findings of Section 3 above.

Part 1

1.0 Introduction and Policy Context

- 4.2 This chapter introduces the plan and describes the LDP process and transitional arrangements. It is administrative text which does not direct development.

Further assessment is not required.

2.0 Borough Profile

- 4.3 This chapter sets out the Borough profile. It is factual text to provide context and does not direct development.

Further assessment is not required.

3.0 LDP Vision and Strategic Objectives

- 4.4 The Vision is an overall aspiration for the Council area. Delivery of the Vision is through the social, economic and environmental objectives; the spatial growth strategy and strategic policies; and the operational policies. The Plan Vision does not direct development.
- 4.5 The Strategic Objectives all represent general statements. They state a direction without details of how they will be delivered. Some Objectives are possible or likely drivers of potential effects. Examples are some of the Economic Objectives to facilitate economic growth including through new tourism, economic development and employment in the primary sector (agriculture, forestry and mining), and the Social Objectives to deliver on housing needs. For all Objectives the implications can be and are more appropriately assessed under related development enabling policies. The assessment is therefore undertaken through the consideration of related strategic and operational policies.

Further assessment is not required.

4.0 Strategic Policies

SP 1: Furthering Sustainable Development and Climate Change Resilience

- 4.6 This is a high-level general statement of policy setting out the Council's aspirations to further sustainable development that helps mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. It is a general statement of principle and direction, against which proposals will be assessed through the underpinning Strategies and Operational Policies. In itself, it cannot have any effect on a European site.

SP 1 does not require further assessment.

SP 2: Design and Placemaking

- 4.7 This is a high-level general statement of policy setting out the Council's aspirations to create successful and sustainable places that enhance the quality of life for communities by adhering to the principles of good design and positive place-making. It is a general statement of principle and, in itself, it cannot have any effect on a European site.

SP 2 does not require further assessment.

5.0 Spatial Growth Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy

SGS 1: Spatial Growth Strategy,

- 4.8 SGS 1 is a high-level statement of strategy which, in itself, cannot have any effect on a European site. The Spatial Growth Strategy provides a strategic framework for realising the vision of sustainable development for the Borough. It will support the delivery of the LDP's vision and strategic objectives by setting out where growth should be directed, in terms of housing, economic growth, retail, services, tourism, administration, leisure and cultural facilities, over the Plan period. SGS 1 will primarily be delivered through the strategic policies and proposals set out in Part 1 of the Plan Strategy and will inform allocations of land for development in the Local Policies Plan. The implications of development growth have been discussed in Section 3 and are more appropriately assessed under related strategic and operational policies.

SGS 1 does not require further assessment.

SGS 2: Settlement Hierarchy

- 4.9 The main purpose of the Settlement Hierarchy (SGS 2) is to provide the spatial framework for the delivery of the Spatial Growth Strategy. The three Main Settlements of Armagh City, Banbridge Town and Craigavon Urban Area (comprising the elements of Portadown, Central Craigavon & Lurgan) are confirmed as Hubs in the RDS 2035 and are considered to have the most potential to cluster in the Borough. These Main Settlements will be the focus of development within the Borough and will be supported by the small towns, villages and small settlements, which are identified as local centres serving the needs of the rural hinterland. The settlement boundaries (settlement limits) contain urban development to maintain a clear distinction between the built-up area and the surrounding countryside and, at this stage, remain unchanged from those designated within the extant Area Plans. The boundaries will be reviewed and identified at draft LPP stage, which will be subject to HRA. The assessment is therefore undertaken through the consideration of related development-enabling strategic and operational policies.

SGS 2 does not require further assessment.

6.0 Housing Strategy

- 4.10 The Housing Strategy is a general statement of strategy which, in itself, cannot have any effect on a European site. It sets out a framework for managing housing growth in a manner that reinforces the regional policy approach and reflects local circumstances.

Further assessment is not required.

SGS 3 Strategic Housing Allocation

- 4.11 The Plan will make provision for 16,409 dwellings within the Borough over the Plan period with an allocation of 13,948 dwellings within the settlements and 2,461 dwellings in the countryside.

SGS 4: Management of Housing Supply

- 4.12 To manage housing supply over the Plan period, the Council will zone housing land within the Main Settlements and Small Towns. The Main Settlements are Armagh City, Banbridge Town and the Craigavon Urban Area and the Small Towns are Dromore, Gilford, Rathfriland, Keady, Markethill and Tandragee.

All zoned housing sites will be 0.1 hectares or above and capable of delivering 5 dwellings or more.

SGS 3 and SG 4 enable development and depending on the location have potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites.

SGS 3 and SGS 4 have been screened in for further assessment

7.0 Economic Development Strategy

SGS 5: Strategic Economic Development Lands Allocation

- 4.13 The Economic Development Strategy and SGS 5 are general statements of strategy setting out how much land is needed for economic development throughout the Plan period and where it is to be located. Its implications as a driver of growth are discussed in Section 3 and will be assessed under related development-enabling policies. The scale, extent and location of all the economic land allocation will be identified at the draft LPP stage, which will be subject to a further HRA.
- 4.14 SGS 5 enables development. Depending on the location, the approach has the potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites.

SGS 5 has been screened in for further assessment

8.0 Retail Strategy

SGS 6 - Retail Strategy

- 4.15 The Retail Strategy and SGS 6 are general statements of strategy which aim to promote and support a town centre first approach for retail and other main town centre uses across the Borough. It provides a spatial framework against which to apply the operational policies for Retailing and Town Centres and cannot have any effect on a European site. The Local Policies Plan will incorporate site specific land use zonings for Development Opportunity Sites in order to facilitate a mixture of uses including retail, office, leisure, cultural and residential uses in City / Town Centres, as appropriate.
- 4.16 Implications of delivery are assessed under operational policies for retailing and town centres and other relevant policies including design and place-making. Development Opportunity sites will be brought forward and assessed at the draft Local Policies Plan stage.

SGS 6 does not require further assessment.

9.0 Tourism Strategy

SGS 7: Tourism Strategy

- 4.17 The Tourism Strategy and SGS 7 are general statements of strategy to promote sustainable tourism development which cannot have any effect on a European site. Implications of delivery from tourism development will be assessed under related general policies, as well as tourism and design and place-making policies.

SGS 7 does not require further assessment.

10.0 Transportation Strategy

SGS 8: Transportation Strategy

- 4.18 The Transportation Strategy and SGS 8 are general statements of strategy to promote sustainable development and support modal shift to from private vehicular use to active travel and public transport, which cannot have any effect on a European site. Implications will be assessed under development-enabling policies and operational transportation policies.

SGS 8 does not require further assessment.

11.0 Open Space Strategy

SGS 9: Open Space Strategy

- 4.19 The Open Space Strategy and SGS 9 are general statements of strategy to protect existing areas of open space and identify new sites, where required to meet current and future need. Implications will be assessed under development-enabling policies.

SGS 9 does not require further assessment.

12.0 Countryside Strategy

- 4.20 The Countryside Strategy is a general statement of strategy which cannot have any effect on a European site.

SGS 10: Sustainable Development in the Countryside, SGS 11: Strategic Landscape Policy Areas

- 4.21 SGS 10 and SGS 11 are general statements of policy for managing development in the countryside in a sustainable manner, promoting high standards of design and protecting special landscape character, environmental quality and visual amenity. These, in themselves, cannot have any effect on a European site, however they are a possible driver of potential effects. Implications are assessed under relevant development-enabling operational policies.

SGS 10 does not require further assessment.

13.0 Heritage Strategy

SGS 12: Heritage Strategy

- 4.22 The Heritage Strategy and SGS 12 are general statements of strategy to protect, conserve and enhance where possible the Borough's natural, built, archaeological and landscape heritage. The overall strategy seeks to be protective of natural heritage and cannot have any effect on a European site.

SGS 12 does not require further assessment.

PART 2

14.0 General Policies for All Development

GP 1 Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change, GP 3 Public Safety and Human Health, GP 4 Amenity

- 4.23 GP 1, GP 3 and GP 4 are all policies listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. Implications of delivery are assessed under related operational policies.

GP 1, GP 3 and GP 4 do not require further assessment.

GP 2 Infrastructure Requirements for Development

- 4.24 Policy GP 2 sets out the requirements for transport and for wastewater and drainage, including development relying on non-mains sewerage. While it is broadly related to criteria [for testing the acceptability of a proposal], there is potential for development coming forward under this policy to generate pathways for effects on European sites.

GP 2 has been screened in for further assessment.

15.0 Design and Place-making

DES 1 Design Quality, DES 5 Advertisements

- 4.25 Policy DES 1 sets out the requirements for development proposals in settlements with the aim of promoting good design and positive place-making. While it is broadly related to criteria [for testing the acceptability of a proposal], there is potential for development coming forward under this policy to generate pathways for effects on European sites. Policy DES 5 facilitates development which may include illumination which could negatively impact mobile species. Depending on scale and location, the potential to generate pathways for effects on a European site cannot be ruled out.

DES 1 and DES 5 have been screened in for further assessment.

DES 2 Rural Design and Character in the Countryside, DES 3 Trees and Hedgerows, DES 4 Shopfront Design

- 4.26 DES 2, DES 3 and DES 4 provide general statements of strategy/policy or list the general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. Some of these policies also seek to be protective of countryside landscape and character. These policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European sites. Implications are assessed under related development-enabling operational policies.

DES 2, DES 3 and DES 4 do not require further assessment.

16.0 Social Theme

16.1 Housing

HOU 2 Protected Housing Areas in City and Town Centres, HOU 3 Design Concept Statements, Concept Master Plans and Comprehensive Planning, HOU 6 Affordable Housing in Settlements

- 4.27 HOU 2 is a general statement of policy which, in itself, cannot have any effect on a European site. HOU 3 and HOU 6 are both policies listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. Implications of delivery are assessed under related operational policies.

HOU 2, HOU 3 and HOU 6 do not require further assessment.

HOU 1 Protecting Zoned Housing Land, HOU 4 Quality in Residential Development, HOU 5 Residential Mix, HOU 7 Conversion or Change of Use of Existing Buildings to Flats or Apartments, HOU 8 Houses in Multiple Occupation, HOU 9 Specialist Residential Accommodation, HOU 10 Travellers Accommodation, HOU 11 Householder Development, HOU 12 New Dwellings in an Existing Cluster, HOU 13 Replacement Dwellings, HOU 14 Infill and Ribbon Development, HOU 15 Dwellings on a Farm, HOU 16 Dwellings for Non-Agricultural Business Enterprises, HOU 17 Personal and Domestic Circumstances, HOU 18 Affordable Housing in the Countryside, HOU 19 Residential Caravans and Mobile Homes

- 4.28 All other policies in this group enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites.

HOU 1, HOU 4, HOU 5, HOU 7, HOU 8, HOU 9, HOU 10, HOU 11, HOU 12, HOU 13, HOU 14, HOU 15, HOU 16, HOU 17, HOU 18 and HOU 19 have been screened in for further assessment.

16.2 Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation

OSR 1 Protection and Provision of Open Space, OSR 2 Public Open Space in new Residential Development, OSR 3 Outdoor Recreation in the Countryside, OSR 4 Intensive Sports Facilities, OSR 5 Noise Generating Sports and Outdoor Recreational Facilities, OSR 6 Development of Facilities ancillary to Water Sports, OSR 7 The Floodlighting of Sports and Outdoor Recreational Facilities, OSR 8 Green and Blue Infrastructure

- 4.29 All policies in this group enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites.

OSR 1, OSR 2, OSR 3, OSR 4, OSR 5, OSR 6, OSR 7 and OSR 8 have been screened in for further assessment.

16.3 Community and Cultural

CCF 1 Community and Cultural Facilities

- 4.30 There is potential for development coming forward under policy CCF 1 to generate pathways for effects on European sites.

CCF 1 has been screened in for further assessment.

17.0 Economic Theme

17.1 Economic Development

ECN 1 Economic Development in the Countryside, ECN 2 Expansion of an Established Economic Development Use in the Countryside, ECN 3 Redevelopment of an Established Economic Development Use in the Countryside, ECN 4 Major Economic Development in the Countryside, ECN 5 Small Scale Economic Development Projects, ECN 6 Farm Diversification, ECN 7 Agricultural and Forestry

Development, ECN 8 Economic Development in Settlements, ECN 9 Retention of Zoned Lands and Economic Development Uses

- 4.31 Policies ECN 1 to ECN 9 enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites.

ECN 1, ECN 2, ECN 3, ECN 4, ECN 5, ECN 6, ECN 7, ECN 8 and ECN 9 have been screened in for further assessment.

ECN 10 Development incompatible with Economic Development Uses

- 4.32 Policy ECN 10 is a strategic high-level policy to avoid incompatible development. In itself (i.e. in the absence of other policies) the policy cannot lead to any development or change.

ECN 10 does not require further assessment.

17.2 Retailing and Town Centres

RTC 1 Retailing and Other Main Town Centre Use, RTC 2 District Centres, RTC 3 Local Centres, RTC 4 Villages and Small Settlements, RTC 5 Retailing in the Countryside and RTC 6 Roadside Service Facilities

- 4.33 Policies RTC 1 to RTC 6 enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites.

RTC 1, RTC 2, RTC 3, RTC 4, RTC 5 and RTC 6 have been screened in for further assessment.

17.3 Tourism

TOU 1 Tourism Development in Settlements, TOU 2 Tourist Amenities in the Countryside, TOU 3 Hotels, Guest Houses and Tourist Hostels in the Countryside, TOU 4 Major Tourism Development in the Countryside- Exceptional Circumstances, TOU 5 Self Catering Accommodation in the Countryside, TOU 6 New and Extended Holiday Parks in the Countryside

- 4.34 Policies TOU 1-to TOU 6 enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites.

TOU 1, TOU 2, TOU 3, TOU 4, TOU 5 and TOU 6 have been screened in for further assessment.

TOU 7 Safeguarding Tourism Assets

- 4.35 Policy TOU 7 is a general plan-wide safeguarding policy and one that cannot lead to development or other change. This policy cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European sites.

TOU 7 does not require further assessment.

17.4 Minerals Development

MIN 1 Minerals Development, MIN 2 Areas of Constraint on Minerals Development, MIN 4 High Value Minerals, MIN 5 Hydrocarbon Development, MIN 6 Peat Extraction, MIN 7 Restoration and Aftercare of Minerals Sites, MIN 8 Development at Risk associated with Past Underground Mineral Extraction

- 4.36 MIN 1, MIN 2, MIN 3, MIN 4, MIN 5 and MIN 6 enable minerals development, peat extraction and site restoration which have potential for impacts on European sites, although MIN2 constrains development exceptions apply therefore there is potential for impacts from all these policies depending on location, scale and nature of development

MIN 1, MIN 2, MIN 3, MIN 4, MIN 5 and MIN 6 have been screened in for further assessment.

MIN 3 Minerals Safeguarding

- 4.37 MIN 3 is a general plan-wide safeguarding policy and one that cannot lead to development or other change. This policy cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European sites.

MIN 3 does not require further assessment.

17.5 Telecommunications, Utilities and Infrastructure

TUI 1 Telecommunications Development, TUI 2 Infrastructure, Utilities and Overhead Lines

- 4.38 Policies TUI 1-and TUI 2 enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites.

TUI 1 and TUI 2 have been screened in for further assessment.

17.6 Transportation

TRAN 1 Accessible Environments, TRAN 4 Safeguarding New Transport Schemes, TRAN 5 Protection of Disused Transport Routes, TRAN 6 Transport Assessment,

- 4.39 Policies TRAN 1, TRAN 4, TRAN 5 and TRAN 6 are either general statements of policy or policy which list the general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals to promote accessibility and efficient and safe movement of traffic in the design of development. These policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European sites.

TRAN 1, TRAN 4, TRAN 5 and TRAN 6 do not require further assessment.

TRAN 2 Access to Public Roads, TRAN 3 Access to Protected Routes, TRAN 7 Parking and Servicing Arrangements, TRAN 8 Active Travel including Walking and Cycling, TRAN 9 Provision of Car Parks

Policies TRAN 2, TRAN 3, TRAN 7, TRAN 8 and TRAN 9 enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites.

TRAN 2, TRAN 3, TRAN 7, TRAN 8 and TRAN 9 have been screened in for further assessment.

18.0 Environmental Theme

18.1 Historic Environment

HE 1 The Preservation of Archaeological Remains of Regional Importance and their Settings, HE 2 The Protection of Archaeological Remains of Local Importance and their Settings, HE 3 Archaeological Assessment and Evaluation, HE 4 Archaeological Mitigation

- 4.40 Policies HE 1 to HE 4 are either general plan-wide environmental / site safeguarding policies or list criteria for testing the acceptability of the proposal. These policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European sites.

HE 1, HE 2, HE 3 and HE 4 do not require further assessment.

HE 5 Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes of Special Historic Interest, HE 6 Listed Buildings - Change of Use and/or Extension or Alteration of a Listed Building, HE 7 Demolition of a Listed Building, HE 8 Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building, HE 9 New Development in a Conservation Area, HE 10 Demolition in a Conservation Area, HE 11 Demolition in Areas of Townscape or Village Character, HE 12 New Development in Areas of Townscape or Village Character, HE 13 Enabling Development, HE 14 Conversion and Re-Use of Non-Designated Heritage Assets

All other policies in this grouping (HE 5 to HE 14) are development enabling. Some are largely protective, however, exceptions may apply and potential effects on a European site cannot be ruled out.

HE 5, HE 6, HE 7, HE 8, HE 9, HE 10, HE 11, HE 12, HE 13 and HE 14 have been screened in for further assessment.

18.2 Natural Heritage

NH 1 Protection of European and Ramsar Sites – International

NH 1 restates the legal and policy requirements of the Habitats Regulations (NI) and the SPPS in relation to European sites and listed or proposed Ramsar sites. This policy is intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on European sites (as collective terminology) and must be considered further.

NH1 has been screened in for further assessment.

NH 2 Species Protected by Law, NH 3 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (National), NH 4 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (Local), NH 5 Habitats, Species, Biodiversity or Features of Natural Heritage Importance, NH 8 Area(s) of Outstanding Natural Beauty, NH 9 Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCIs)

Policies NH 2 to NH 5 and policies NH 8 to NH 9 are all general plan-wide environmental / site safeguarding policies. Some of these policies may afford additional protection to European sites and their selection features; however, they were not included for this specific purpose and therefore do not represent mitigation for impacts on European sites.

NH 2, NH 3, NH 4 and NH 5 do not require further assessment.

NH 6 Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs), NH 7 Landscape Wedges

Policies NH 6 & NH 7 are largely protective; however, exceptions may apply and potential effects on a European site cannot be ruled out.

NH 6 and 7 have been screened in for further assessment.

18.3 Flood Risk and Drainage

FRD 1 Development in Fluvial (River) Flood Plains, FRD 3 Development and Surface Water (Pluvial), Flood Risk outside Flood Plains, FRD 4 Artificial Modification of Watercourses, FRD 5 Development in Proximity to Controlled Reservoirs

Policies FRD 1, FRD 3, FRD 4 and FRD 5 generally seek to be protective in respect of flood risk and drainage, however, they do permit development which meets the policy criteria, therefore the potential for effects on European sites cannot be ruled out.

FRD 1, FRD 3, FRD 4 and FRD 5 have been screened in for further assessment.

FRD 2 Protection of Flood Defence and Drainage Infrastructure

Policy FRD 2 is a general statement of policy which cannot have any effect on a European site.

FRD 2 does not require further assessment.

18.4 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

RLED 1 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development

Policy RLED 1 encompasses integrated micro-generation within development proposals (as encouraged under SP 1 and GP 1) as well as new renewable and low carbon energy development proposals. Depending on the location, nature and scale of the renewable or low carbon energy development, the potential for effects on European sites cannot be ruled out.

RLED has been screened in for further assessment.

18.5 Waste Management

WMT 1 Environmental Impact of a Waste Management Facility, WMT 2 Waste Collection and Treatment Facilities, WMT 3 Waste Disposal, WMT 4 Land Improvement, WMT 5 Development in the vicinity of Waste Management Facilities

This grouping of policies all enable development, therefore there is potential for effects on European sites depending on the location, scale and nature of development. Some of the policies include protective caveats which could be construed as mitigation.

18.6 Environmental Protection

EP 1 Environmental Pollution

Policy EP 1 is a general plan-wide environmental safeguarding policy. The policy may afford additional protection to European sites and their selection features; however, it was not included for this specific purpose and therefore does not represent mitigation for impacts on European sites.

EP 1 does not require further assessment.

EP 2 Land Contamination

EP 2 may enable development on contaminated land where criteria are met, the potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites cannot be ruled out.

EP 2 has been screened in for further assessment.

PART 3

19.0 Other Specialised Areas

DC1 Developer Contributions

This is a policy which sets out requirement for developer contributions and planning agreements. In itself, it cannot have any effect on a European site. Implications of delivery are assessed under related Strategic and Operational Policies

20.0 Monitoring and Review

Monitoring Framework

This is administrative text setting out monitoring and review arrangements. The Council has developed a Monitoring Framework which measures the Plan objectives and policies against a range of indicators and targets which will inform the effectiveness of the Policy. The Council may consider if ongoing monitoring is sufficient or whether a review of the Plan Strategy is required.

The Monitoring and Review Chapter does not require further assessment.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Transitional Arrangements

Appendix 2 Guidance for Development Relying on Non-Mains Wastewater Infrastructure

Appendix 3 Hazardous Substances and Major Accident Hazard Pipelines

Appendix 4 Guidance for Outdoor Advertisements

Appendix 5 Residential Space Standards

Appendix 6 Definition of an Established Residential Area

Appendix 7 Wheelchair Housing Space Standards

Appendix 8 Guidance for Householder Development

Appendix 9 Vernacular Buildings

Appendix 10 Homeworking

Appendix 11 Tourism:

Part A: Tourist Amenities in the Countryside

Part B: Landscape Design Considerations for Holiday Parks

Appendix 12 Flood Risk:

Part A – Sustainable Drainage

Part B – Assessing Flood Risk and Drainage Impact

Appendix 13 Maps

Appendices 1 to 13 provide additional information used to inform the Plan Strategy and guidance to inform users of the draft Plan Strategy. The Annexes cannot have any effect on a European site.

All Appendices have been screened out from requiring further assessment

Abbreviations and Glossary

This is administrative text which cannot have an effect on a European site.

Further assessment is not required.

4.2 Outcome of Screening

All policies which have been ‘Screened Out’ at this stage have been assigned a screening category which allows them to be recognised as unlikely to have a significant effect, either alone or in combination. They are aspirational text, advice providing or represent general criteria for testing the acceptability of a proposal which may come forward under the [draft] Plan Strategy. These policies do not promote or support development or environmental changes that could affect a European site.

The policies that have been ‘Screened In’ are identified in Table 4.1. The purpose for ‘Screening In’ is not intended to constrain any particular type of development, it is however on the basis that they enable development or activities which could generate pathways for effects or include protective measures which might be construed to be mitigation and in accordance with the regulations, case law and best practice require consideration at appropriate assessment.

In combination effects are not considered at this stage, as screening has concluded that the draft Plan Strategy ‘alone’ has the potential to generate likely significant effects. Identified plans and projects likely to give rise to developments causing effects that could combine or interact with those of the draft Plan Strategy will be considered as part of the appropriate assessment.

Table 4.1 Policies ‘Screened In’ as having a likely significant effect and requiring further assessment

PART 1
6.0 Housing Strategy
6.1 SGS 3: Strategic Housing Allocation
6.2 SGS 4: Management of Housing Supply
7.0 Economic Development Strategy
7.1 SGS 5: Strategic Economic Development Lands Allocation
8.0 Retail Strategy
PART 2
14.0 General Policies for All Development
GP 2 Infrastructure Requirements for Development
15.0 Design and Place-making
DES 1 Design Quality
DES 5 Advertisements
16.0 Social Theme
16.1 Housing
HOU 1 Protecting Zoned Housing Land
HOU 4 Quality in Residential Development
HOU 5 Residential Mix
HOU 7 Conversion or Change of Use of Existing Buildings to Flats or Apartments
HOU 8 Houses in Multiple Occupation
HOU 9 Specialist Residential Accommodation
HOU 10 Travellers Accommodation
HOU 11 Householder Development
HOU 12 New Dwellings in an Existing Cluster
HOU 13 Replacement Dwellings
HOU 14 Infill and Ribbon Development

HOU 15 Dwellings on a Farm
HOU 16 Dwellings for Non-Agricultural Business Enterprises
HOU 17 Personal and Domestic Circumstances
HOU 18 Affordable Housing in the Countryside
HOU 19 Residential Caravans and Mobile Homes
16.2 Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation
OSR 1 Protection and Provision of Open Space
OSR 2 Public Open Space in new Residential Development
OSR 3 Outdoor Recreation in the Countryside
OSR 4 Intensive Sports Facilities
OSR 5 Noise Generating Sports and Outdoor Recreational Facilities
OSR 6 Development of Facilities ancillary to Water Sports
OSR 7 The Floodlighting of Sports and Outdoor Recreational Facilities
OSR 8 Green and Blue Infrastructure
16.3 Community and Cultural
CCF 1 Community and Cultural Facilities
17.0 Economic Theme
17.1 Economic development
ECN 1 Economic Development in the Countryside
ECN 2 Expansion of an Established Economic Development Use in the Countryside
ECN 3 Redevelopment of an Established Economic Development Use in the Countryside
ECN 4 Major Economic Development in the Countryside
ECN 5 Small Scale Economic Development Projects
ECN 6 Farm Diversification
ECN 7 Agricultural and Forestry Development
ECN 8 Economic Development in Settlements
ECN 9 Retention of Zoned Lands and Economic Development Uses
17.2 Retailing and Town Centres
RTC 1 Retailing and Other Main Town Centre Use
RTC 2 District Centres
RTC 3 Local Centres
RTC 4 Villages and Small Settlements
RTC 5 Retailing in the Countryside
RTC 6 Roadside Service Facilities
17.3 Tourism
TOU 1 Tourism Development in Settlements
TOU 2 Tourist Amenities in the Countryside
TOU 3 Hotels, Guest Houses and Tourist Hostels in the Countryside
TOU 4 Major Tourism Development in the Countryside- Exceptional Circumstances
TOU 5 Self Catering Accommodation in the Countryside
TOU 6 New and Extended Holiday Parks in the Countryside
17.4 Minerals development
MIN 1 Minerals Development
MIN 2 Areas of Constraint on Minerals Development
MIN 4 High Value Minerals
MIN 5 Hydrocarbon Development
MIN 6 Peat Extraction
MIN 7 Restoration and Aftercare of Minerals Sites
MIN 8 Development at Risk associated with Past Underground Mineral Extraction
17.5 Telecommunications, Utilities and Infrastructure

TUI 1 Telecommunications Development
TUI 2 Infrastructure, Utilities and Overhead Lines
17.6 Transportation
TRAN 2 Access to Public Roads
TRAN 3 Access to Protected Routes
TRAN 7 Parking and Servicing Arrangements
TRAN 8 Active Travel including Walking and Cycling
TRAN 9 Provision of Car Parks
18.0 Environmental Theme
18.1 Historic Environment
HE 5 Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes of Special Historic Interest
HE 6 Listed Buildings - Change of Use and/or Extension or Alteration of a Listed Building
HE 7 Demolition of a Listed Building
HE 8 Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building
HE 9 New Development in a Conservation Area
HE 10 Demolition in a Conservation Area
HE 11 Demolition in Areas of Townscape or Village Character
HE 12 New Development in Areas of Townscape or Village Character
HE 13 Enabling Development
HE 14 Conversion and Re-Use of Non-Designated Heritage Assets
18.2 Natural Heritage
NH 1 Protection of European and Ramsar Sites - International
NH 6 Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs)
NH 7 Landscape Wedges
18.3 Flood Risk and Drainage
FRD 1 Development in Fluvial (River) Flood Plains
FRD 3 Development and Surface Water (Pluvial) Flood Risk outside Flood Plains
FRD 4 Artificial Modification of Watercourses
FRD 5 Development in Proximity to Controlled Reservoirs
18.4 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
RLED 1 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development
18.5 Waste Management
WMT 1 Environmental Impact of a Waste Management Facility
WMT 2 Waste Collection and Treatment Facilities
WMT 3 Waste Disposal
WMT 4 Land Improvement
WMT 5 Development in the vicinity of Waste Management Facilities
18.6 Environmental Protection
EP 2 Land Contamination

5 Appropriate Assessment (Step 6)

Following the screening of plan proposals, as summarised in Table 4.1, it has been found that there is potential for likely significant effects to arise from 90 Policies. In combination effects are also assessed.

5.1 Protective Measures in the [draft] Plan Strategy

- 5.1 Part 1 of the [draft] Plan Strategy includes the structure of the Plan and advice on how to use it. This section makes it clear that, for all development proposals, all Strategic Policies and Strategies must be considered, followed by all General Policies and all Design and Place-making in addition to all relevant Operational policies.

- 5.2 The following overarching mitigation applies:

“The strategic policies and strategies set out in Part 1 of the Plan Strategy must always be referred to in the first instance...”

“...These components of the Plan Strategy (PS) are largely strategic in nature and these strategies and associated policies provide guidance on the general locations where development, or particular types of development, are broadly regarded as appropriate or inappropriate...”

“...Applicants should then refer to Part 2 of the PS and consider the proposal under the General Policies for all development (GP 1- GP 4) and the policies for Design and Place-making (DES 1- DES 5), as applicable, before referring to the relevant Operational Policies set out in the remainder of Part 2 and Part 3...”

“...Whilst applicants should focus on the particular Operational Policies relevant to their proposal, policies should not be read in isolation, and more than one policy could apply depending on the nature and location of the proposal. All policies considered relevant to the proposed development will be taken into account by Council in the determination of a planning application. In assessing proposals, the Council will consider all relevant policies in the round. This means applicants should not read policies in isolation, as more than one policy may apply to any proposal.”

- 5.3 Under the General Policies, GP 2 will apply to all development for which planning permission is granted subject to meeting criteria on provision for water, wastewater and drainage infrastructure. Further details are included in the discussion of GP 2 below.

- 5.4 [Draft] Plan Strategy, Section 18.2 ‘Natural Heritage’ includes Policy NH 1 Protection of European and Ramsar Sites (International). Policy NH 1 states the existing requirements of the Habitats Regulations (NI) and of the SPPS which reiterates those legislative requirements as follows:

Planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal that, either individually or in combination with existing and/or proposed plans or projects, is not likely to have a significant effect on:

- *a European Site (Special Protection Area, proposed Special Protection Area, Special Areas of Conservation, candidate Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Community Importance); or*
- *a listed or proposed Ramsar Site.*

Where a development proposal is likely to have a significant effect (either alone or in combination) or reasonable scientific doubt remains, the Council will carry out an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives.

Appropriate mitigation measures in the form of planning conditions may be imposed. In light of the conclusions of the assessment, the Council shall agree to the development only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site.

In exceptional circumstances, a development proposal which could adversely affect the integrity of a European or Ramsar Site may only be permitted where:

- *there are no alternative solutions; and*
- *the proposed development is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest; and*
- *compensatory measures are agreed and fully secured.*

As part of the consideration of exceptional circumstances, where a European or Ramsar site hosts a priority habitat or priority species listed in Annex I or II of the Habitats Directive, a development proposal will only be permitted when:

- *it is necessary for reasons of human health or public safety or there is a beneficial consequence of primary importance to the environment; or*
- *agreed in advance with the appropriate authority.*

- 5.5 For development coming forward under the draft Plan Strategy, the fact that Policy NH 1 must also apply is sufficient to avoid adverse effects on European sites. This ensures that site selection features are a consideration when the proposal is being developed and reduces the potential for tensions between NH 1 and other Strategic or Operational policies.

5.2 Mitigation Measures

- 5.6 The consideration of measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of a draft plan on a European site has been progressed to Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment. The first step in this Appropriate Assessment is to seek to incorporate mitigation measures which might be relied upon to avoid any adverse effects to the integrity of the European sites potentially affected.
- 5.7 This section therefore considers the policies identified in Table 4.1 in light of potential mitigation measures which have been incorporated into the [draft] Plan. With the approach in Appendix 2 (Step 6) in mind, the policies (grouped within their relevant topics) which were identified as having a likely significant effect have been considered further, as set out below. All policies considered to have potential to generate pathways for effects and all policies which include restrictions or specific caveats protective of European sites which could be construed as mitigation have been screened in for further assessment.
- 5.8 Section F 10.1.2. of the HRA Handbook identifies mitigation measures that may be introduced to a Plan. These include but are not limited to:
- (a) Case-specific policy restrictions, or
 - (b) Case-specific policy caveats

However, the following must also apply:

'To be an appropriate restriction or caveat (in (a) or (b) above), enabling the plan making body to ascertain no adverse effect on the integrity of a European site, the restriction must be:

- *Case-specific;*
- *Explicit; and*
- *Added to the policy and not merely added to the explanatory text or commentary, or not merely inserted into the implementation or monitoring chapters.*

- 5.9 For this [draft] Plan, it was found that case-specific policy caveats will provide sufficient mitigation to ensure policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

5.3 Mitigation Measures in the [draft] Plan Strategy Policies which can provide protection to European sites

PART 1

6.0 Housing Strategy

SGS 3 Strategic Housing Allocation & SGS 4: Management of Housing Supply

- 5.10 SGS 3 and SG 4 enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites. Although no specific protective policy caveats are included in these Spatial Growth Strategies, they must be considered in accordance with the relevant strategic and operational policies.
- 5.11 Further detailed analysis will be undertaken at the Local Policies Plan stage, including a further review of commitments, growth rates and any infrastructure constraints.
- 5.12 All policies considered relevant to a development proposal will be taken into account by Council. In view of restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these Growth Strategies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

No further policy amendments are required to SGS 3 and SGS 4.

7.0 Economic Development Strategy

SGS 5: Strategic Economic Development Lands Allocation

- 5.13 SGS 5 enables development and has potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites. Although no specific protective policy caveats are included in this Spatial Growth Strategy, it must be considered in accordance with the relevant strategic and operational policies.
- 5.14 All policies considered relevant to a development proposal will be taken into account by Council. In view of restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, this Growth Strategy cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

No further policy amendments are required to SGS 5.

PART 2

14.0 General Policies for All Development

GP 2 Infrastructure Requirements for Development

- 5.15 Policy GP 2 states:

Planning permission will be granted for a development proposal that meets, where relevant, the following criteria:

b) Water, Wastewater and Drainage: the proposal includes suitable new or upgraded provision for all water, wastewater and drainage infrastructure needed to facilitate the development. In cases where mains wastewater infrastructure is not available or cannot be provided, the applicant will be required to provide a suitable non-mains wastewater arrangement (including management and maintenance provision) as part of the planning application.

The applicant will be required to demonstrate that the proposal will not create or add to a pollution problem, nor have an unacceptable adverse impact on public health, amenity or the character of the area.

In those areas identified as having a pollution risk, development relying on a non-mains wastewater arrangement shall only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where appropriate mitigation measures have been agreed.

All policies considered relevant to a development proposal will be taken into account by Council. In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, this Policy cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

No further policy amendments are required to GP 2.

15.0 Design and Place-making

DES 1 Design Quality, DES 5 Advertisements

5.16 Policy DES 1 states

The development proposal shall

c) identify important features of the historic environment, landscape and the natural environment and ensure these are suitably integrated and protected within the design and layout, restored and enhanced where appropriate.

5.17 Policy DES 5 enables development and has potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites. Although no specific protective policy caveats are included in DES 5, it must be considered in accordance with the relevant strategic and operational policies.

5.18 All policies considered relevant to a development proposal will be taken into account by Council. In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

No further policy amendments are required to DES 1 and DES 5.

16.0 Social Theme

16.1 Housing

HOU 1 Protecting Zoned Housing Land, HOU 4 Quality in Residential Development, HOU 5 Residential Mix, HOU 7 Conversion or Change of Use of Existing Buildings to Flats or Apartments, HOU 8 Houses in Multiple Occupation, HOU 9 Specialist Residential Accommodation, HOU 10 Travellers Accommodation, HOU 11 Householder Development, HOU 12 New Dwellings in an Existing Cluster, HOU 13 Replacement Dwellings, HOU 14 Infill and Ribbon Development, HOU 15 Dwellings on a Farm, HOU 16 Dwellings for Non-Agricultural Business Enterprises, HOU 17 Personal and Domestic Circumstances, HOU 18 Affordable Housing in the Countryside, HOU 19 Residential Caravans and Mobile Homes.

5.19 Policies HOU 1, HOU 5, HOU 7, HOU 8, HOU 9, HOU 12, HOU 13, HOU 14, HOU 15, HOU 16, HOU 17, HOU 18 and HOU 19 enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites. Although no specific protective policy caveats are included, these policies must be considered in accordance with the relevant strategic and operational policies.

5.20 Policy HOU 4 states:

In established residential areas, planning permission will only be permitted where the proposal would not result in unacceptable damage to the local character and environmental quality of these areas.

5.21 Policy HOU 10 states:

Planning permission will be granted for suitable Travellers-specific accommodation within a settlement, where it will meet a demonstrable need identified in the local housing needs assessment and the following criteria are met, where relevant:

a) the proposal is compatible with the surrounding context, including existing as well as other approved or planned land uses, buildings and structures, so as not to have a detrimental impact on environmental amenity, local character or residential amenity.

5.22 Policy HOU 11 states:

Planning permission will be granted for a householder development proposal where [all of] the following criteria and additional requirements are met, where relevant:

c) the proposal will not cause the unacceptable loss of, or damage to, trees or other landscape features which contribute significantly to local environmental quality, biodiversity and amenity value;

Where the loss of trees and other landscape features is unavoidable, in relation to Criterion c), suitable compensatory planting and/or other works will normally be required. New planting and biodiversity enhancement measures shall otherwise be provided that are appropriate to the nature, scale and location of the proposal, to help the development integrate into its surroundings and to support wildlife.

5.23 All policies considered relevant to a development proposal will be taken into account by Council. In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

No further policy amendments are required to HOU 1, HOU 4, HOU 5, HOU 7, HOU 8, HOU 9, HOU 10, HOU 11, HOU 12, HOU 13, HOU 14, HOU 15, HOU 16, HOU 17, HOU 18 and HOU 19.

16.2 Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation

OSR 1 Protection and Provision of Open Space, OSR 2 Public Open Space in new Residential Development, OSR 3 Outdoor Recreation in the Countryside, OSR 4 Intensive Sports Facilities, OSR 5 Noise Generating Sports and Outdoor Recreational Facilities, OSR 6 Development of Facilities ancillary to Water Sports, OSR 7 The Floodlighting of Sports and Outdoor Recreational Facilities, OSR 8 Green and Blue Infrastructure

5.24 Policy OSR 7 enables development and has potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites. Although no specific protective policy caveats are included, it must be considered in accordance with the relevant strategic and operational policies.

5.25 Policy OSR 1 states:

All proposals must also demonstrate that the loss of open space will have no significant detrimental impact on the amenity, character or biodiversity of an area.

5.26 Policy OSR 2 states:

Public open space required by this policy will be expected to conform to all the following criteria, where relevant:

VII. it retains important landscape, natural and historic environment features and incorporates, protects, enhances and/or restores these appropriately.

5.27 Policy OSR 3 states:

A Development proposal for an outdoor recreational use in the countryside will be permitted where [all of] the following criteria are met:

a) there is no adverse impact on the natural and historic environment;

5.28 Policy OSR 4 states:

In all cases, the development of an intensive sports facility will be required to demonstrate the need for the facility in addition to meeting the following criteria:

II. there is no adverse impact on the natural and historic environment.

5.29 Policy OSR 5 states:

A development proposal for a sport or outdoor recreational activity that generates high levels of noise will only be permitted where all the following criteria are met:

b) there is no unacceptable level of conflict, disturbance or nuisance caused to farm livestock and wildlife; and

c) there is no conflict, disturbance or nuisance caused to the enjoyment of environmentally sensitive features, and locations or areas valued for their silence and solitude.

5.30 Policy OSR 6 states:

A development proposal for a facility ancillary to water sports, adjacent to inland lakes, reservoirs and waterways, will be permitted where [all of] the following criteria are met:

b) There is no adverse impact on the natural and historic environment;

d) There is no conflict with the provisions of any local management plan that has been formulated or endorsed by a competent authority.

5.31 Policy OSR 8 states:

A development proposal must, where necessary, include enhancements to the green and blue infrastructure network to mitigate any potential unacceptable adverse impacts on existing wildlife habitats or features of natural heritage, landscape or recreational value.

5.32 All policies considered relevant to a development proposal will be taken into account by Council. In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

No further policy amendments are required to OSR 1, OSR 2, OSR 3, OSR 4, OSR 5, OSR 6, OSR 7 and OSR 8.

16.3 Community and Cultural

CCF 1 Community and Cultural Facilities

5.33 Policy CCF 1 enables development and has potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites. Although no specific protective policy caveats are included, it must be considered in accordance with the relevant strategic and operational policies.

5.34 All policies considered relevant to a development proposal will be taken into account by Council. In view of restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, this policy cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

No further policy amendments are required to CCF 1.

17.0 Economic Theme

17.1 Economic Development

ECN 1 Economic Development in the Countryside, ECN 2 Expansion of an Established Economic Development Use in the Countryside, ECN 3 Redevelopment of an Established Economic Development Use in the Countryside, ECN 4 Major Economic Development in the Countryside, ECN 5 Small Scale Economic Development Projects, ECN 6 Farm Diversification, ECN 7 Agricultural and Forestry Development, ECN 8 Economic Development in Settlements, ECN 9 Retention of Zoned Lands and Economic Development Uses

5.35 Policies ECN 1, ECN 2, ECN 3, ECN 4, ECN 5, ECN 6, ECN 8 and ECN 9 enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites. Although no specific protective policy caveats are included, these policies must be considered in accordance with the relevant strategic and operational policies.

5.36 Policy ECN 7 states:

Planning permission will be granted for development on an agricultural holding or forestry enterprise where it is demonstrated that:

(d) it will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the natural or built environment

5.37 All policies considered relevant to a development proposal will be taken into account by Council. In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

No further policy amendments are required to ECN 1, ECN 2, ECN 3, ECN 4, ECN 5, ECN 6, ECN 7, ECN 8 and ECN 9.

17.2 Retailing and Town Centres

RTC 1 Retailing and Other Main Town Centre Use, RTC 2 District Centres, RTC 3 Local Centres, RTC 4 Villages and Small Settlements, RTC 5 Retailing in the Countryside and RTC 6 Roadside Service Facilities

5.38 Policies RTC 1 to RTC 6 enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites. Although no specific protective policy caveats are included, these policies must be considered in accordance with the relevant strategic and operational policies.

5.39 All policies considered relevant to a development proposal will be taken into account by Council. In view of restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

No further policy amendments are required to RTC 1, RTC 2, RTC 3, RTC 4, RTC 5 and RTC 6.

17.3 Tourism

TOU 1 Tourism Development in Settlements, TOU 2 Tourist Amenities in the Countryside, TOU 3 Hotels, Guest Houses and Tourist Hostels in the Countryside, TOU 4 Major Tourism Development in the Countryside- Exceptional Circumstances, TOU 5 Self Catering Accommodation in the Countryside, TOU 6 New and Extended Holiday Parks in the Countryside

5.40 Policies TOU 1-to TOU 6 enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites. Although no specific protective policy caveats are included, these policies must be considered in accordance with the relevant strategic and operational policies.

5.41 All policies considered relevant to a development proposal will be taken into account by Council. In view of restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

No further policy amendments are required to TOU 1, TOU 2, TOU 3, TOU 4, TOU 5 and TOU 6.

17.4 Minerals Development

MIN 1 Minerals Development, MIN 2 Areas of Constraint on Minerals Development, MIN 4 High Value Minerals, MIN 5 Hydrocarbon Development, MIN 6 Peat Extraction, MIN 7 Restoration and Aftercare of Minerals Sites, MIN 8 Development at Risk associated with Past Underground Mineral Extraction

5.42 Policies MIN 2, MIN 6, MIN 7 and MIN 8 enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites. Although no specific protective policy caveats are included, these policies must be considered in accordance with the relevant strategic and operational policies.

5.43 Policy MIN 1 states:

Planning permission will be granted for minerals development where it is demonstrated that

the proposal will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on:

a) the natural environment

c) the water environment

h) it will not have an unacceptable impact when considered cumulatively with any other existing, approved or planned minerals or other development.

Where the proposal falls within or in close proximity to a site or area of landscape, amenity, scientific, or heritage (natural, built or archaeological) value², including those proposed for designation, planning permission will not normally be granted where this would adversely affect the integrity of or threaten to undermine the rationale for the designation.

5.44 Policy MIN 4 states:

There will not be a presumption against the exploitation of high value minerals in any area. However, where such a minerals development proposal falls within a statutory or policy designation, or a proposed designation, due weight will be given to the reason for the designation.

5.45 Policy MIN 5 states:

...In all locations, there will be a presumption against the extraction of hydrocarbons by unconventional methods until there is sufficient and robust evidence on all environmental impacts associated with such methods.

5.46 All policies considered relevant to a development proposal will be taken into account by Council. In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

No further policy amendments are required to MIN 1, MIN 2, MIN 3, MIN 4, MIN 5, MIN 6, MIN 7 and MIN 8.

17.5 Telecommunications, Utilities and Infrastructure

TUI 1 Telecommunications Development, TUI 2 Infrastructure, Utilities and Overhead Lines

5.47 Policies TUI 1-and TUI 2 enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites.

5.48 Policy TUI 1 states:

Proposals for new, or upgraded, telecommunications development together with any necessary enabling works, will be permitted where it has been demonstrated that the proposal will not result in unacceptable damage to visual amenity or unacceptable harm to environmentally sensitive features or locations, including features of the natural and historic environment.

Developers will therefore be required to demonstrate that proposals for telecommunications development, having regard to technical and operational constraints, have been sited and designed to minimise visual and environmental impact.

5.49 Policy TUI 2 states:

Proposals for new, or upgraded, infrastructure and utilities development must meet the following criteria:

c) The proposal will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment; and

d) The proposal will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on features of the natural and historic environment.

Applicants must demonstrate that these matters have been fully considered and that any adverse impacts from the proposed development will be adequately mitigated.

- 5.50 All policies considered relevant to a development proposal will be taken into account by Council. In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

No further policy amendments are required to TUI 1 and TUI 2.

17.6 Transportation

TRAN 2 Access to Public Roads, TRAN 3 Access to Protected Routes, TRAN 7 Parking and Servicing Arrangements, TRAN 8 Active Travel including Walking and Cycling, TRAN 9 Provision of Car Parks

- 5.51 Policies TRAN 2, TRAN 3, TRAN 7 and TRAN 8 enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites. Although no specific protective policy caveats are included, these policies must be considered in accordance with the relevant strategic and operational policies.

- 5.52 Policy TRAN 9 states:

Planning permission will only be granted for the development or extension of public or private car parks, including park and ride and park and share where it is demonstrated the proposal:

c) does not have a detrimental impact on local environmental quality;

- 5.53 All policies considered relevant to a development proposal will be taken into account by Council. In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

No further policy amendments are required to TRAN 2, TRAN 3, TRAN 7, TRAN 8 and TRAN 9.

18.0 Environmental Theme

18.1 Historic Environment

HE 5 Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes of Special Historic Interest, HE 6 Listed Buildings - Change of Use and/or Extension or Alteration of a Listed Building, HE 7 Demolition of a Listed Building, HE 8 Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building, HE 9 New Development in a Conservation Area, HE 10 Demolition in a Conservation Area, HE 11 Demolition in Areas of Townscape or Village Character, HE 12 New Development in Areas of Townscape or Village Character, HE 13 Enabling Development, HE 14 Conversion and Re-Use of Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 5.54 Policies HE 5, HE 6, HE 7, HE 8, HE 9, HE 10, HE 11, HE 12, HE 13 and HE 14 enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites. Although no specific protective policy caveats are included, these policies must be considered in accordance with the relevant strategic and operational policies.

- 5.55 Policy HE 5 states:

In assessing applications for development in or adjacent to Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes of Special Historic Interest, particular account will be taken of the impact of the proposals on:

a) the archaeological, historical or botanical interest of the site

- 5.56 All policies considered relevant to a development proposal will be taken into account by Council. In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

No further policy amendments are required to HE 5, HE 6, HE 7, HE 8, HE 9, HE 10, HE 11, HE 12, HE 13 and HE 14.

18.2 Natural Heritage

NH 1 Protection of European and Ramsar Sites – International

- 5.57 Details of Policy NH 1 have been referred to at 5.1 ‘Protective Measures in the [draft] Plan Strategy’. NH 1 restates the legal and policy requirements of the Habitats Regulations (NI) and the SPSS in relation to European sites and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

This policy is considered a measure intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on European sites (as collective terminology). It cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

No further policy amendments are required to NH1.

NH 6 Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs), NH 7 Landscape Wedges

- 5.58 Policies NH 6 and NH 7 enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites. Although no specific protective policy caveats are included, these policies must be considered in accordance with the relevant strategic and operational policies.
- 5.59 All policies considered relevant to a development proposal will be taken into account by Council. In view of restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

18.3 Flood Risk and Drainage

FRD 1 Development in Fluvial (River) Flood Plains, FRD 3 Development and Surface Water (Pluvial), Flood Risk outside Flood Plains, FRD 4 Artificial Modification of Watercourses, FRD 5 Development in Proximity to Controlled Reservoirs

- 5.60 Policies FRD 1, FRD 3, FRD 4 and FRD 5, while they generally seek to be restrictive of development in areas at risk of flooding and restrictive of modifications to watercourses, do enable development which meets criteria, therefore the potential for effects on European sites cannot be ruled out.
- 5.61 Policy FRD 3 states:

A DA [Drainage Assessment] will also be required for any development proposal, except for minor development, where:

e) Surface water run-off from the development may adversely impact upon other development or features of importance to nature conservation, archaeology or the historic environment.

A development requiring a DA will be permitted where it is demonstrated through the DA that adequate measures will be put in place so as to effectively mitigate the flood risk to the proposed development and from the development elsewhere.

- 5.62 All policies considered relevant to a development proposal will be taken into account by Council. In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

No further policy amendments are required to FRD 1, FRD 3, FRD 4 and FRD 5.

18.4 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

RLED 1 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development

5.63 Policy RLED 1 enables development and has potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites.

5.64 Policy RLED 1 states:

All renewable and low carbon energy development, any associated buildings, and supporting infrastructure will be permitted where the proposal will not result in an unacceptable adverse impact (alone or in combination with other developments) on the following planning considerations:

(e) biodiversity and geodiversity, nature conservation, archaeological or built heritage interests;

(f) local natural resources, such as air quality, water quality or quantity;

... Proposals must demonstrate that they will protect and, where feasible, seek to enhance biodiversity.

[For] Wind Energy Development

In addition to meeting the criteria set out at (a) – (h) above, all applications for wind energy development, including proposals for re-powering of existing development, will also be required to demonstrate...

i. The development will not cause a landslide or bog burst hazard.

5.65 All policies considered relevant to a development proposal will be taken into account by Council. In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

No further policy amendments are required to RLED 1.

18.5 Waste Management

WMT 1 Environmental Impact of a Waste Management Facility, WMT 2 Waste Collection and Treatment Facilities, WMT 3 Waste Disposal, WMT 4 Land Improvement, WMT 5 Development in the vicinity of Waste Management Facilities

5.66 Policies WMT 1, WMT 2, WMT 3, WMT 4 and WMT 5 enable development and have potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites.

5.67 Policy WMT 1 states:

A development proposal for a new waste management facility, or an extension to an existing facility, will be permitted where there is no unacceptable adverse impact on the environment.

Planning permission will be granted where it can be demonstrated that [all of] the following criteria are met:

a) the proposal will not cause demonstrable harm to human health or result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment;

h) the development will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the natural or historic environment;

i) The types of waste to be deposited or treated and the proposed method of disposal or treatment will not pose a serious environmental risk to air, water or soil resources;

j) the proposed site is not at risk from flooding, and the proposal will not cause or exacerbate flooding elsewhere;

l) All proposals for waste disposal (landfilling and land raising) or land improvement operations must include suitable, detailed and practical restoration and aftercare proposals for the site that will help to enhance biodiversity.

In instances where potential adverse impacts are identified, planning consent will not be granted unless it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that they can be effectively prevented or controlled through appropriate mitigating measures.

5.68 Policy WMT 2 states:

All proposals will be required to comply with one or more of the following locational criteria:

e) In the case of civic amenity facilities, the site is conveniently located to service a neighbourhood or settlement whilst avoiding unacceptable adverse impact on the character, environmental quality and amenities of the local area; or

f) It is suitably located in the countryside and involves the reuse of existing buildings or is on land within or adjacent to existing non- residential building groups. Where it is demonstrated that new buildings/plant are needed these must have an acceptable visual and environmental impact.

In addition, proposals will be required to meet the following operational criteria

k) It will not result in an unacceptable adverse environmental impact that cannot be prevented or appropriately controlled by mitigating measures (see Policy WMT 1).

5.69 Policy WMT 3 states:

Proposals for the development of landfill or land raising facilities for the disposal of waste will be permitted where [all of] the following criteria are met:

c) It will not result in an unacceptable adverse environmental impact that cannot be prevented or appropriately controlled by mitigating measures (see Policy WMT 1);

g) Detailed measures are included for the appropriate restoration and aftercare of sites that will help to enhance biodiversity.

5.70 Policy WMT 4 states:

Proposals for the disposal of inert waste by its deposition on land will be permitted where it is demonstrated that it will result in land improvement and [all of] the following criteria are met:

b) It will not result in an unacceptable adverse environmental impact that cannot be prevented or appropriately controlled by mitigating measures (see Policy WMT 1);

d) Detailed measures are included for the appropriate restoration and aftercare of sites that will help to enhance biodiversity.

5.71 Policy WMT 5 states:

Proposals involving the development of land in the vicinity of an existing or approved waste management facility or waste water treatment works (WwTWs), will only be permitted where [both of] the following criteria are met:

b) It will not give rise to unacceptable adverse impacts in terms of people, transportation systems or the environment.

5.72 All policies considered relevant to a development proposal will be taken into account by Council. In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

No further policy amendments are required to WMT 1, WMT 2, WMT 3, WMT 4 and WMT 5.

18. 6 Environmental Protection

EP 2 Land Contamination

5.73 Policy EP 2 enables development and has potential to generate pathways for effects on European sites.

5.74 Policy EP 2 states:

[For] Development Proposals at risk of contaminating land

Planning permission will only be permitted for development proposals where it is demonstrated that the proposed operations/activities will not have a significant adverse impact on the natural environment (including surface and groundwater), human health and property as a result of land contamination.

[For] Development Proposals located on known or suspected contaminated land

Development proposals located on known or suspected contaminated land will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that [all of] the following criteria are met:

b) The development of, and use of, the site will not have a significant adverse impact on human health, property and the natural environment (including surface and groundwater);and

c) There are appropriate measures in place for the disposal and / or treatment of any hazardous material and waste.

...For all development proposals where significant adverse impacts are identified, planning permission will only be granted where it is demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Council, that they can be effectively prevented or controlled through appropriate mitigating measures

No further policy amendments are required to EP 2.

5.4 Amending the Plan until there would be no Adverse Effects on Site Integrity (Step 7)

5.75 Having identified potential case specific policy restrictions and caveats in respect of aspects of the Plan which were identified as having a likely significant effect, it is now necessary to apply the integrity test, taking account of these mitigation measures.

5.76 Following incorporation of the mitigation measures identified above, the re-screening of the elements of the Plan which are affected by the mitigation measures is set out in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Applying the Integrity Test following Incorporation of Mitigation Measures

Policy Topic	Recommended Mitigation Measures	Integrity Test Conclusion
6.0 Housing Strategy	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these Growth Strategies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.
7.0 Economic Development Strategy	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, this Growth Strategy cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.
14.0 General Policies for All Development	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, this Policy cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.
15.0 Design and Place-making	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.
16.0 SOCIAL THEME		
16.1 Housing	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.
16.2 Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.
16.3 Community and Cultural	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, this policy cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.
17.0 ECONOMIC THEME		
17.1 Economic Development	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.
17.2 Retailing and Town Centres	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.
17.3 Tourism	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.
17.4 Minerals Development	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

Policy Topic	Recommended Mitigation Measures	Integrity Test Conclusion
17.5 Telecommunications, Utilities and Infrastructure	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.
17.6 Transportation	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.
18.0 ENVIRONMENTAL THEME		
18.1 Historic Environment	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.
18.2 Natural Heritage	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.
18.3 Flood Risk and Drainage	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.
18.4 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.
18.5 Waste Management	No further policy amendments are required.	In view of policy caveats and restrictions on development through Policy NH 1, these policies cannot undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.

5.5 Consideration of in combination effects

- 5.77 It was found that there are protective measures and overarching policies in the Plan Strategy that will ensure that development causing an adverse effect on site integrity cannot be approved. It will be important that HRAs for individual developments also consider in combination effects before planning permission is granted.
- 5.78 Policy NH 1 is explicit that Planning permission will only be granted ~~[by the Council]~~ for a development proposal that, either individually or in combination with existing and/or proposed plans or projects, is not likely to have a significant effect on a SPA or proposed SPA, a SAC or candidate SAC, a Site of Community Importance, or a listed or proposed Ramsar Site.
- 5.79 Policy NH 1 therefore ensures that any development approved under the Plan Strategy [once adopted] will have to demonstrate compliance with the ‘in combination’ provisions of the Habitats Regulations (NI). There is therefore no risk of a residual effect at the [draft] Plan Strategy HRA stage, which might act in combination with other plans and projects as identified in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Plan or Project Identified for consideration of in combination effects

Plan or Project	Possible significant effects from plan or project	Is there a risk of in combination effects	Possible significant effects in combination
REGIONAL LEVEL			
Regional Development Strategy 2035	Potential in combination effects may arise where there is a requirement to provide for new infrastructure or where new development occurs, such effects may include: • Disturbance to habitats/species; • Species mortality; • Alterations to water quality and/or water movement; • Release of contaminated material (soils, runoff); and • Introduction or spread of invasive species.	The RDS has been subject to Appropriate Assessment and mitigation measures recommended. It is not considered that there is potential for in combination effects to arise, however in the absence of mitigation or appropriate consideration of potential adverse effects upon European site, adverse in combination effects may occur and cannot be excluded.	No. The mitigation measures contained within individual plans prioritise the avoidance of effects where possible and provide measures to minimise effects. In combination effects from projects which arise from implementation of the RDS will not be significant, especially when viewed in light of the mitigation in the Plan Strategy against policy NH 1 which will require Appropriate Assessment.
Strategic Planning Policy Statement	Potential in combination effects may arise where there is a requirement to provide for new infrastructure or where new development occurs, such effects may include: • Disturbance to habitats/species; • Species mortality; • Alterations to water quality and/or water movement; • Release of contaminated material (soils, runoff); and • Introduction or spread of invasive species.	The SPSS has been subject to SEA. No significant adverse environmental effects were identified and mitigation was not required, therefore it is not considered that there is potential for in combination effects to arise.	No. No significant adverse effects were identified from the SPSS in the absence of mitigation measures. In combination effects from projects which arise from implementation of the SPSS will not be significant, especially when viewed in light of the mitigation in the Plan Strategy against Policy NH 1 which will require Appropriate Assessment.
COUNTY/COUNCIL LEVEL			
Mid Ulster District Council Local Development Plan 2030 - [Draft] Plan Strategy (February 2019) Until such times as the Local Policies Plan has been prepared, the existing (extant) Plans (Cookstown Area Plan 2010, Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan 2010, and Magherafelt Area Plan 2015) will remain in operation and in effect represent the Local Policies Plan until such times as it [the LPP] has been prepared.	Potential in combination effects may arise where there is a requirement to provide for new infrastructure or where new development occurs. Such effects may include: • Disturbance to habitats/species; • Species mortality; • Alterations to water quality and/or water movement; • Release of contaminated material (soils, runoff); and • Introduction or spread of invasive species.	This neighbouring Council 'draft' Plan has been subject to SA and a draft AA which will incorporate robust mitigation measures into the plan itself to avoid effects. In the absence of mitigation or appropriate consideration of potential adverse effects upon European sites, adverse in combination effects may occur and cannot be excluded.	No. The mitigation measures contained within the projects prioritise the avoidance of effects and provide measures to minimise effects. In combination effects from projects which arise from the implementation of these plans will not be significant, especially when viewed in light of the mitigation in the Plan Strategy against Policy NH 1 which will require Appropriate Assessment.
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Local Development Plan 2035 – [Draft] Plan Strategy 2035	Potential in combination effects may arise where there is a requirement to provide for new infrastructure or where new development occurs. Such effects may	This neighbouring Council 'draft' Plan has been subject to SA and a draft AA which will incorporate robust mitigation measures into the plan itself to avoid effects. In the	No. The mitigation measures contained within the projects prioritise the avoidance of effects and provide measures to minimise effects. In combination effects from

Plan or Project	Possible significant effects from plan or project	Is there a risk of in combination effects	Possible significant effects in combination
The two existing Area Plans, Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) adopted October 2013 and Ards and Down Area Plan (ADAP) adopted March 2009 remain in force as the statutory development plans for the district until such time as they are replaced by the Newry, Mourne and Down Local Development Plan 2035 in its entirety.	include: • Disturbance to habitats/species; • Species mortality; • Alterations to water quality and/or water movement; • Release of contaminated material (soils, runoff); and • Introduction or spread of invasive species.	absence of mitigation or appropriate consideration of potential adverse effects upon European sites, adverse in combination effects may occur and cannot be excluded.	projects which arise from the implementation of these plans will not be significant, especially when viewed in light of the mitigation in the Plan Strategy against Policy NH 1 which will require Appropriate Assessment.
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Local Development Plan 2032 —Plan Strategy	Potential in combination effects may arise where there is a requirement to provide for new infrastructure or where new development occurs. Such effects may include: • Disturbance to habitats/species; • Species mortality; • Alterations to water quality and/or water movement; • Release of contaminated material (soils, runoff); and • Introduction or spread of invasive species.	This neighbouring Council Plan has been subject to SA and AA which incorporates robust mitigation measures into the plan itself to avoid effects. In the absence of mitigation or appropriate consideration of potential adverse effects upon European Sites, adverse in combination effects may occur and cannot be excluded.	No. The mitigation measures contained within the projects prioritise the avoidance of effects and provide measures to minimise effects. In combination effects from projects which arise from the implementation of this plan will not be significant, especially when viewed in light of the mitigation in the Plan Strategy against policy NH 1, which will require Appropriate Assessment.
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Local Development Plan 2030 Plan Strategy	Potential in combination effects may arise where there is a requirement to provide for new infrastructure or where new development occurs. Such effects may include: • Disturbance to habitats/species; • Species mortality; • Alterations to water quality and/or water movement; • Release of contaminated material (soils, runoff); and • Introduction or spread of invasive species.	This neighbouring Council Plan has been subject to SA and AA which incorporates robust mitigation measures into the plan itself to avoid effects. In the absence of mitigation or appropriate consideration of potential adverse effects upon European Sites, adverse in combination effects may occur and cannot be excluded.	No. The mitigation measures contained within the projects prioritise the avoidance of effects and provide measures to minimise effects. In combination effects from projects which arise from the implementation of this plan will not be significant, especially when viewed in light of the mitigation in the Plan Strategy against policy NH 1, which will require Appropriate Assessment.
Monaghan County Development Plan 2025 – 2031	Potential in combination effects may arise where there is a requirement to provide for new infrastructure or where new development occurs. Such effects may include: • Disturbance to habitats/species; • Species mortality; • Alterations to water quality and/or water movement; • Release of contaminated material (soils, runoff); and	This neighbouring Council Plan has been subject to SA and AA which incorporates robust mitigation measures into the plan itself to avoid effects. In the absence of mitigation or appropriate consideration of potential adverse effects upon European Sites, adverse in combination effects may occur and cannot be excluded.	No. The mitigation measures contained within the projects prioritise the avoidance of effects and provide measures to minimise effects. In combination effects from projects which arise from the implementation of this plan will not be significant, especially when viewed in light of the mitigation in the Plan Strategy against policy NH 1, which will require Appropriate Assessment.

Plan or Project	Possible significant effects from plan or project	Is there a risk of in combination effects	Possible significant effects in combination
	•Introduction or spread of invasive species.		
LOCAL/PROJECT LEVEL			
LA08/2025/1493/F <i>Large commercial/industrial project</i>	Potential in combination effects may arise on European sites from development of this nature and scale. Such effects may include:	These projects have been identified by the Council as major projects due to their location, nature and/or scale. There is potential for such development to have a negative effect on connected European sites.	No. All projects will be subject to HRA and should a robust AA conclude no adverse effects and that the decision-maker is subject to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995, then there can be no in combination effects with the Plan Strategy, especially when viewed in light of the mitigation in the Plan Strategy against Policy NH 1 which will require Appropriate Assessment.
Q/2014/0341/F LA08/2026/0139/F <i>Large housing projects</i>	• Disturbance to habitats/species; • Species mortality; • Alterations to water quality and/or water movement; • Release of contaminated material (soils, runoff); and	These projects will require a HRA to be undertaken. In the absence of mitigation or appropriate consideration of potential adverse effects upon European sites, adverse in combination effects may occur and cannot be excluded.	
LA08/2025/0893/F <i>Large mixed use project</i>	•Introduction or spread of invasive species.		
LA08/2020/1277/O LA08/2026/0063/F <i>Large recreation project</i>			
LA08/2017/1736/F <i>Large education project</i>			

5.80 Following the reasoning set out in Principle 6 of Section C.8.1 of the HRA Handbook, Policy NH 1 provides a basis for ruling out effects that may act in combination with other plans and projects- including those identified in Table 5.2.

6 Conclusions

6.1 Preparing the HRA Record (Step 8)

6.1.1 Outcome of [draft] HRA

- 6.1 The draft Plan Strategy has been subject to screening under the Habitats Regulations. All Strategic Policies, Strategies and Operational Policies have been considered in respect of the potential for likely significant effects upon any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.
- 6.2 Following the draft Plan Strategy screening exercise, 90 policies were identified as having a likely significant effect in the absence of mitigation. Mitigation measures, in the form of case-specific policy caveats, were incorporated in respect of these policies and reviewed as part of an appropriate assessment. The rationale for these is set out in Section 5 of this report and is summarised in Table 5.1.
- 6.3 As individual projects come forward under the draft Plan Strategy, they will be subject to the rigorous assessment requirements to establish whether they, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, are likely to have significant effects on any European site. Such projects can only be permitted where the Council Planning Authority is certain as to the absence of adverse effects on any European site.
- 6.4 The Local Policies Plan is the second stage of the LDP. The LPP will identify settlement limits, zonings and detailed boundaries of environmental designations and, where appropriate, will introduce local policies or key site requirements for these zonings and designations. Another HRA will be prepared to assess the potential impacts of the LPP on European sites. The information about European sites in Appendix 3, which will be updated if required, will be important as a starting point for the HRA of the LPP. Following Independent Examination of the LPP, that HRA will be finalised and adopted by the Council and published alongside the adopted LPP.
- 6.5 In conclusion, the draft Plan Strategy, taking account of mitigation measures, will not undermine the conservation objectives of any European site. Rather, the policy caveats amplify the requirements for a robust HRA coming forward at project level to be assessed on site specific, case-by-case basis. In light of the mitigation, there is not likely to be an adverse effect on the site integrity of any European site arising from any aspect of the LDP [draft] Plan Strategy.
- 6.6 Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, as the Competent Authority, can conclude that the LDP draft Plan Strategy will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended), either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

Appendix 1. Glossary

Adverse Effect on Site Integrity	An effect on the qualifying features of a European site which would undermine the achievement of the conservation objectives for that site and which would have a negative effect on the coherence of its ecological structure and function, across its whole area, that enables it to sustain the habitats, complex of habitats and / or the levels of populations of the species for which the site is, or will be, designated.
Competent Authority	For the purposes of the Habitats Regulations (NI) the expression 'competent authority' includes government departments, district councils and statutory undertakers, and any trustees, commissioners, board or other persons who, as a public body and not for their own profit, act under any statutory provision for the improvement of any place or the production or supply of any commodity or service.
Cumulative Impact	A number of developments in a locality, or a continuous activity over time that together may have an increased impact on the environment.
De Minimis	Having no appreciable effect.
European sites	Collective term used within this report to include an existing or proposed Special Protection Area (SPA), an existing or candidate Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a Site of Community Importance (SCI), or a listed or proposed Ramsar site (the latter is a wider international designation).
Global Status	The global status is an expert judgement of the overall value of the European site for the conservation of the relevant Annex I habitat. Sites have been graded A, B or C.
Habitats Regulations (NI)	The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) and The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) (Amendment) (Northern Ireland (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.
In combination effect	Refers to effects that may be likely significant effects when considered in combination with effects from other plans or projects.
Likely significant effect	An effect that cannot be ruled out on the basis of objective information. Likely in this context means there is a risk or possibility that an effect will be significant. An effect is significant if it would undermine a European site's conservation objectives.
Mitigation measures	Measures to avoid, cancel or reduce the effects of a plan or project on a European site.
National Site Network (NSN)	Sites designated to protect special habitats or species of European importance, as listed in The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended), to ensure 'the conservation of a wide range of rare, threatened or endemic animal and plant species.'
Natura 2000 (N2K)	The European network of Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas under the Wild Birds Directive, provided for by Article 3(1) of the Habitats Directive.
Ramsar site	A site listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance adopted at Ramsar, Iran in 1971. As a matter of policy, these sites are treated in the same way as European sites.

Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are sites that have been adopted by the European Commission and formally designated by the government of each country in whose territory the site lies.

Special Protection Area (SPA) Area classified under Article 4 of the EU Birds Directive 1979 and 2009.

The Directives Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (codified version). These Directives are referred to as the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive respectively and together are called 'The Directives' for the purposes of this report.

Appendix 1. References and Evidence Sources

A 1.1. References

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National Parks and Wildlife Service [Online] Maps and Data > Protected site data > Download Boundary Data (Update date 03/03/2026) (Available at <https://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data/designated-site-data/download-boundary-data> [accessed 08/05/2026]).

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A 1.2. Evidence sources

The following sources for identifying European sites were consulted and the most recent GIS boundaries used to inform the site selection process. The high-level search areas are shown in Figure 2.1: Overview of European sites considered (Scanning and Selecting) on page 7.

Northern Ireland

- **Ramsar sites:** DAERA [Online]⁹ (accessed 08/05/2026)
- **SPA:** DAERA [Online]⁹ (accessed 08/05/2026)
- **SAC:** DAERA [Online]⁹ (accessed 08/05/2026)
- **pSPA:** direct provision by the NIEA via a data sharing agreement 11/01/2016
- **proposed Ramsar sites:**
 - Derryleckagh: DAERA [Online] Consultation map (found at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/derryleckagh-ramsar>, accessed 08/05/2026)
 - Dundrum Bay: not published. Underpinning SPA/SAC boundary used.

Republic of Ireland

- **SPA:** National Parks and Wildlife Service [Online]¹⁰ (accessed 08/05/2026)
- **SAC:** National Parks and Wildlife Service [Online]¹⁰ (accessed 08/05/2026)

GB (terrestrial/inshore)

- **SPA:** Joint Nature Conservation Committee [Online]¹¹ (accessed 08/05/2026)
- **SAC:** Joint Nature Conservation Committee [Online]¹¹ (accessed 08/05/2026)

GB (marine)

- **SPA:** Joint Nature Conservation Committee [Online] Marine Protected Area Web Map Service¹² (accessed 04/12/2025)
- **SAC:** as above.

⁹ See 'References' section for full source.

¹⁰ See 'References' section for full source.

¹¹ See 'References' section for full source.

¹² See 'References' section for full source.

Appendix 2. The Approach to Habitats Regulations Assessment for Plans

A 2.1. Introduction

This Appendix sets out the approach to carrying out Habitats Regulations Assessments for Local Development Plans (LDPs) in Northern Ireland in the context of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended). It is informed by the Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook (HRA Handbook) which, up until January 2026, was regularly updated to reflect case law.

The HRA Handbook is aimed at statutory bodies, local authorities, and other ‘competent authorities’. It is a definitive source of detailed guidance that is regularly updated for good practice and monitored by a barrister specialising in environmental law and the Habitats Regulations in particular. In places reference is made to relevant sections of the HRA Handbook where more detail can be found and, at times, extracts of the HRA Handbook are quoted.

The context for HRA is set out firstly. This is followed by an overview of how HRA applies to plans and the consideration of mitigation. Finally, the stages and steps for the HRA process, as applied to Local Development Plans in Northern Ireland, are detailed. HRA is an iterative process carried out in parallel with plan preparation. The HRA will be modified in light of consultation and representations on and any amendments to the draft Plan Strategy. The record of the HRA will be completed and published with the adopted plan (Plan Strategy or Local Policies Plan).

A 2.2. The Habitats Regulations

The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended), commonly referred to as the Habitats Regulations, implemented the requirements of the Directive 92/43/EEC ‘on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora’ and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 ‘on the conservation of wild birds’ (codified version) in Northern Ireland. These Directives are referred to as the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive respectively and, together, are called the Directives for the purposes of this report.

The overall aim of the Directives is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are designated to afford protection to habitats and species listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives. These designations form a suite of sites that, in Europe, form a network of ecologically important sites called ‘Natura 2000 Sites’. Since the UK’s exit from the European Union SACs and SPAs in Northern Ireland no longer form part of the Natura 2000 network. They are still referred to as European sites however they are now collectively referred to as the National Site Network (NNS) (Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), 2020).

The most recent amendment to the Habitats Regulations is the enactment of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 following the UKs departure from the European Union. These Regulations simply amended the existing Habitats Regulations to make them operable a UK context at the end of the transition period in. The requirement to undertake Habitat Regulations Assessments (HRAs) for assessing the impact of plans on European Sites remains the same.

For the purposes of the Habitats Regulations, the expression ‘competent authority’ is construed in accordance with Regulation 5. Competent authorities include government departments, district councils and statutory undertakers, and any trustees, commissioners, board or other persons who, as a public body and not for their own profit, act under any statutory provision for the improvement of any place or the production or supply of any commodity or service. As planning authorities, Councils

are competent authorities. Regulation 43 (1) of the Habitats Regulations requires competent authorities to make an appropriate assessment of plans and projects which are likely to have a significant effect on an international site in Northern Ireland, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. For the purpose of this report, 'European sites' collectively may include existing or proposed Special Protection Areas (SPAs), existing or candidate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Sites of Community Importance (SCI), and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

A 2.3. Guidance and Caselaw

A 2.3.1. Applying HRA to Local Development Plans

The Planning Act requires the LDP to be produced in two parts – the first being the Plan Strategy, followed upon adoption, by the Local Policies Plan.

The approach to HRA for a Plan differs to that for a project. In the case of projects, the precise location of development is known and more detailed information is generally available, or can be obtained about construction, operation and other stages of the development thus enabling full assessment.

By comparison, the LDP is a strategic level Plan setting out a framework for development but generally lacking detail of where and when developers will bring forward development. This will not be known until after the Plan has been published. Therefore, the approach to HRA for LDPs differs to that for projects. The Plan does however steer how and where projects may be brought forward.

The assessment of strategic plans can present a challenge in terms of deciding what effects may come about as a result of the Plan and which cannot occur due to other strategic and regulatory requirements with which the LDP and development management decisions must comply. The view could be taken that, given that a policy is included to meet the requirements of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS), and that all planning applications must comply with the Habitats Regulations, then the Plan Strategy cannot result in an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site. However, this argument has been rejected by the Courts who have ruled¹³ that the requirement for planning permission to be determined in light of the relevant land use Plan, necessarily means that those plans have considerable influence on development decisions and that, as such, land use plans must be subject to HRA in their own right. As a result, to terminate the HRA on this basis would not only be contrary to case law but it would also miss the opportunity to draw attention to the extent of European sites in, or connected to, the Council area and to inform land use planning in such a way as to minimise the regulatory burden of compliance with the Regulations at the later project HRA stage.

There are a number of pieces of case law that clarify how the Directives should be interpreted as applying to plans. The key points are summarised here; these were detailed in the HRA Handbook and the relevant section of the Handbook is referenced accordingly (e.g. F.x.x or C.x, etc.).

C-6/04 European Commission v United Kingdom¹⁴ (Handbook F.10.1.5).

- A. Land use plans can potentially have significant effects on European sites, despite the subsequent need for planning permission at 'project' level stage.
- B. Assessment of land use plans must therefore be secured under the provisions of the Habitats Directive.
- C. The assessment of plans has to be tailored to the stage of Plan making.
- D. The assessment should be 'to the extent possible based on the basis of the precision of the Plan'.

¹³ Case C-6/04: Commission of the European Communities v United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland judgment of the Court 20 October 2005 (Refer para 55)

¹⁴ Case C-6/04: Commission of the European Communities v United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland judgment of the Court 20 October 2005.

Feeney¹⁵ (UK High Court) reinforced this (Handbook F.10.1, C.9.4.2):

“Each appropriate assessment must be commensurate to the relative precision of the plans at any particular stage and no more. There does have to be an appropriate assessment at the Core Strategy stage, but such an assessment cannot do more than the level of detail of the strategy at that stage permits.”

Boggis¹⁶ Court of Appeal & EC v UK (Handbook C.7.5.2).

- The implications for HRA of plans are that the HRA should be proportionate to the level of detail. There should be *“credible evidence that there was a real, rather than a hypothetical, risk”*
- The Plan has weight as planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development Plan (unless material considerations indicate otherwise).
- HRA should concentrate on aspects of the Plan that could, realistically, be likely to have a significant effect.
- A likely significant effect should not be assumed for:
 - policies and proposals that are no more than general policy statements or which express a general aspiration or intent;
 - policies which generate no more than theoretical risks, or vague or hypothetical effects; or
 - policies or proposals for which meaningful assessment can be made at this stage, where no particular significant effect on any particular European site can actually be identified.
- Reliance should not simply be placed on a general European site protection policy as this does not address potential tensions or conflicts in the Plan between site protection and policies or proposals which could significantly affect European sites.
- Tensions in the Plan must be resolved in favour of protecting the European sites from harm.
- Policies or proposals with a high potential for significant adverse effects on European sites should be removed or subject to mitigation measures.

A 2.3.2. Assessing and applying mitigation measures

CJEU Case C323/17 (People over Wind & Sweetman)¹⁷ (Handbook C.5, F7.1)

On 12 April 2018, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) issued a judgment, *Case C323/17 (People over Wind & Sweetman)*, which ruled that Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive must be interpreted as meaning that mitigation measures, referred to in the judgment as measures which are intended to avoid or reduce effects, should be assessed within the framework of an appropriate assessment. It is therefore no longer permissible to take account of measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of a Plan or project on a European site at the Stage 1 test of likely significance.

In light of this, Stage 1 Assessment does consider essential features and characteristics of the Plan; it also takes account of regional and strategic context and other regulatory controls that will apply to development under the Plan. However, measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been adverse effects on the integrity of European sites are not taken into account in Stage 1 and instead are assessed at Stage 2 appropriate assessment.

¹⁵ Sean Feeney v Oxford City Council and the Secretary of State CLG para 92 of the judgment dated 24 October 2011 Case No CO/3797/2011, Neutral Citation [2011] EWHC 2699 Admin

¹⁶ Peter Charles Boggis and Easton Bavants Conservation v Natural England and Waveney District Council, High Court of Justice Court of Appeal case C1/2009/0041/QBACF Citation No [2009] EWCA Civ. 1061 20th October 2009

¹⁷ Case C-323/17 Request for a preliminary ruling, People Over Wind and Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta, 12th April 2018

The consideration of mitigation differs between projects and plans, although for both cases it is not appropriate to take account of mitigation measures which might be incorporated into the Plan at the screening stage. The first step in appropriate assessment is therefore to seek to incorporate mitigation measures which might be relied upon to avoid any adverse effects to the integrity of the European site.

Feeney v Oxford City Council¹⁸ (Handbook F10.1).

Case law has established that it is acceptable in principle to include policies within a Local Plan which are conditional upon certain conditions being met.

Abbotskerswell v Teignbridge (2014)¹⁹ (Handbook F10.1).

In this case the High Court specifically endorsed an approach which potentially relies upon matters being finalised after the adoption of the Plan. The competent authority must however be satisfied that the measures can be delivered in practice.

This is captured in the HRA Handbook F.10.1 (emphasis added):

'Because the integrity test incorporates the application of the precautionary principle as a matter of law, and because Plan assessments are, by their nature, less precise than project assessments, it is important for the assessment process to eliminate the prospect of adverse effects on site integrity in so far as that is possible at the level of specificity inherent in the nature and purpose of the particular Plan.'

F.10.1.2 of the Handbook refers to mitigation measures which might be relied upon to show that there would be no adverse effects on site integrity. Examples are provided as follows:

'mitigation measures that may be introduced during or after the 'appropriate assessment' stage may be:

- a) Case-specific policy restrictions;*
- b) Case-specific policy caveats;*
- c) Prescribing how adverse effects on site integrity will be avoided by mitigation measures in a lower level or more detailed Plan, to be confirmed by a more detailed Habitats Regulations Assessment at that level;*
- d) Deleting aspects of the Plan that will probably fail the tests of the Directive at project application stage;*
- e) Ensuring that there are no proposals that could adversely affect the integrity of a European site that if retained in the Plan may lead to a case for the proposal to be permitted, using the incorporation in the Plan as the imperative reason of overriding public interest in its favour, because the Plan relies on it being, or assumes that it will be, implemented;*

To be an appropriate restriction or caveat (in (a) or (b) above), enabling the Plan-making body to ascertain no adverse effect on the integrity of a European site, the restriction must be:

- *case-specific;*
- *explicit; and*

¹⁸ Sean Feeney v Oxford City Council and the Secretary of State CLG para 92 of the judgment dated 24 October 2011 Case No CO/3797/2011, Neutral Citation [2011] EWHC 2699 Admin

¹⁹ Abbotskerswell Parish Council v Teignbridge District Council [2014] EWHC 4166 (Admin)

- *added to the policy and not merely added to the explanatory text or commentary, or not merely inserted into the implementation or monitoring chapters.'*

A 2.3.3. Co-ordination with other Habitats Regulations Assessments

The Habitats Regulations provide for co-ordination between competent authorities at Regulation 47. While Regulation 47 does not strictly apply to HRA for Local Development Plans, it does establish the principle that a competent authority can place weight on a HRA carried out by another competent authority. This is subject to the proviso that the competent authority should be satisfied that the earlier HRA was robust and has not become outdated by further information or developments. No guidance has been issued by DAERA as allowed for under 47(3), however in 2012 the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs published guidance²⁰ to meet the equivalent regulation in England. This guidance was subsequently updated and incorporated into joint guidance²¹ published in 2021 which is shorter and less specific:

You can use an HRA previously carried out by another competent authority for the same proposal if:

- *there's no new information or evidence that may lead to a different conclusion*
- *the assessments already done are relevant, thorough and correct*
- *the conclusions are rigorous and robust*
- *there's no new case law that changes the way an HRA should be carried out or interpreted*

If you decide to use a previous HRA's evidence and conclusions, you should still make sure your final decision will have no negative effect on the European site. The final decision is your responsibility.

You should not assess any part of a proposal that another competent authority has a role to assess. The relevant competent authority will do their own assessment (emphasis added).

When you make your decision on whether a proposal can go ahead or not, you should record that you've used all or part of an HRA carried out by another authority.

The withdrawn 2012 DEFRA guidance stated: *"Due to these conditions there may be cases where it is not appropriate to adopt the reasoning, conclusions or assessment of another competent authority, or it is only appropriate to adopt some elements of an earlier assessment. In addition, even where the conditions are met, a competent authority may need to undertake additional work to supplement the assessment they have adopted in order to meet the full appropriate assessment requirements."*

The Handbook C12.3 consequently recommends: *"However, a competent authority must not adopt the reasoning or conclusions of another casually or blindly. Caution must be used and the four conditions in principle 3 in C.12.1 above must be met because competent authorities remain responsible for ensuring their decisions are consistent with the Regulations"*.

The application and implications of the DEFRA guidance have been considered in detail within Part C.12 of the HRA Handbook. Therefore, it is accepted as good practice that consideration may be given to HRAs carried out by other competent authorities where they are applicable to development to be brought forward under the LDP.

²⁰ DEFRA (2012) Guidance on competent authority coordination under the habitats Regulations

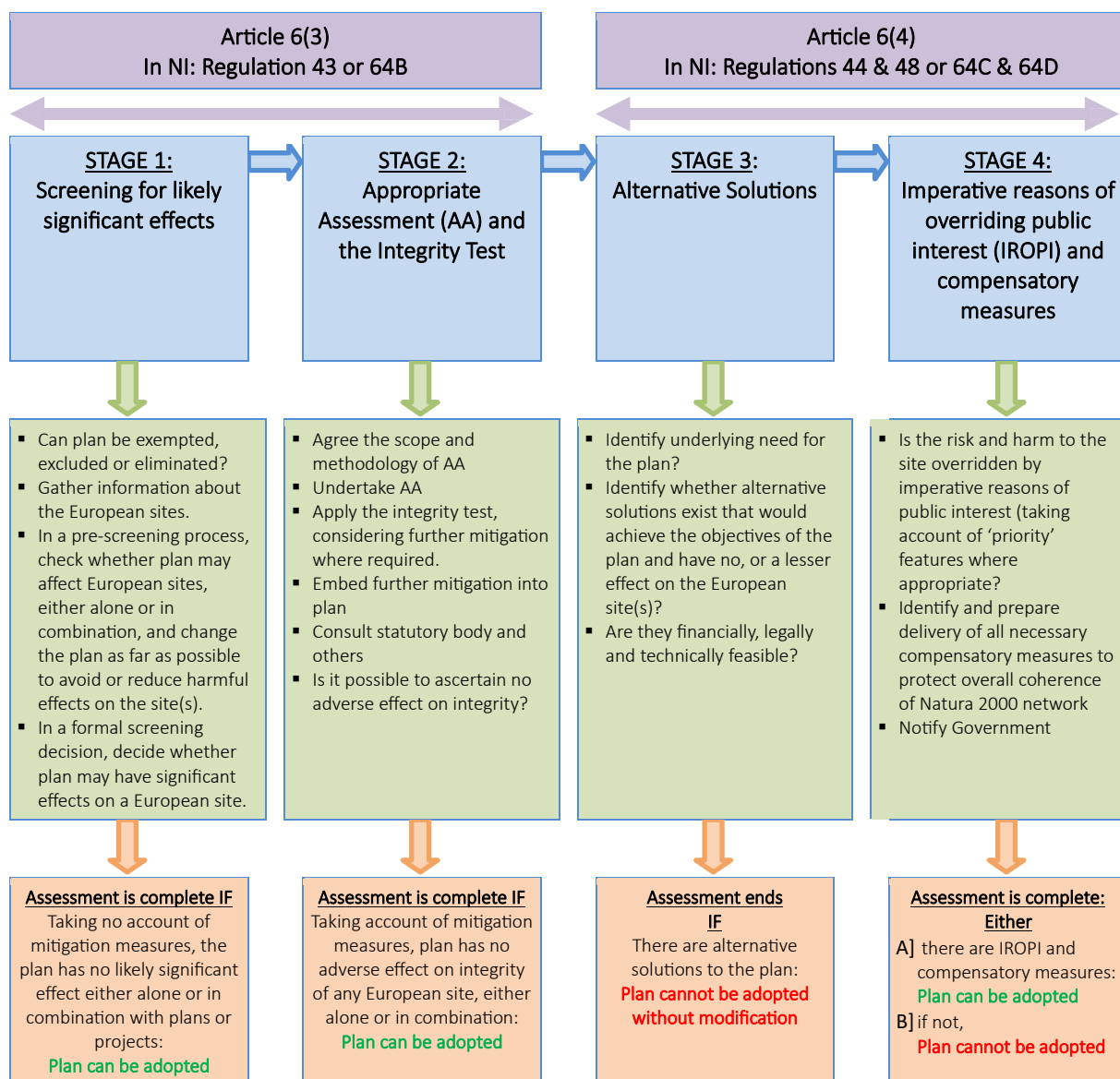
²¹ DEFRA et al [Online] Habitats regulations assessments: protecting a European site: How a competent authority must decide if a plan or project proposal that affects a European site can go ahead (last updated 6 December 2023).

A 2.4. HRA Stages and Steps

A 2.4.1. Overview

The HRA of the [draft] Plan Strategy follows the four-stage approach to assessment set out under the Habitats Regulations (NI), which is summarised in Figure A 2.1.

Figure A 2.1: Outline of the four-stage approach of the Habitats Regulations (NI)



Extract (adapted for NI) from The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, www.dtapublications.co.uk
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The approach to HRA for LDPs in Northern Ireland follows 11 steps which correspond with Stages 1 and 2 in Figure A 2.1. These steps are not named as such in the HRA Handbook; however, Figure A 2.2 shows the steps in context with the corresponding references in the HRA Handbook.

Stage 1 involves firstly deciding whether a plan or project should be subject to HRA (Step 1).

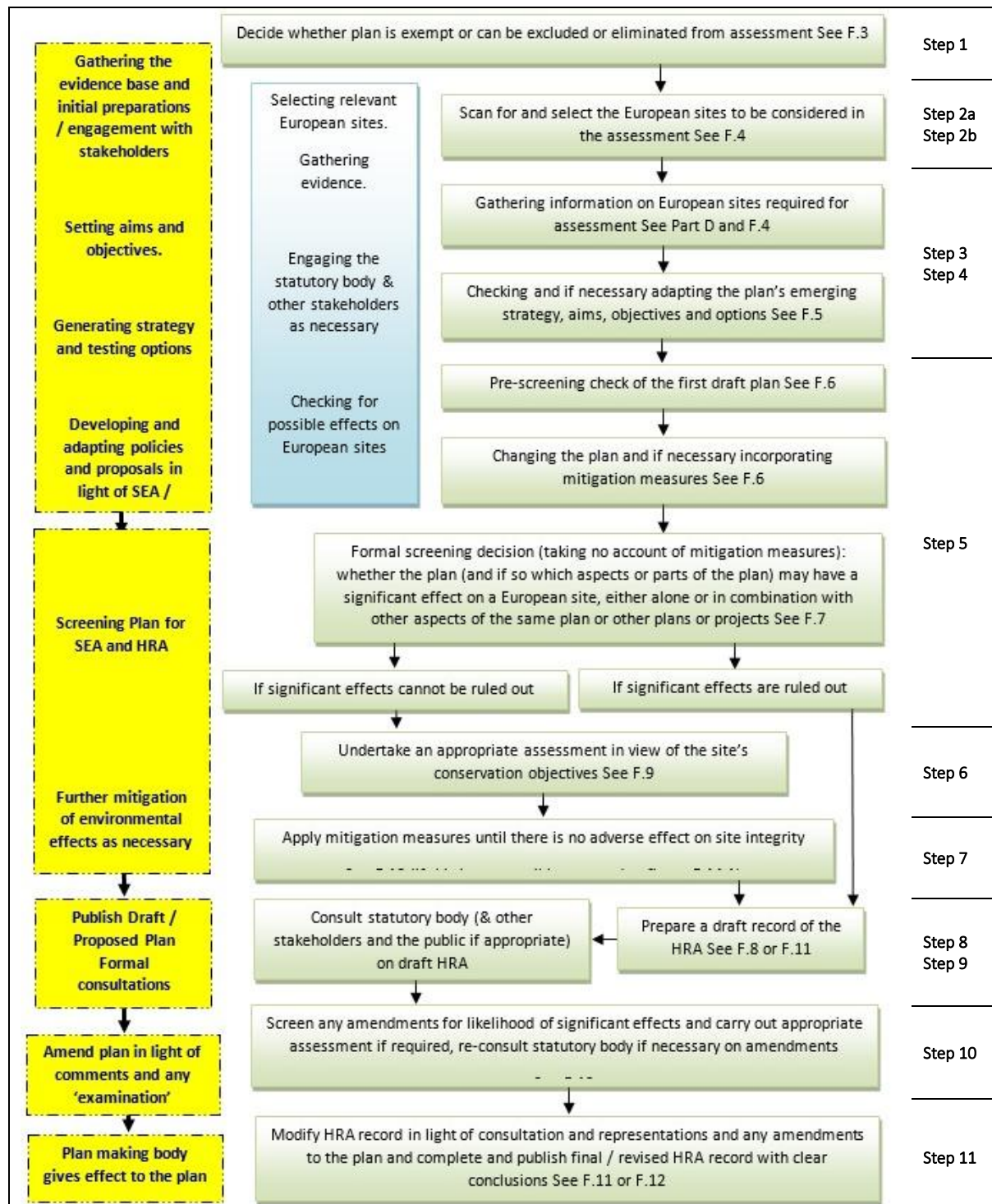
Steps 2, identifying European sites, and 3, gathering information about those sites, help to identify the European sites which the plan may affect and compiles information about those sites.

Step 4 allows for discretionary discussion with the Statutory Nature Conservation Body and other stakeholders. The final step of Stage 1 is the preliminary screening of the plan to determine which

elements of it are likely to have a significant effect on a European site and identify the sites that may be affected.

Stage 2 is referred to as ‘appropriate assessment’. It assesses the implications of the plan or project for European sites in view of the sites’ conservation objectives. A plan can only proceed if it can be ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of a European site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans.

Figure A 2.2: Steps in the HRA Process (Plans) (from the HRA Handbook)



Adapted from: Tyldesley, D., and Chapman, C., (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, December 2024 [final] edition UK: DTA Publications Limited www.dtapublications.co.uk. Figure F 1.3

If Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment finds that there would be an adverse effect on site integrity, then alternative solutions which are financially, legally and technically feasible need to be considered further in Stage 3. Alternative solutions are already considered in preparation of many plans, for example through the Preferred Options Paper for Local Development Plans and in carrying out Strategic Environmental Assessment which requires consideration of reasonable alternatives. Compliance with regional policies and strategies also means that environmental effects will have been taken into account. It is therefore rare for HRAs for LDPs to progress beyond Stage 2.

Stage 4 applies in the event that there is an imperative reason of public interest which overrides the risk and harm to sites, and priority features where appropriate. It provides for compensatory measures to protect the overall coherence of the National Site Network / Natura 2000 network to be identified, delivery detailed and the government notified. As already noted it is rare for HRAs for LDPs to progress beyond Stage 2. Stage 3 and 4 are not therefore detailed further in this approach.

A 2.4.2. Stage 1: Screening Plan for Likely Significant Effects

Step 1: Deciding whether a plan should be subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment

This step involves considering the nature of the plan and its individual proposals to determine whether there is a requirement to carry out a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and is further detailed in HRA Handbook F.2. and F.3.

The following questions help determine whether the document being reviewed is a plan in the context of the Directives.

- Is the whole of the plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site for nature conservation purposes?
- Is the plan a strategic development plan, local development plan, supplementary guidance?
- Is the plan a general statement of policy showing only the general political will or intention of the plan making body, and no effect on any particular European site can reasonably be predicted?
- Does the plan contain a programme, or policies, or proposals which could affect one or more particular European sites?

Step 1 is recorded in 1.6.1 of this report. If it is found that a plan is not subject to HRA, then the outcome is recorded and it is not necessary to progress beyond this step.

In practice, an LDP is a Plan in the context of the Directives and subject to HRA.

Step 2: Scanning and selecting European sites potentially affected

This step follows the scan-collate-consider-select procedure set out in the HRA Handbook Figure F.4.3 and is carried out in parallel with Step 3. Step 2a is the scanning stage; Step 3 collates information; Step 2b involves considering the information and selecting the relevant sites that may be affected.

European sites that are within the plan area, within a zone of influence beyond the plan area or connected to the plan area through ecology or infrastructure are identified. This is detailed in the HRA Handbook F.4 and presented in Chapter 2, Table 2.2 of this report. This is carried out using the Scanning and Site Selection List in Figure F.4.4. of the HRA Handbook.

Step 2b: 'Short-list' of sites that should be considered in the HRA

Taking account of the information gathered in Step 3 and the 'long-list' of sites identified at Step 2a, a further scan is carried out to determine the effects that could potentially affect European sites as a result of the plan. The information collected about the 'long-list' of sites in Step 3 is summarised in Appendix 3.

As it takes account of the site selection features, pathways to sites and conservation objectives, this step may find that some of the sites on the 'long list' can be eliminated from further assessment, as

there can be no conceivable effect on the site, or the site's conservation objectives could not be undermined. This step may also potentially identify some sites that were overlooked at Step 2a.

The sites that have been eliminated as a result of this step are identified in Table A.3.2 along with the reasoning.

Step 3: Gathering information about the European sites

This step is carried out in parallel with and informs Step 2. Information for each site on the 'long list' identified at Step 2a is compiled to include selection features, conservation objectives, conservation status and potential threats to site integrity from planning related development, in context with the site's location relative to the plan area and any plan designations. This is detailed in the HRA Handbook F.4 and presented in Appendix 3.

Step 4: Discretionary discussions on the method and scope of the appraisal

The Statutory Nature Conservation Body, represented by the Department of Agriculture, the Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), may be consulted informally to ensure that the information at Step 3 is up to date and reflects known issues for the European sites. This provides the opportunity to invite comment on the scope of the HRA and potential in combination considerations.

Step 5: Screening the plan for likely significant effects

This step is detailed in the HRA Handbook F.6.1-F6.4 and F.7 and advises how the outcome should be recorded. The screening of the whole plan is presented in Appendix 5 and the outcome summarised in Section 4 of the HRA. The HRA Handbook also presents principles, with reference to case law and government guidance, which inform screening and the interpretation of terms used. Some relevant extracts are:

'As a result of European case law in Waddenzee, irrespective of the normal English meaning of 'likely', in this statutory context a 'likely significant effect' is a possible significant effect; one whose occurrence cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information. In this context it is permissible to ask whether a plan or project 'may have a significant effect...' (Principle 3)'

'A significant effect is any effect that would undermine the conservation objectives for a European site...' (Principle 4)'

'An effect which would not be significant can properly be described as : as 'insignificant effect'; or a 'de Minimis effect'; or a 'trivial effect'; or as having 'no appreciable effect'; but it is important to bear in mind that, in this context, all the terms are synonymous and are being used to describe effects which would not undermine the conservation objectives...' (Principle 8)'

'Objective', in this context, means clear verifiable fact rather than subjective opinion. It will not normally be sufficient for an applicant merely to assert that the plan or project will not have an adverse effect on a site, nor will it be appropriate for a competent authority to rely on reassurances based on supposition or speculation. On the other hand, there should be credible evidence to show that there is a real rather than a hypothetical risk of effects that could undermine the site's conservation objectives. Any serious possibility of a risk that the conservation objectives might be undermined should trigger an 'appropriate assessment'. (Principle 11).'

Plan Strategies are set in the context of a vision and objectives which indicate the outcomes intended to be achieved through the plan. How these should be considered is set out in Sections F.6.2.2 and F.6.2.3 of the HRA Handbook as follows:

'...it is possible that the goals and objectives are the drivers for the possibility of a significant effect on a European site, but in most cases, it will be subsequent, more detailed policies or proposals that would have such implications, rather than the general

goals or objectives. In most cases the general goals and objectives will be screened out, either because they will have no effect at all, or because they are general statements which are too vague to have a significant effect on a particular site. Even if they are the driver of the potential effect, it is likely that the plan will contain a more specific policy or proposal that would be the better target for assessment.'

The 'screening categories' in Part F of the HRA Handbook are used to provide a consistent and transparent approach to the screening process. The following categories are used to assess whether an overall plan and its individual proposals require HRA. They are explained in detail in the section of the HRA Handbook referenced.

- A. General statement of policy / general aspiration (screened out). (Handbook F.6.3.1)
- B. Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability / sustainability of proposals (screened out). (Handbook F.6.3.2)
- C. Proposal referred to but not proposed by the plan (screened out). (Handbook F.6.3.3)
- D. General plan-wide environmental protection / site safeguarding / threshold policies (screened out). (Handbook F.6.3.4)
- E. Policies or proposals which steer change in such a way as to protect European sites from adverse effects (screened out). (Handbook F.6.3.5)
- F. Policy that cannot lead to development or other change (screened out). (Handbook F.6.3.6)
- G. Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site (screened out). (Handbook F.6.3.7)
- H. Policy or proposal the (actual or theoretical) effects of which cannot undermine the conservation objectives (either alone or in combination with other aspects of this or other plans or projects) (screened out). (Handbook F.6.3.8)
- I. Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone (screened in) (Handbook F.6.3.9)
- J. Policy or proposal with an effect on a site but unlikely to be significant alone, so need to check for likely significant effects in combination (Handbook F.6.3.10)
- K. Policy or proposal unlikely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination (screened out after the in combination test). (Handbook F.6.3.11)
- L. Policy or proposal which might be likely to have a significant effect in combination (screened in after the in combination test). (Handbook F.6.3.11)
- M. Bespoke area, site or case-specific policies or proposals intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on a European site (screened in) (Handbook F.6.3.12)

In some cases, more than one category may apply. Where it is the case that part of a policy is in one category e.g. B. 'policy listing general criteria', whereas another part is in another category e.g. H. 'cannot undermine the conservation objectives' then both categories are listed e.g. B/H. Where part of a policy is screened in, then this part will be further assessed.

Consideration must be given to any cumulative effects of proposals during plan preparation, as detailed in HRA Handbook F.6.3.11. These include potential cumulative effects within the plan and in combination effects with other relevant plans and projects. For those proposals falling under categories A to H, there is no likely significant effect alone and thus there cannot be any effect in combination. Those under category I are deemed to have a likely significant effect alone and will be progressed to appropriate assessment. Therefore, in combination assessment is not required at Stage

1. Those policies or proposals falling under category J need further assessed to determine whether they fall into K or L when considered in combination.

If there are likely significant effects, either alone or in combination, then the sites and features which may be affected and potential impacts are summarised in preparation for Stage 2.

A 2.4.3. Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment and the Integrity Test

Step 6: The Appropriate Assessment

The summary from Step 5 is the starting point for the appropriate assessment. Step 6 assesses whether any likely significant effect could lead to an adverse effect on site integrity for each site. This is set out in the HRA Handbook F.6.5 and F.9.

Where it is found that there could be an adverse effect for any site, then measures are identified to remove any potential for adverse effects, as described above. Measures considered at appropriate assessment must be subject to ‘a full and precise analysis of the measures capable of avoiding or reducing any significant effects’. These measures may include case-specific policy restrictions or caveats, adding mitigation in a further plan that will deliver the current plan, removing proposals that could have an adverse effect on site integrity, specific mitigation plans or a large-scale mitigation strategy which includes measures to mitigate adverse effects of the current plan.

In considering in combination assessment at appropriate assessment, Principle 4 in section C.8.1 of the HRA Handbook ‘the in combination assessment’ reads as follows:

‘In deciding the required scope of an appropriate assessment one must always keep firmly in mind that the underlying purpose of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive is to ensure (subject to the operation of Article 6(4)) that a plan or project is authorised only to the extent that it will not, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, adversely affect the integrity of the European site; the key purpose.

European Commission guidance and case law establishes that the underlying intention of the in combination provision is to take account of cumulative effects. An appropriate assessment need not be extended further than is necessary to fulfil the key purpose.’

Principle 6 in section C.8.1 of the HRA Handbook states that, following an appropriate assessment:

‘...if on assessment alone it is ascertained that the subject plan or project will in fact have no effect at all on the European site, an adverse effect in combination is ruled out and no further assessment is required. The plan or project may be authorised.’

Step 7: Amending the plan until there would be no adverse effects on site integrity

Any mitigation identified in Step 6 is incorporated in the plan. This is further detailed in the HRA Handbook F.11 and presented in Chapter 5 of this report. In the case of a draft HRA, if the mitigation is not already included in the DPS, it will be incorporated before the Plan Strategy is finalised and adopted.

Step 8: Preparing the HRA Record

This report records the HRA and supporting evidence and comprises this report with clear conclusions as set out in Chapter 6 of this report.

Step 9: Consultation

If the HRA is concluded at Stage 1 the HRA Report with a Statement of Finding of No Likely Significant Effects is published. Consultation is not required on this Stage 1 Test of Likely Significance in these circumstances however it is recommended that the record is published as a supporting document for the plan. If the draft plan is subject to consultation a draft Stage 1 HRA Report may be included in the consultation with a note that it will be updated to take account of any changes in the proposals or European sites before the plan is finalised.

If the HRA progresses to Stage 2 then DAERA must be consulted on a draft Stage 2 HRA Report (also known as an appropriate assessment). Other stakeholders such as managers of European sites should be consulted where appropriate. Public consultation is not required on the draft Stage 2 HRA Report however it may be included as a supporting document for any public consultation on the draft plan and comment on it invited. It should be stated that the HRA will be updated to take account of any changes in the proposals or European sites before the plan is finalised.

Step 10: Proposed modifications

Modifications to a plan may come about as a result of consultation, Independent Examination or the outcome of the HRA. The approach to their consideration is set out in F.12 of the HRA Handbook. Representations by DAERA and other consultees are recorded with a note on if, and how, they have been addressed in the HRA. Further mitigation identified through Step 9, or as a result of a revised HRA in light of modifications to the plan, is incorporated in the plan. Steps 6- 8 are updated to reflect any additional mitigation and adverse effects reviewed.

Step 11: Modifying and completing the appraisal record

If it is found that there are no adverse effects on site integrity then the HRA may be concluded and a Stage 2 HRA Appropriate Assessment Report published to include a Record of No Adverse Effect on the Integrity of any European site under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended).

Appendix 3. Site Information

This Appendix provides an overview of the European sites identified for consideration. It outlines the selection features, conservation objectives, conservation status and potential threats to site integrity from planning related development and its location relative to the Plan area and any Plan designations. This has informed this HRA and will also provide baseline information for a further HRA to be carried out for the LPP.

The Conservation Objectives to be considered at appropriate assessment for the short-list of sites is provided as separate Annex A.

A 3.1. Introduction to Site Information

A 3.1.1. Conservation Objectives

EU Member States have responsibility under the Habitats and Birds Directives to ensure that all habitats and species of Community Interest are maintained or restored to Favourable Conservation Status (FCS). Natura 2000 sites have a role to play in achieving this overall objective as the most important core sites for these species and habitats.

Since the UK's exit from the EU, SACs and SPAs in the UK no longer form part of the EU Natura 2000 ecological network. The 2019 Regulations have created a National Site Network on land and at sea, including both the inshore and offshore marine areas in the UK. The National Site Network includes existing SACs and SPAs; and any new SACs and SPAs designated under these Regulations.

Any references to Natura 2000 in the 1995 Regulations and in guidance now refers to the new National Site Network and the 2019 Regulations establish management objectives for the National Site Network. These are known as the 'Network Objectives'.

The term European site Conservation Objectives will also retain its previous meaning, as maintaining a coherent network of protected sites with overarching Conservation Objectives is still required in order to fulfil the commitment made by government to maintain environmental protections and to continue to meet international legal obligations.

The UK Government and devolved administrations (Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland) will cooperate to manage, and where necessary, adapt the network to contribute towards meeting the Network Objectives. Any references in the Habitats Regulations to meeting the 'requirements of the Directives' include achieving the Network Objectives. The overall Network Objectives are to:

- Maintain or, where appropriate, restore habitats and species listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive to a Favourable Conservation Status (FCS); and
- Contribute to ensuring, in their area of distribution, the survival and reproduction of wild birds and securing compliance with the overarching aims of the Wild Birds Directive.

The National Site Network reflects the most important core sites for these species and habitats. To ensure that each National Site Network site contributes fully to reaching the overall target of FCS, it is important to set clear conservation objectives for each individual site. These define the desired state for each of the species and habitat types for which the site was designated.

Conservation Objectives have a role in:

- Conservation planning and management by guiding management to maintain habitats and species in, or restore them to, favourable condition;
- Assessing plans and projects in light of the site's conservation objectives; and
- Monitoring and reporting by providing the basis for assessing the condition of a feature, the factors that affect it and the actions required.

Each site must therefore be managed in a way that ensures it contributes as effectively as possible to helping the species and habitats for which it has been designated reach FCS. To achieve this, DAERA is preparing individual Conservation Management Plans for 57 out of the 58 SACs²². Those that are currently available have been referred to in preparing this report (47 have been published at the time of writing).

Favourable Condition is defined as *‘the target condition for an interest feature in terms of the abundance, distribution and/or quality of that feature within the site’*. Where available, the most recent condition assessment for site selection features has been referred to in preparing this report.

Conservation Objectives are not published for Ramsar sites, therefore the Conservation Objectives for the associated SAC and/or SPA have been referred to.

European sites in Ireland remain part of the Natura 2000 network and are protected and managed by Ireland as an EU Member State in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

A 3.2. Sources of information Northern Ireland sites

The appropriate assessments draw on or refer to source documents as detailed below. Digital maps for all sites can be viewed on the DAERA Natural Environment Map Viewer, or downloaded from its digital datasets web page. Maps to illustrate the relationship between the plan area and European sites are provided in Appendix 4 of this report. Additional, site specific, sources of information are listed for each site.

The information used for the appropriate assessment draws on or references the sources detailed below. References and hyperlinks for online sources (where applicable) are included in the ‘References’ section.

Digital maps showing the European site and Ramsar site boundaries are available on DAERA’s [Online] Natural Environment Map Viewer. Boundary data was obtained from DAERA’s [Online] Digital Datasets web page (see References) and sites were scanned using GIS software. The maps in Appendix 5 are included to illustrate the relationship between the Plan area and European sites.

Special Areas of Conservation

An overview of each SAC in Northern Ireland is provided on the JNCC website at its section on ‘SACs in the United Kingdom’²³. Under ‘General Site Character’, a hyperlink is provided to view the standard data form for that SAC. The Annex I habitats and Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of the site are summarised, along with a brief outline of why the site is important.

Published documents for each SAC were accessed through DAERA’s [Online] web page on Protected Areas²⁴. For each site, the hyperlink to ‘Guidance and literature’ provides access to documents setting out the reasons for designation, the Conservation Objectives and a site map.

Conservation Management Plans were accessed through DAERA’s [Online] storymap site.

Special Protection Areas

A hyperlink to the standard data form for each SPA is provided on the JNCC website at its section on ‘Special Protection Areas’²⁵.

Further information for each SPA can be found through DAERA’s [Online] portal for Protected Areas²⁴. For each site listed, the hyperlink to ‘Guidance and Literature’ provides access to the SPA citation document and the site’s Conservation Objectives.

²² DAERA [Online] ‘Introduction to Conservation Management Plans (CMPs) for Northern Ireland’s Special Areas of Conservation’ (found at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/introduction-conservation-management-plans-cmps-northern-irelands-special-areas-conservation> [accessed 08/05/2026])

²³ JNCC [Online] SACs in the United Kingdom (found at <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/> [accessed 08/05/2026])

²⁴ DAERA [Online] Protected Areas (found at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/protected-areas> [accessed 08/05/2026])

²⁵ JNCC [Online] Special Protection Areas (SPAs): List of sites (found at <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/list-of-spas/> [accessed 08/05/2026])

Ramsar sites

A hyperlink to the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS) for each Ramsar site can be found on the JNCC website at its section on 'Ramsar Sites in the UK, the Crown Dependencies & UK Overseas Territories'²⁶.

Further information for each Ramsar site can be found through DAERA's [Online] portal for Protected Areas²⁴. For each site listed, the hyperlink to 'Guidance and Literature' provides access to the site's citation and accompanying map.

A 3.2.1. Condition Assessment

Habitats Regulations Reporting is six yearly reporting on NI's most important habitats and species. It replaces the reporting requirements that were originally established under Article 17 and Article 12 of the Habitats and Birds Directives respectively; these requirements were transferred into the Habitats Regulations (NI) following the UK's exit from the EU.

In January 2026, DAERA published the first series of Habitats Regulations Reports, covering the 2019-2024 period. These reports document the main achievements under the Habitats Regulations in Northern Ireland in relation to nature conservation and implementation of the Regulations

DAERA currently updates its summaries of feature condition status on an annual basis, in line with its Environmental Statistics Reporting. These are accessed on its 'Protected Areas Monitoring Results' portal²⁷ and the most recently published information is for 2024/25.

The summary feature condition status lists the most recent condition assessment for features and has been referred to in compiling site information.

A 3.3. Sources of Information: Ireland sites

Digital maps showing all European site boundaries can be viewed on the National Parks and Wildlife Service's (NPWS) [Online] Protected Sites map-viewer. Boundary data has been obtained via the NPWS' 'GIS Web Services for NPWS Designations' for analysis in a GIS (see 'References' section of this report). Figures using this boundary data are provided in Appendix 4 to illustrate the relationship between the Plan area and European sites.

Special Protection Areas (Ireland)

An overview of Ireland's SPA network can be found on the NPWS website at the page on Special Protection Areas²⁸. This page allows the user to view site details and access the Site Documents published for each SPA. The Conservation Objectives are published on the NPWS Protected Sites portal, at 'Conservation Objectives'²⁹

The NPWS directs to the European Commission website³⁰ to access the Standard Data Forms for each Natura 2000 site.

Special Areas of Conservation (Ireland)

An overview of Ireland's SAC network can be found on the NPWS website at the page on Special Areas of Conservation³¹. This page allows the user to view site details and access the Site Documents

²⁶ JNCC [Online] Ramsar sites in the UK, the Crown Dependencies & UK Overseas Territories (found at <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/ramsar-sites/> [accessed 08/05/2026])

²⁷ DAERA [Online] Protected Areas – Protected Areas Monitoring Results (found at - <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/protected-areas-protected-areas-monitoring-results> [accessed 08/05/2026])

²⁸ National Parks and Wildlife Service [Online] Special Protection Areas (SPA) (found at <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa> [accessed 08/05/2026])

²⁹ National Parks and Wildlife Service [Online] Conservation Objectives (found at <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/conservation-management-planning/conservation-objectives> [accessed 08/05/2026])

³⁰ European Commission [Online] Natura 2000 The largest network of protected areas in the world (found at https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/natura-2000_en [accessed 08/05/2026])

³¹ National Parks and Wildlife Service [Online] Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) (found at <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac> [accessed 08/05/2026])

published for each SPA. The Conservation Objectives are published on the NPWS Protected Sites portal, at 'Conservation Objectives'²⁹.

The NPWS directs to the European Commission website³⁰ to access the Standard Data Forms for each Natura 2000 site.

Condition Assessment (Ireland)

The NPWS Conservation Objectives portal²⁹ provides hyperlinks to the Site Documents published for each SAC and SPA. For some of these sites, Conservation Objectives Supporting Documents are also provided and include condition information. Habitat and Species data and other national datasets are also provided in the Maps and Data subsection of the NPWS site.

A 3.4. Step 2a: 'Long List' of sites

Table A 3.1: Scanning and site selection list for sites that could potentially be affected by the Plan (Adapted from F4.4, HRA Handbook)

Group	Types of Plan	Sites to scan for and check	Method of scanning	Names of sites selected for Screening
Within/ Direct	1. All plans (terrestrial, coastal and marine)	Sites within the geographic area covered by or intended to be relevant to the Plan	<i>GIS - All European sites intersecting Plan area selected.</i>	Lough Neagh & Lough Beg Ramsar site Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA Montiaghs Moss SAC Peatlands Park SAC
Hydrological	2. Plans that could affect the aquatic environment	Sites upstream or downstream of the Plan area in the case of river or estuary sites	<i>GIS - ZOI (Catchment-based). All hydrologically connected European sites upstream or downstream of Plan area.</i>	Lough Neagh & Lough Beg Ramsar site Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA Montiaghs Moss SAC Peatlands Park SAC Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC
		Open water, peatland, fen, marsh and other wetland sites with relevant hydrological links to land within the Plan area, irrespective of distance from the Plan area	<i>GIS - ZOI (Catchment-based). GIS - All European sites with hydrological connectivity to Plan area.</i>	<i>The following sites upstream/upcatchment of the Council area were considered for hydrological pathways, but excluded due to the absence of any mobile aquatic selection features:</i> Slieve Beagh Ramsar site Slieve Beagh SAC Slieve Beagh-Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea SPA Slieve Beagh SPA (ROI)
Hydrological	3. Plans that could affect the marine environment	Sites that could be affected by changes in water quality, currents or flows; or effects on the inter-tidal or sub-tidal areas or the sea bed, or marine species	<i>GIS - ZOI (RBMP waterbody-based). All European sites with marine components that are downstream.</i> <i>Recommended DAERA screening distances (50km & 100km) for marine SACs.</i>	Bann Estuary SAC Belfast Lough Open Water SPA Belfast Lough Ramsar site Belfast Lough SPA Carlingford Lough proposed Marine Extension pSPA Carlingford Lough Ramsar site Carlingford Lough SPA Carlingford Lough SPA (ROI) Dundalk Bay SPA (ROI) East Coast (NI) Marine pSPA

Group	Types of Plan	Sites to scan for and check	Method of scanning	Names of sites selected for Screening
				North Channel SAC Dundalk Bay SAC
Coastal Processes	4. Plans that could affect the coast	Sites in the same coastal 'cell', or part of the same coastal ecosystem, or where there are interrelationships with or between different physical coastal processes	<i>Not applicable.</i>	None.
Ecological	5. Plans that could affect mobile species	Sites whose qualifying features include mobile species which may be affected by the Plan irrespective of the location of the Plan's proposals or whether the species would be in or out of the site when they might be affected.	<i>GIS - Zol. All European sites within 15km of Plan area selected.</i> <i>and</i> <i>SPAs outside the Plan area that have a functional linkage / relationship identified in the Conservation Objectives of the SPA(s) within the Plan area (none applicable).</i> <i>As discussed at 2.2, while consideration was given to the recommended DAERA screening distances (50km & 100km) for SACs which have relevant marine mobile species as a qualifying feature, there is no viable pathway for direct effects on marine mobile species. (Indirect hydrological pathway considered under 3. & 7).</i> <i>In developing the methodology for scanning and selection, consideration was given to the inclusion of SPA outside the Zone of Influence (≥15km) which have qualifying features in common with the SPAs sites intersecting the Plan area, as all SPAs in the UK and Ireland which host wintering bird species could be considered as connected.</i>	Carlingford Lough SPA Carlingford Lough proposed Marine Extension pSPA Lough Neagh & Lough Beg Ramsar site Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA Montiaghs Moss SAC Peatlands Park SAC Slieve Beagh SPA <i>The following sites were considered for impacts on mobile feature species, but excluded due to the absence of any direct mechanism for impacting the selection features:</i> North Channel SAC Skerries and Causeway SAC

Group	Types of Plan	Sites to scan for and check	Method of scanning	Names of sites selected for Screening
			<i>The assessment focuses on those European sites within the Zone of Influence as there is no credible mechanism for the Plan to affect the more distant sites:</i> ▪ <i>The only viable pathway for effects from the Plan on breeding or wintering birds from other European sites is if they use the sites in the Zone of Influence of the Plan.</i> ▪ <i>There is no viable pathway for additional effects on more distant sites</i> <i>Any policy-based measures employed to avoid or mitigate effects on features from sites within the Zone of Influence will also safeguard the same or similar features associated with more distant European sites.</i>	
Recreation	6. Plans that could increase recreational pressure on European sites potentially vulnerable or sensitive to such pressure.	Such European sites in the Plan area	GIS – ZOI All European sites intersecting Plan area selected.	Lough Neagh & Lough Beg Ramsar site Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA Montiagh's Moss SAC Peatlands Park SAC
Recreation		Such European sites within an agreed zone of influence or other reasonable and evidence-based travel distance of the Plan area boundaries that may be affected by local recreational or other visitor pressure from within the Plan area.	Not applicable.	At this stage of plan-making, there is no credible evidence that there is a real, rather than a hypothetical, risk of effects on any site outside the Council area.
Recreation		Such European sites within an agreed zone of influence or other evidence-based longer	Not applicable.	At this stage of plan-making, there is no credible evidence that there is a real, rather

Group	Types of Plan	Sites to scan for and check	Method of scanning	Names of sites selected for Screening
		travel distance of the Plan area, which are major (regional or national) visitor attractions such as European sites which are National Nature Reserves where public visiting is promoted, sites in National Parks, coastal sites and sites in other major tourist or visitor destinations.		<i>than a hypothetical, risk of effects on any site outside the Council area.</i>
Infra/Dev Growth	7. Plans that would increase the amount of development	Sites in the Plan area or beyond that are used for, or could be affected by, water abstraction irrespective of distance from the Plan area.	<i>NI Water's Water Supply Zone(s) (from most recently published version of 'Drinking Water Quality Annual Report') - All European sites located at a 'Raw Water Source' selected.</i>	Lough Neagh & Lough Beg Ramsar site Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA Montiaghs Moss SAC <i>The following site was also considered, but excluded, as the regulation and control of water levels in Lough Neagh removes any potential hydrological pathway: Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC</i>
Infra/Dev Growth		Sites used for, or could be affected by, discharge of effluent from waste water treatment works or other waste management streams serving the Plan area, irrespective of distance from the Plan area	<i>GIS - All European sites within, or with downstream hydrological connectivity to Plan area.</i>	Bann Estuary SAC Belfast Lough Open Water SPA Belfast Lough Ramsar site Belfast Lough SPA Carlingford Lough proposed Marine Extension pSPA Carlingford Lough Ramsar site Carlingford Lough SPA Carlingford Lough SPA (ROI) Carlingford Shore SAC Dundalk Bay SPA (ROI) East Coast (NI) Marine pSPA Lough Neagh & Lough Beg Ramsar site Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA Montiaghs Moss SAC

Group	Types of Plan	Sites to scan for and check	Method of scanning	Names of sites selected for Screening
				North Channel SAC Peatlands Park SAC Dundalk Bay SAC
Infra/Dev Growth		Sites that could be affected by the provision of new or extended transport or other infrastructure.	NA - the Plan does not include the provision of new or extended transport or other infrastructure. Any New Transport Schemes to which the Plan refers would be taken forward by the DFI under their Transport Plans irrespective of whether the Plan is adopted with or without reference to it.	None (NA)
Development Growth (aerial)		Sites that could be affected by increased deposition of air pollutants arising from the proposals, including emissions from significant increases in traffic.	All European sites within 15km of Plan area (follows Revised Operational Protocol (DAERA, 2025) and UK Air Pollution Information System (APIS))	Carlingford Lough proposed Marine Extension pSPA Carlingford Shore SAC Derryleckagh proposed Ramsar site Derryleckagh SAC Dundrum Bay proposed Ramsar site Eastern Mourne SAC Lough Neagh & Lough Beg Ramsar site Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA Montiagh's Moss SAC Murlough SAC Peatlands Park SAC Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC Rostrevor Wood SAC Slieve Beagh SPA Slieve Gullion SAC
Ecological	8. Plans for linear developments or infrastructure	Sites within a specified distance from the centre line of the proposed route (or alternative routes), the distance may be varied for differing types of site / qualifying features and in the absence of established good	NA – the Plan does not include any linear infrastructure.	None (NA)

Group	Types of Plan	Sites to scan for and check	Method of scanning	Names of sites selected for Screening
		practice standards, distance(s) to be agreed by the statutory nature conservation body		
Ecological	9. Plans that introduce new activities or new uses into the marine, coastal or terrestrial environment	Sites considered to have qualifying features potentially vulnerable or sensitive to the effects of the new activities proposed by the Plan	<i>NA - the Plan does introduce any new activities or uses.</i>	None (NA)
Ecological	10. Plans that could change the nature, area, extent, intensity, density, timing or scale of existing activities or uses.	Sites considered to have qualifying features potentially vulnerable or sensitive to the effects of the changes to existing activities proposed by the Plan	<i>As for (1.) GIS - All European sites intersecting Plan area selected.</i>	Lough Neagh & Lough Beg Ramsar site Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA Montiagh's Moss SAC Peatlands Park SAC
Ecological	11. Plans that could change the quantity, quality, timing, treatment or mitigation of emissions or discharges to air, water or soil	Sites considered to have qualifying features potentially vulnerable or sensitive to the changes in emissions or discharges that could arise as a result of the Plan	<i>See (3.) and (7.) above</i>	None (NA) <i>Sites that could be affected by alteration of surface/groundwater quality are already selected above at (3.)</i> <i>Sites that could be affected by aerial emissions already selected above at (7.)</i> <i>Sites that could be affected by increased discharge of effluent from waste water treatment already selected above at (7.)</i>
Ecological	12. Plans that could change the quantity, volume, timing, rate, or other characteristics of biological resources harvested, extracted or consumed	Sites whose qualifying features include the biological resources which the Plan may affect, or whose qualifying features depend on the biological resources which the Plan may affect, for example as prey species or supporting habitat or which may be disturbed by the	<i>NA - not applicable to land use plans.</i>	None (NA)

Group	Types of Plan	Sites to scan for and check	Method of scanning	Names of sites selected for Screening
		harvesting, extraction or consumption		
Ecological	13. Plans that could change the quantity, volume, timing, rate, or other characteristics of physical resources extracted or consumed	Sites whose qualifying features rely on the non-biological resources which the Plan may affect, for example, as habitat or a physical environment on which habitat may develop or which may be disturbed by the extraction or consumption	NA - not applicable to land use plans.	None (NA)
Ecological	14. Plans which could introduce or increase, or alter the timing, nature or location of disturbance to species	Sites whose qualifying features are considered to be potentially sensitive to disturbance, for example as a result of noise, activity or movement, or the presence of disturbing features that could be brought about by the Plan	As for (5.) Plans that could affect mobile species. No additional sites/features identified.	Carlingford Lough proposed Marine Extension pSPA Carlingford Lough SPA Lough Neagh & Lough Beg Ramsar site Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA Montiaghs Moss SAC Peatlands Park SAC Slieve Beagh SPA
Ecological	15. Plans which could introduce or increase or change the timing, nature or location of light or noise pollution	Sites whose qualifying features are considered to be potentially sensitive to the effects of changes in light or noise that could be brought about by the Plan	As for (5.) Plans that could affect mobile species. No additional sites/features identified.	
Ecological	16. Plans which could introduce or increase a potential cause of mortality of species	Sites whose qualifying features are considered to be potentially sensitive to the source of new or increased mortality that could be brought about by the Plan	NA - the Plan does not provide for new activities or development that has a credible risk of mortality. Sites whose qualifying features are potentially directly impacted are selected at (1.) above.	

Group	Types of Plan	Sites to scan for and check	<i>Method of scanning</i>	Names of sites selected for Screening
			<i>Sites whose qualifying features are potentially impacted by noise / vibration are selected at (14.) above</i>	

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Taking account of the 'long-list' of sites identified in Section 2, the discussion of potential impacts of development in Section 3 and the site information gathered (summarised in the Table below), a further scan was carried out to determine the effects that could potentially affect European sites as a result of the plan.

Table A 3.2: European Sites identified following Step 2A

Site Name	Direct	Hydrological	Ecological	Water supply	Wastewater	Aerial	Qualifying Feature Habitat/Species	Summary of negative pressures/ threats/ activities (from JNCC) - additional detail provided in Conservation Objectives at Annex A.	Likely Significant Effect
Lough Neagh and Lough Beg SPA	•	•	•	•	•	•	JNCC record: - Common tern (r) - Whooper swan (w) - Tundra swan (Bewick's swan) (w) - Common pochard (w) - Tufted duck (w) - Common goldeneye (w) DAERA Conservation Objectives add: - Great crested grebe (b) (w) (p) - Golden plover (w) - Scaup(w) Waterfowl Assemblage wintering population (Component species: Whooper Swan, Bewick's Swan, Golden Plover, Great Crested Grebe (wintering) Pochard, Tufted Duck, Scaup, Goldeneye, Little Grebe, Cormorant, Greylag Goose, Shelduck, Wigeon, Gadwall, Teal, Mallard, Shoveler, Coot, Lapwing) ¹Habitat extent. Roost site locations. [Conservation status requires sufficiently large habitat to maintain its population on a long-term basis.]	Modification of cultivation practices Grazing Mining and quarrying Utility and service lines Airports, flightpaths Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish) Invasive non-native species Other ecosystem modifications Changes in abiotic conditions² Changes in biotic conditions³	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: - Habitat loss (including ex-situ loss and through recreation) - Disturbance / Displacement (including ex-situ loss and through recreation) - Introduction of invasive, non-native, competitive or predatory species - Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution - Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution - Aquatic Hydrodynamic effects – alterations to drainage - Aquatic Hydrodynamic effects – new engineered structures - Growth - increased water abstraction - Growth – discharges of waste water
Lough Neagh & Lough Beg Ramsar site	•	•	•	•	•	•	<u>Criterion 1</u> A particularly good representative example of natural or near-natural wetlands. Wetland habitat [comprising]: Freshwater lakes: permanent, Other, Peatlands (including peat bogs swamps, fens), Shrub-dominated wetlands, Forested peatland <u>Criterion 2</u> Assemblage of rare, vulnerable or endangered species or sub-species (vascular plants, invertebrates). <u>Criterion 3</u> Special value for maintaining the genetic and ecological diversity of a region.	Adverse factors cited on RIS: - Eutrophication - Pollution – agricultural fertilisers RIS indicates that factors affecting ecological character include increased nutrient inputs from agricultural run-off and general domestic sewage from catchment housing and other developments.	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: - Habitat loss (including ex-situ loss and through recreation) - Disturbance / Displacement (including ex-situ loss and through recreation) - Introduction of invasive, non-native, competitive or predatory species - Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution - Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution - Aquatic Hydrodynamic effects – alterations to drainage - Aquatic Hydrodynamic effects – new engineered structures - Growth - increased water abstraction

						<u>Criteria 4, 5 & 6</u> Special value as the habitat of plants or animals at a critical stage of their biological cycles. Assemblage of international importance. Breeding Great crested grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>, Gadwall <i>Anas strepera</i>, Pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i>, tufted duck <i>Aythya fuligula</i>, Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i> and Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>. Other important breeding wetland species include shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>, Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>, Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>, Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> and Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>. Species occurring at levels of international importance: regularly supports ≥1% of population of: Tundra swan, <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>, Whooper swan, <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>, Common pochard, <i>Aythya ferina</i>, Tufted duck, <i>Aythya fuligula</i>, Greater scaup, <i>Aythya marila marila</i>, Common goldeneye, <i>Bucephala clangula clangula</i>. <u>Criterion 7</u> Population of pollan <i>Coregonus autumnalis</i>.		Growth – discharges of waste water
Montiaghs Moss SAC	•	•	•	•	•	Marsh Fritillary Butterfly <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>	Grazing Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish) Air pollution, air-borne pollutants Fire and fire suppression Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions Biocenotic evolution, succession	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Habitat loss (including ex-situ loss and through recreation) Introduction of invasive, non-native, competitive or predatory species Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution Aquatic Hydrodynamic effects – alterations to drainage Growth - increased water abstraction Growth – discharges of waste water
Peatlands Park SAC	•	•	•	•	•	Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration Active raised bogs Bog woodland Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles	Air pollution, air-borne pollutants Invasive non-native species Fire and fire suppression Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions Biocenotic evolution, succession	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Habitat loss (including through recreation) Introduction of invasive, non-native, competitive or predatory species Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution Aquatic Hydrodynamic effects – alterations to drainage Growth - increased water abstraction Growth – discharges of waste water
Bann Estuary SAC	•			•		Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ("white dunes") Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes")	Grazing Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Air pollution, air-borne pollutants Invasive non-native species Problematic native species	No - the hydrological link to this site is distant and tenuous, at a minimum distance of 70km via Lough Neagh, Lough Beg and the lower River Bann. With the exception of 'Atlantic salt meadows', which are tidally inundated, the qualifying features are not aquatic. The Conservation

					Embryonic shifting dunes	Fire and fire suppression Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions Biocenotic evolution, succession Changes in abiotic conditions ²	Objectives reference effects on ecosystem structure or function through aerial emissions (nitrogen deposition), however water quality is not currently identified as a pressure or threat and the site was not included in the first phase of Conservation Management Plan development. There is no viable mechanism for the [draft] Plan to undermine the site's conservation objectives.
Belfast Lough Open Water SPA	•			•	Great Crested Grebe wintering population. ¹ Habitat extent, roosting/loafing sites. [Conservation status requires sufficiently large habitat to maintain its population on a long-term basis.]	Shipping lanes, ports, marine constructions Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish) Marine water pollution Changes in abiotic conditions ² Changes in biotic conditions ³	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water
Belfast Lough Ramsar site	•			•	<u>Ramsar Criterion 6</u> Common redshank , <i>Tringa totanus totanus</i> Black-tailed godwit , <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> Wetland habitats: Rocky shores, Tidal flats, Coastal brackish / saline lagoons.	No factors adversely affecting the site's ecological character reported in most recent published RIS. Assume as per Belfast Lough SPA.	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water
Belfast Lough SPA	•			•	JNCC record: Bar-tailed godwit (w) Common redshank (w) Common tern (r) Arctic tern (r) Black-tailed godwit(w) DAERA published COs Common redshank (w) Great Crested Grebe wintering population. ¹ Habitat extent, roosting/loafing sites. [Conservation status requires sufficiently large habitat to maintain its population on a long-term basis.]	Shipping lanes, ports, marine constructions Airports, flightpaths Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish) Marine water pollution invasive non-native species Changes in abiotic conditions ² Changes in biotic conditions ³	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water
Carlingford Lough SPA	•	•		•	Common tern (r) Sandwich tern (r) Light-bellied brent goose (w) ¹ Habitat extent, roost site locations. [Conservation status requires sufficiently large habitat to maintain its population on a long-term basis.]	Utility and service lines Shipping lanes, ports, marine constructions Marine and Freshwater Aquaculture Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish) Marine water pollution Invasive non-native species Other ecosystem modifications Interspecific faunal relations	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water

						Changes in abiotic conditions ² Changes in biotic conditions ³	
Carlingford Lough proposed Marine Extension pSPA	•	•	•	•	As for Carlingford Lough SPA. The proposed marine extension has been defined for foraging Sandwich and Common Tern originating from the tern colony within the site.	As for Carlingford Lough SPA.	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water
Carlingford Lough Ramsar site	•	•	•	•	<u>Criterion 2</u> (nationally important breeding populations) Common tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> <u>Criterion 6</u> (species/population at level of international importance) Light-bellied brent goose, <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> RIS [2015 update] indicates Criterion 4 to be included in next update. Sandwich tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i> currently occurring at levels of national importance; regularly supported during breeding season	No factors adversely affecting the site's ecological character reported in most recent published RIS. Assume as per Carlingford Lough SPA.	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water
Derryleckagh SAC					• Transition mires and quaking bogs Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles	Grazing Grazing in forests/ woodland Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish) Pollution to groundwater (point sources and diffuse sources) Air pollution, air-borne pollutants Invasive non-native species Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions Biocenotic evolution, succession	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution
Derryleckagh proposed Ramsar site					• <u>Criterion 1</u> Representative example of rare, or unique example of a natural or near-natural wetland type: mire in a transitional stage between fen and bog.	Not published. Assumed to be as per wetland feature of Derryleckagh SAC.	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution
Dundrum Bay proposed Ramsar site					• Not known (not published).	Not known (not published). Assumed to be as per wetland features of Murlough SAC.	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution
East Coast (NI) Marine pSPA	•		•		Great Crested Grebe (w) Red-throated Diver (r) Sandwich Tern (r) Common Tern (r) Arctic Tern (r) Manx Shearwater (r)	As per Belfast Lough Open Water SPA: Shipping lanes, ports, marine constructions Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish) Marine water pollution	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water

					Eider Duck (r) ¹ Habitat extent. Roosting / Loafing sites [Conservation status requires sufficiently large habitat to maintain its population on a long-term basis.]	Changes in abiotic conditions ² Changes in biotic conditions ³	
Eastern Mourne SAC					- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> - European dry heaths - Alpine and Boreal heaths - Siliceous alpine and boreal grasslands - Blanket bogs (* if active bog) - Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) - Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation	Grazing Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Air pollution, air-borne pollutants Invasive non-native species Problematic native species Fire and fire suppression Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions Changes in abiotic conditions ²	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution
Murlough SAC					- Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (<i>Calluno-Ulicetea</i>) - Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritima</i>) - Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>Argentea</i> (<i>Salicion arenariae</i>) - Embryonic shifting dunes - Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) - Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide - Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time - Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) - Marsh Fritillary <i>Euphydryas Aurinia</i> - Harbour (Common) Seal <i>Phoca vitulina</i>	Grazing Renewable abiotic energy use Marine and Freshwater Aquaculture Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Military use and civil unrest Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish) Air pollution, air-borne pollutants Invasive non-native species Problematic native species Fire and fire suppression Biocenotic evolution, succession Changes in abiotic conditions ²	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution
North Channel SAC	•	•	•		Harbour porpoise (winter months)	Exploration and extraction of oil or gas Shipping lanes, ports, marine constructions Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources Military use and civil unrest Marine water pollution	No – the hydrological link to this site is distant and tenuous, at a minimum distance of 60km via the River Lagan (or its tributaries), and Belfast Lough. The focus of the Conservation Objectives for harbour porpoise is on addressing pressures that affect site integrity and would include: • killing or injuring harbour porpoise (directly or indirectly); • preventing their use of significant parts of the site (disturbance / displacement); • significantly damaging relevant habitats; or • significantly reducing the availability of prey. Given the hydrological distance and the volume of dilution occurring in the waterbodies providing the hydrological link, there is no viable mechanism for the [draft] Plan to undermine the site's conservation objectives.
Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay SAC	•				Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>)	Hunting and collection of wild animals (terrestrial) Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish)	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution

							Invasive non-native species Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions	Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water
Rostrevor Wood SAC					•	Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion alvae</i>)	Air pollution, air-borne pollutants Invasive non-native species	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution
Skerries and Causeway SAC		•	•			Reefs Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time Submerged and partially submerged sea caves Harbour porpoise <i>Phocoena phocoena</i>	Exploration and extraction of oil or gas Renewable abiotic energy use Shipping lanes, ports, marine constructions Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish) Marine water pollution invasive non-native species Changes in abiotic conditions ²	No – the hydrological link to this site is distant and tenuous, at a minimum distance of 83km via Lough Neagh, Lough Beg and the lower River Bann. Given the hydrological distance and the volume of dilution occurring in the waterbodies providing the hydrological link, there is no viable mechanism for the [draft] Plan to undermine the site's conservation objectives.
Slieve Beagh Ramsar site						<u>Criterion 1</u> The site is a large and relatively intact example of a blanket bog and one of the best examples of this habitat in the UK. It also contains nationally important examples of transitional and alkaline fen and oligotrophic/mesotrophic lakes.	Overgrazing (livestock)	No – the plan can have no conceivable effect. Although the site is upstream/upcatchment of the Council area, it has no mobile qualifying features and there is no viable pathway.
Slieve Beagh SAC						Active blanket bog Natural dystrophic lakes and pool European dry heaths	Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions Grazing Air pollution, air-borne pollutants Mining and quarrying Invasive non-native species Fire and fire suppression	No – the plan can have no conceivable effect. Although the site is upstream/upcatchment of the Council area, it has no mobile qualifying features and there is no viable pathway.
Slieve Beagh-Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea SPA			•			Hen Harrier (r) ¹ Habitat extent, habitat quality	Other ecosystem modifications Changes in abiotic conditions Changes in biotic conditions Mining and quarrying Renewable abiotic energy use grazing Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Hunting and collection of wild animals (terrestrial) Forest and Plantation management & use Fire and fire suppression	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded due to the site's interconnected relationship and shared feature / interest with the Slieve Beagh SPA (ROI) which is within the ZOI for effects from aerial emissions. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution .
Slieve Gullion SAC					•	European dry heaths	Modification of cultivation practices grazing Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities Air pollution, air-borne pollutants Invasive non-native species Fire and fire suppression	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution

Carlingford Lough SPA (ROI)	•		•	A046 Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> A999 Wetlands	NPWS Conservation Objectives highlight key attributes to be maintained: Population trend Distribution Habitat area Also Conservation objectives of Carlingford Shore SAC.	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water
Carlingford Shore SAC	•		•	Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]	NPWS Conservation Objectives highlight key attributes to be maintained: Habitat area Habitat distribution Physical structure: functionality and sediment supply Vegetation structure: zonation Vegetation composition: typical species and subcommunities Vegetation composition: negative indicator species (include non-native species, species indicative of changes in nutrient status and species not considered characteristic of the habitat) Also Conservation objectives of Carlingford Shore SPA.	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water
Dundalk Bay SAC	•		•	Estuaries [1130] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410]	NPWS Conservation Objectives highlight key attributes to be maintained: [as per Dundalk Bay SPA] and Habitat area Community distribution – conserve habitat in natural condition Habitat distribution – no decline, subject to natural processes Physical structure: Functionality and sediment supply Vegetation structure: zonation Vegetation composition: typical species and sub-communities Vegetation composition: negative indicator species Physical structure: creeks and pans Physical structure: flooding regime Vegetation structure: vegetation height Vegetation structure: vegetation cover	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water
Dundalk Bay SPA (ROI)	•		•	A005 Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> wintering A043 Greylag Goose <i>Anser anser</i> wintering A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> wintering A048 Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> wintering A052 Teal <i>Anas crecca</i> wintering A053 Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> wintering A054 Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> wintering	NPWS Conservation Objectives highlight key attributes to be maintained: [As per Dundalk Bay SAC] and Population trend Distribution	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - waterborne pollution Growth – discharges of waste water

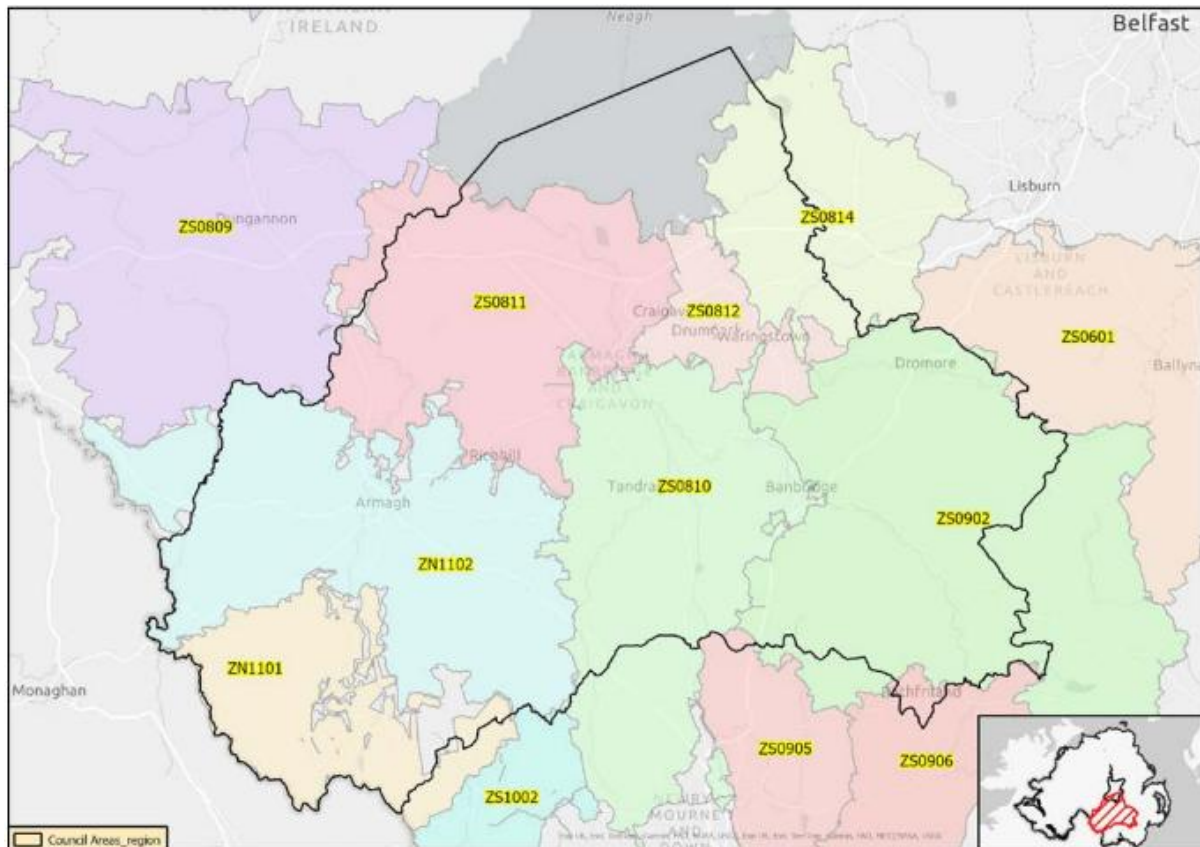
						A065 Common Scoter <i>Melanitta nigra</i> wintering A069 Red-breasted Merganser <i>Mergus serrator</i> wintering A130 Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> wintering A137 Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> wintering A140 Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> wintering A141 Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> wintering A142 Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> wintering A143 Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i> wintering A149 Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i> wintering A156 Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i> wintering A157 Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i> wintering A160 Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i> wintering A162 Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> wintering A179 Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> wintering A182 Common Gull <i>Larus canus</i> wintering A184 Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i> wintering A999 Wetlands & Waterbirds		
Slieve Beagh SPA						Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) [A082]	NPWS Conservation Objectives highlight key attributes to be restored: Population size Productivity rate Spatial utilisation by breeding pairs Extent and condition of heath and bog and associated habitats Extent and condition of low intensity managed grasslands and associated habitats Extent and condition of hedgerows Age structure of forest estate Disturbance to breeding sites	Yes – a LSE cannot be excluded. Potential Impact pathways include: Alteration of habitat quality - airborne pollution
¹ [For SPAs] The Conservation Objectives state that “Habitat and roost sites are not a selection feature but are a factor and more easily treated as if they were a feature. Feature species are fully dependant on such habitats”. ² Abiotic conditions involve non-living components of an ecosystem, (includes water temperature, light attenuation, nutrient availability and water movement (wave action, tidal flows etc)). ³ Biotic conditions involve the living components of an ecosystem (includes food availability, predator-prey relationships, competition, and disease - factors that may alter species distribution, abundance, and community structure								

A 3.5. Infrastructure- Background Information

A 3.5.1. Water Supply

With the exception of private drinking water supplies, of which 24 are currently registered with the DWI in the Council area (see Figure A 3.2) and abstractions (of which 84 are registered with DAERA, Figure A 3.3), water supply in the Council area is provided by NI Water.

Figure A 3.1: NI Water- Water Supply Zones

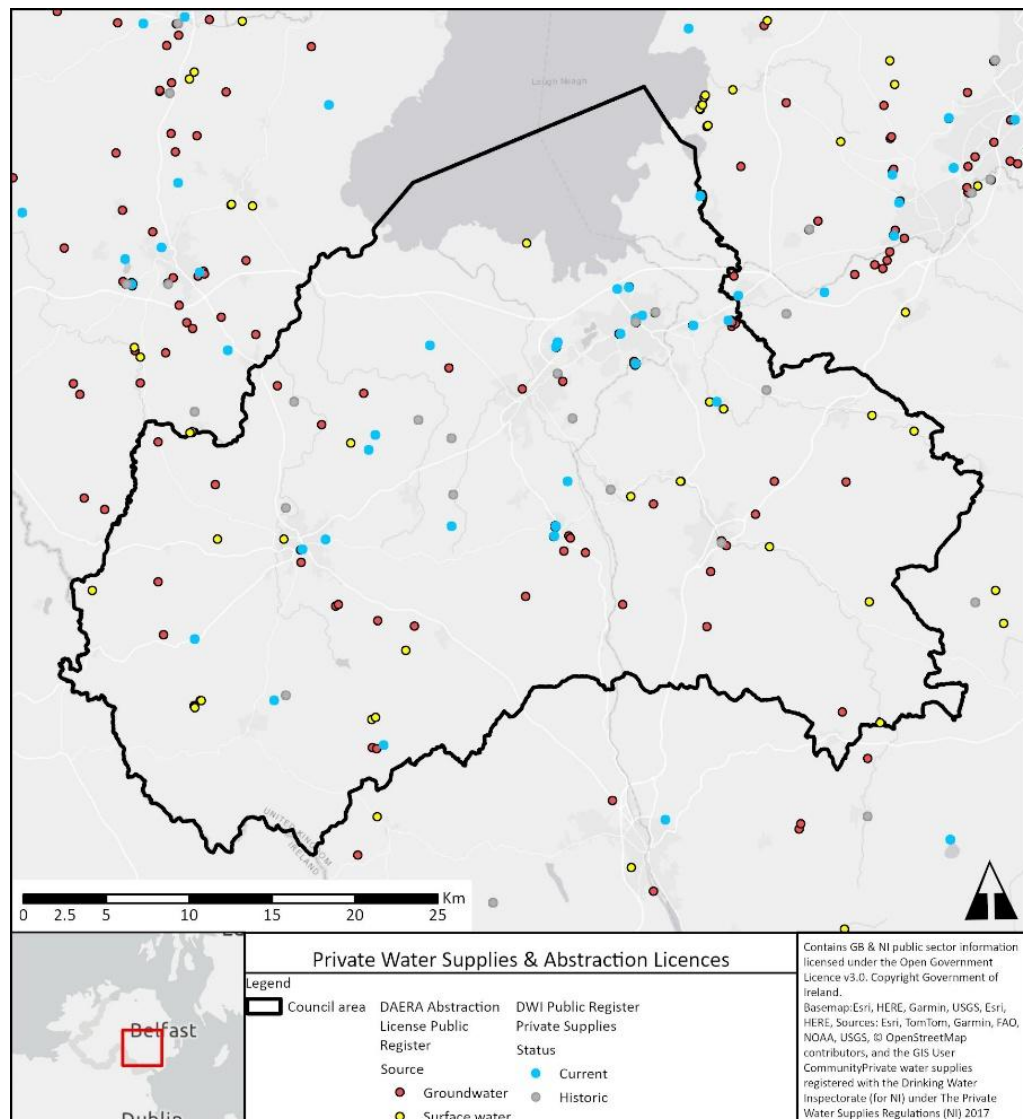


Source: Northern Ireland Water (2025) Appendix 3

Water Supply Zone	Raw Water Source (s)	European site(s) connected
ZN1101 Clay Lake Keady	Clay Lake, Gentle Owens	NA
ZN1102 Seagahan Armagh	Seagahan dam	NA
ZS0810 Castor Bay Tandragee	Lough Neagh	Montiagh's Moss SAC, Lough Neagh and Lough Beg Special Protection Area (SPA), Lough Neagh & Lough Beg RAMSAR Site
ZS0811 Castor Bay Portadown	Lough Neagh	
ZS0812 Castor Bay Craigavon East	Lough Neagh	
ZS0814 Castor Bay Moira	Lough Neagh	
ZS0902 Fofanny Dromore	Spelga and Fofanny reservoirs, Shimna River	NA
ZS0906 Fofanny Hilltown	Spelga and Fofanny reservoirs, Shimna River	NA

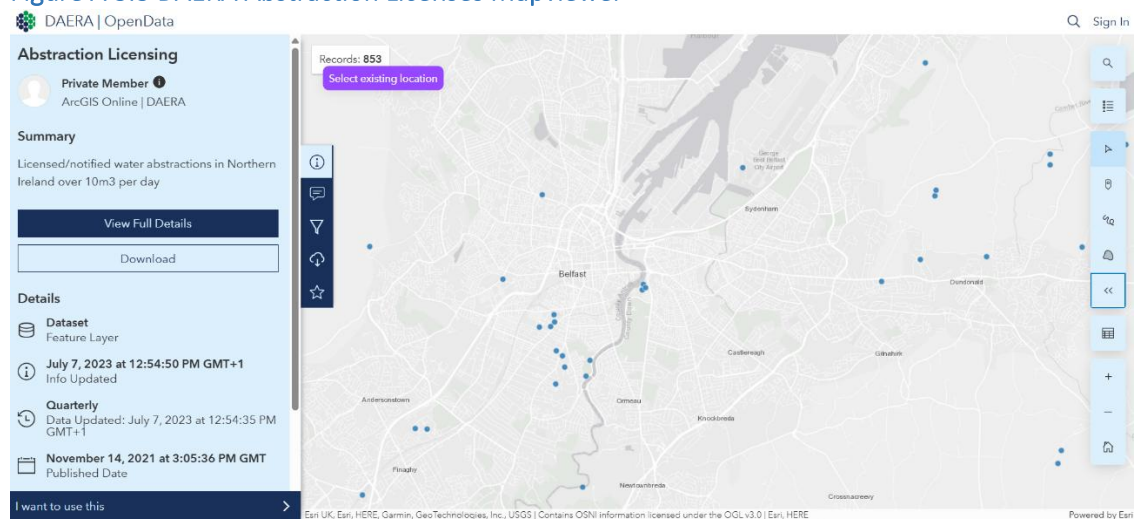
Source: Northern Ireland Water (2025) Appendix 3 'Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council' and Northern Ireland Water [Online] 'About Your Water' - 'Where does my water come from?' (Found at <https://www.niwater.com/about-your-water/bga> [accessed 07/05/2026])

Figure A 3.2 DWI Private Water supplies and DAERA Abstraction Licences



Source: Opendata NI [accessed 25/06/2026])

Figure A 3.3 DAERA Abstraction Licences Mapviewer



Source: Abstraction Licensing- DAERA Open Data- ArcGIS Online [Online] (Found at <https://opendata-daerani.hub.arcgis.com/datasets/DAERANI::abstraction-licensing/explore?location=54.594682%2C-5.889808%2C12.69> [Accessed 22/01/2026])

Appendix 4. Site Maps / Figures

See overleaf

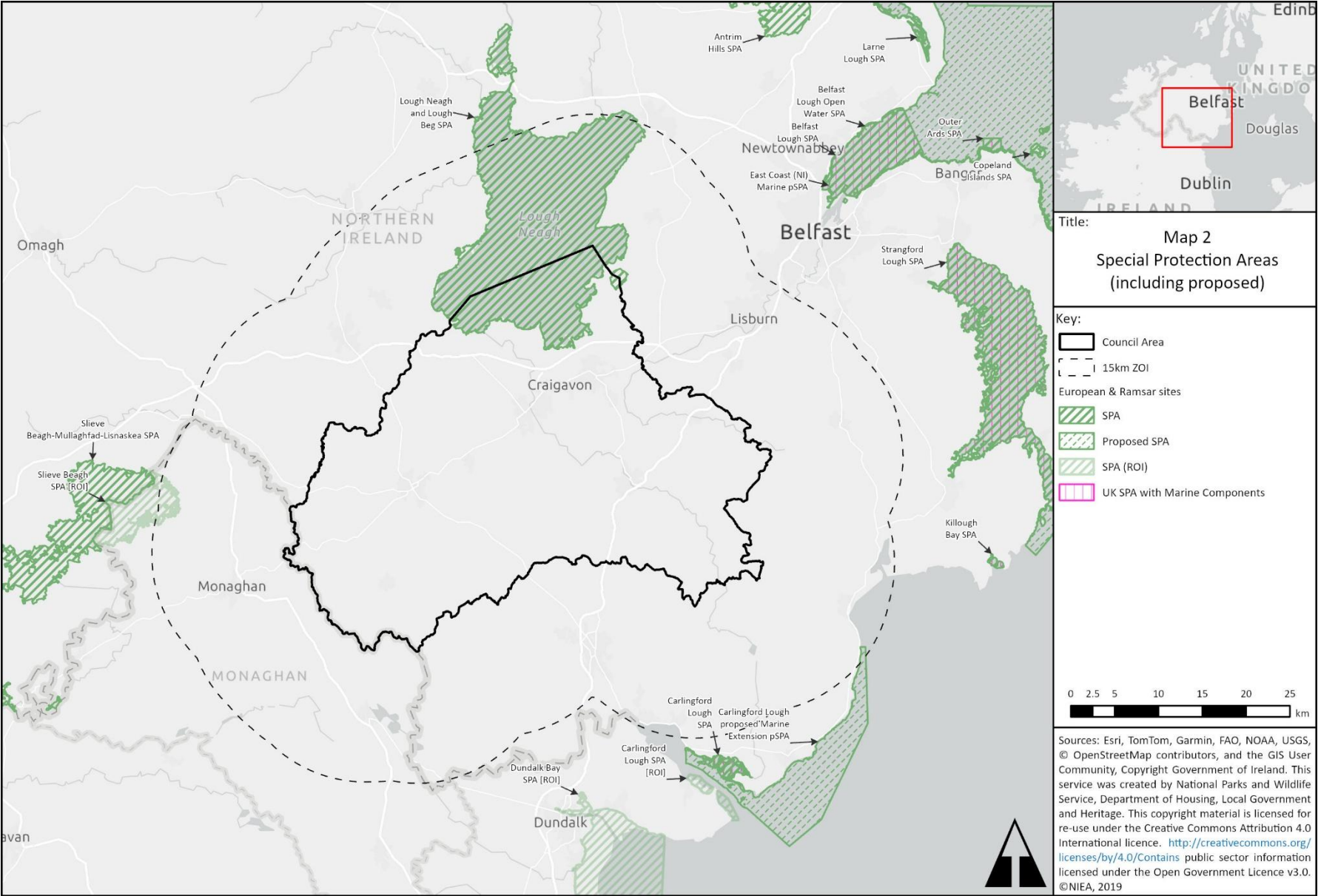
Map 1
Special Areas of Conservation

Key:

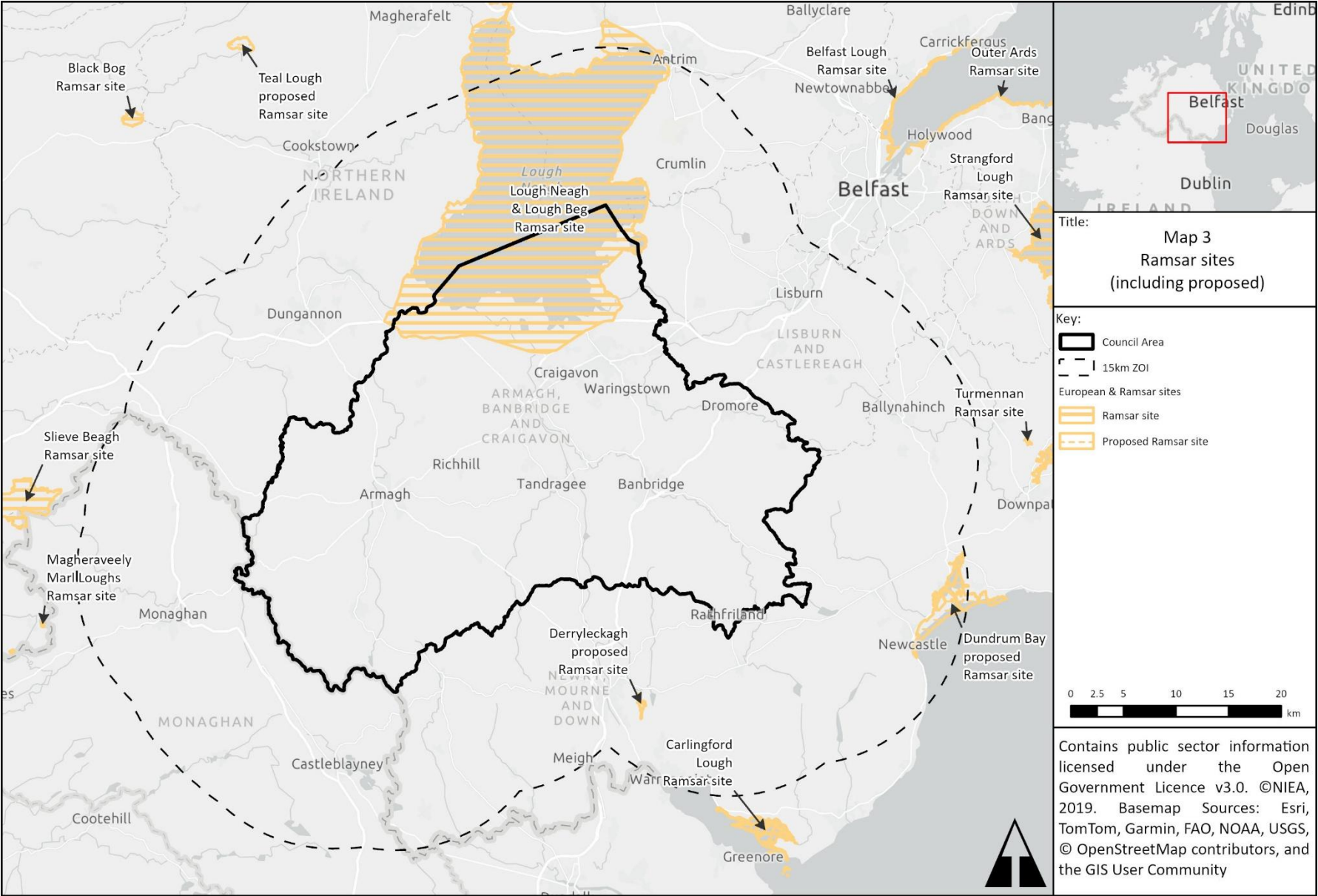
- Council Area
- 15km ZOI
- European & Ramsar sites
- SAC
- SAC [ROI]
- UK SAC with Marine Components

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community. Copyright Government of Ireland. This service was created by National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. This copyright material is licensed for re-use under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/Contains> public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. ©NIEA, 2019

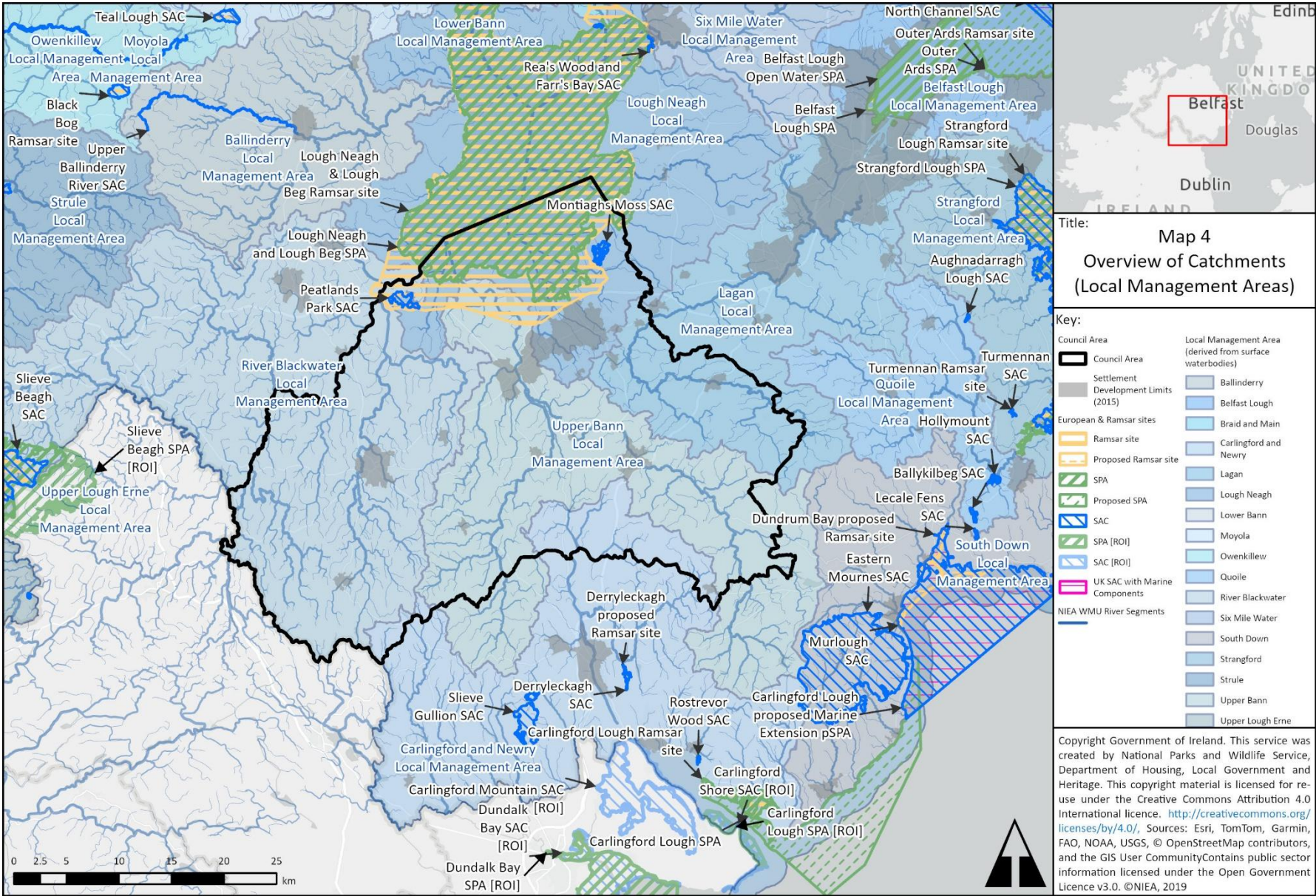
Map 2: Special Protection Areas



Map 3: Ramsar sites



Map 4: Overview of Surface Catchments (DAERA WMU Local Management Areas)



Appendix 5. Review of [draft] Plan Strategy Proposals and Policies

The following categories are used to assess whether an overall plan and its individual proposals require HRA as described in Appendix 2. These are taken from Part F of the HRA Handbook where they are explained in detail in the sections referenced. In some instances, more than one category may apply to a policy.

- A. General statement of policy / general aspiration (screened out). [Handbook F.6.3.1]
- B. Policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability / sustainability of proposals (screened out). [Handbook F.6.3.2]
- C. Proposal referred to but not proposed by the plan (screened out). [Handbook F.6.3.3]
- D. General plan-wide environmental protection / site safeguarding / threshold policies (screened out). [Handbook F.6.3.4]
- E. Policies or proposals which steer change in such a way as to protect European sites from adverse effects (screened out). [Handbook F.6.3.5]
- F. Policy that cannot lead to development or other change (screened out). [Handbook F.6.3.6]
- G. Policy or proposal that could not have any conceivable effect on a site (screened out). [Handbook F.6.3.7]
- H. Policy or proposal the (actual or theoretical) effects of which cannot undermine the conservation objectives (either alone or in combination with other aspects of this or other plans or projects) (screened out). [Handbook F.6.3.8]
- I. Policy or proposal which may have a likely significant effect on a site alone (screened in) [Handbook F.6.3.9]
- J. Policy or proposal with an effect on a site but unlikely to be significant alone, so need to check for likely significant effects in combination [Handbook F.6.3.10]
- K. Policy or proposal unlikely to have a significant effect either alone or in combination (screened out after the in combination test). [Handbook F.6.3.11]
- L. Policy or proposal which might be likely to have a significant effect in combination (screened in after the in combination test). [Handbook F.6.3.11]
- M. Bespoke area, site or case-specific policies or proposals intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on a European site (screened in) [Handbook F.6.3.12]

Screening [draft] PS Sections 1 and 2 (Introduction and Borough Profile)

Plan Proposal/Policy	Criteria	Screening	Comment
Contents	Not applicable		Administrative text- introduces the plan, describes the LDP process and sets out the transitional arrangements until the plan is adopted.
Foreword	Not applicable		Administrative text- introduces the plan, describes the LDP process and sets out the transitional arrangements until the plan is adopted.
Consultation Arrangements	Not applicable		Administrative text- introduces the plan, describes the LDP process and sets out the transitional arrangements until the plan is adopted.
PART 1			
1.0 Introduction and Policy Context	Not applicable		Administrative text- introduces the plan, describes the LDP process and sets out the transitional arrangements until the plan is adopted.
1.1 Introduction			
1.2 Policy Context			
2.0 Borough Profile	Not applicable		Administrative text- Profile of the Borough [factual]

Screening [draft] PS Section 3 LDP Vision and Strategic Objectives

Vision/Strategic Objective	Criteria	Screening	Comment
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough will be a place of choice to live, work and visit, with a vibrant and sustainable economy, healthy and connected communities and a high quality natural and historic environment.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To further develop Armagh City, Banbridge and the Craigavon Urban Area* as the main settlements (Hubs) for growth.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To support the role of small towns and villages as attractive and vibrant local service centres providing a level of development appropriate to their position in the settlement hierarchy.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To support rural communities by providing appropriate and sustainable opportunities for development in the countryside.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To provide a sufficient supply of land for new housing to meet housing needs by 2035.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To facilitate the diverse range of specific housing needs over the Plan period.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To facilitate community safety and shared spaces through good quality design and layout of proposed schemes.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To facilitate development of community uses at locations accessible to the local communities they serve.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To facilitate the creation and maintenance of conditions that provide for a dynamic, diverse and robust economy to encourage existing and new businesses to invest within the Borough.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To facilitate sustainable economic growth by ensuring an ample supply of land for a variety of economic development uses, offering a choice of sites in terms of size and location that are accessible to all members of the community, including those without access to a car.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To support, regenerate and promote vibrant city and town centres supported by a network of other centres in accordance with the retail strategy and the hierarchy of centres.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To support tourism development by creating and identifying opportunities for sustainable tourism development and by safeguarding key tourism assets from inappropriate development.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To facilitate sustainable economic development of an appropriate scale in the countryside, including employment in the primary sector	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.

Vision/Strategic Objective	Criteria	Screening	Comment
(agriculture, forestry and mining), while recognising the growing importance of self-employment, homeworking and farm diversification.			
To facilitate economic regeneration and support the connectivity of disadvantaged and deprived areas.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To facilitate investment in power, water, sewerage infrastructure and waste management, particularly in the interests of safeguarding public health.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To facilitate physical and digital connectivity which meets the needs of businesses and private households.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To protect strategically important transportation and public utilities infrastructure and, where possible, enhance connectivity within the Borough.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To facilitate and support measures that address climate change mitigation and adaptation, where practicable, to assist in the transition towards a resilient and net zero carbon economy.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To promote sustainable, good quality design and, where possible, the reuse of existing buildings and regeneration of brownfield land to assist climate change mitigation and adaptation and positive place-making.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To prevent inappropriate new development in areas known to be at risk of flooding, or that may increase flood risk elsewhere, and to put in place measures to assist in flood risk management.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To facilitate integration of transportation and land-use planning to encourage a shift towards more sustainable and active modes of transport.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To safeguard unique and sensitive landscapes from inappropriate development by protecting their special landscape character, environmental quality and visual amenity.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To protect and enhance open spaces, including green and blue infrastructure that support health and well-being, and improve connectivity across the Borough through active travel and integrated biodiversity and ecological networks.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To facilitate renewable and low-carbon energy development in appropriate locations, ensuring the protection of the natural and historic environment in support of sustainable development.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance the natural and historic environment.	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.
To minimise waste generation and support the sustainable provision of facilities for the management and reuse of materials, promoting a circular economy	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy / general aspiration.

Screening [draft] PS Sections 4-20

Plan Proposal/Policy	Criteria	Screening	Comment
4.0 Strategic Policies			
4.1 SP 1: Furthering Sustainable Development and Climate Change Resilience	A	Screened Out	This is a high-level general statement of policy setting out what new development proposals should aim to achieve in respect of sustainability and climate change resilience. In itself, it cannot have any effect on a European site. Implications of delivery are assessed under the Spatial Growth Strategies and Operational Policies.
4.2 SP 2: Design and Placemaking	A	Screened Out	This is a high-level general statement of policy setting out what new development proposals should aim to achieve in respect of their design. In itself, it cannot have any effect on a European site. Implications of delivery are assessed under the related Operational Policies.

Plan Proposal/Policy	Criteria	Screening	Comment
5.0 Spatial Growth Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy			
5.1 SGS 1: Spatial Growth Strategy	A	Screened Out	This is a high-level statement of strategy which, in itself, cannot have any effect on a European site. Implications of delivery are assessed under related Spatial Growth Strategies and Operational Policies.
5.2 SGS 2: Settlement Hierarchy	A	Screened Out	This is a strategic high-level statement setting out the settlement hierarchy within the Plan. Implications of delivery are assessed under related Spatial Growth Strategies and Operational Policies.
6.0 Housing Strategy			
6.1 SGS 3: Strategic Housing Allocation	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
6.2 SGS 4: Management of Housing Supply	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
7.0 Economic Development Strategy			
7.1 SGS 5: Strategic Economic Development Lands Allocation	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
8.0 Retail Strategy			
8.1 SGS 6: Retail Hierarchy	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of strategy which aims to promote and support a town centre first approach for retail and other related uses. It provides a spatial framework against which to apply the operational policies for Retailing and Town Centres. In itself, it cannot have any effect on a European site. Implications of delivery are assessed under related Spatial Growth Strategies and Operational Policies.
9.0 Tourism Strategy		#N/A	
9.1 SGS 7: Tourism Strategy	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of strategy which, in itself, cannot have any effect on a European site. Implications of delivery are assessed under related Operational Policies.
10.0 Transportation Strategy		#N/A	
10.1 SGS 8: Transportation Strategy	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of strategy which, in itself, cannot have any effect on a European site. Implications of delivery are assessed under related Spatial Growth Strategies and Operational Policies.
11.0 Open Space Strategy		#N/A	
11.1 SGS 9: Open Space Strategy	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of strategy which, in itself, cannot have any effect on a European site. Implications of delivery are assessed under related Spatial Growth Strategies and Operational Policies.
12.0 Countryside Strategy		#N/A	
12.1 SGS 10: Sustainable Development in the Countryside	A	Screened Out	The LDP Countryside Strategy is a general statement of strategy which, in itself, cannot have any effect on a European site. It is a possible driver of potential effects, however, implications are assessed under relevant development enabling policies.
12.2 SGS 11: Strategic Landscape Policy Areas	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of strategy which, in itself, cannot have any effect on a European site. Implications of delivery are assessed under related Spatial Growth Strategies and Operational Policies.
13.0 Heritage Strategy		#N/A	
13.1 SGS 12: Heritage Strategy	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of strategy which, in itself, cannot have any effect on a European site.
PART 2			
14.0 General Policies for All Development			
GP 1 Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change	B	Screened Out	This is a policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. Implications of delivery are assessed under related operational policies.

Plan Proposal/Policy	Criteria	Screening	Comment
GP 2 Infrastructure Requirements for Development	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
GP 3 Public Safety and Human Health	B	Screened Out	This is a policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. Implications of delivery are assessed under related operational policies.
GP 4 Amenity	B	Screened Out	This is a policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. Implications of delivery are assessed under related operational policies.
15.0 Design and Place-making			
DES 1 Design Quality	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
DES 2 Rural Design and Character in the Countryside	B	Screened Out	This is a policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. It cannot affect any European sites.
DES 3 Trees and Hedgerows	D	Screened Out	This policy is a general plan-wide environmental/site safeguarding policy. It may afford protection to supporting habitat for site selection features.
DES 4 Shopfront Design	B	Screened Out	This is a policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. Implications of delivery are assessed under related operational policies.
DES 5 Advertisements	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
16.0 Social Theme			
16.1 Housing			
HOU 1 Protecting Zoned Housing Land	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HOU 2 Protected Housing Areas in City and Town Centres	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy which, in itself, cannot have any effect on a European site.
HOU 3 Design Concept Statements, Concept Master Plans and Comprehensive Planning	B	Screened Out	This is a policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. Implications of delivery are assessed under related operational policies.
HOU 4 Quality in Residential Development	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HOU 5 Residential Mix	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HOU 6 Affordable Housing in Settlements	B	Screened Out	This is a policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals. Implications of delivery are assessed under related operational policies.
HOU 7 Conversion or Change of Use of Existing Buildings to Flats or Apartments	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HOU 8 Houses in Multiple Occupation	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HOU 9 Specialist Residential Accommodation	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HOU 10 Travellers Accommodation	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HOU 11 Householder Development	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HOU 12 New Dwellings in an Existing Cluster	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HOU 13 Replacement Dwellings	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.

Plan Proposal/Policy	Criteria	Screening	Comment
HOU 14 Infill and Ribbon Development	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HOU 15 Dwellings on a Farm	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HOU 16 Dwellings for Non-Agricultural Business Enterprises	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HOU 17 Personal and Domestic Circumstances	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HOU 18 Affordable Housing in the Countryside	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HOU 19 Residential Caravans and Mobile Homes	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
16.2 Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation			
OSR 1 Protection and Provision of Open Space	I	Screened In	This policy safeguards existing open space, however, it includes exceptions and therefore the potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
OSR 2 Public Open Space in new Residential Development	I	Screened In	This policy safeguards existing open space, however, it includes exceptions and therefore the potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
OSR 3 Outdoor Recreation in the Countryside	I	Screened In	This policy safeguards existing open space, however, it includes exceptions and therefore the potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
OSR 4 Intensive Sports Facilities	I	Screened In	This policy safeguards existing open space, however, it includes exceptions and therefore the potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
OSR 5 Noise Generating Sports and Outdoor Recreational Facilities	I	Screened In	This policy safeguards existing open space, however, it includes exceptions and therefore the potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
OSR 6 Development of Facilities ancillary to Water Sports	I	Screened In	This policy safeguards existing open space, however, it includes exceptions and therefore the potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
OSR 7 The Floodlighting of Sports and Outdoor Recreational Facilities	I	Screened In	This policy safeguards existing open space, however, it includes exceptions and therefore the potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
OSR 8 Green and Blue Infrastructure	I	Screened In	This policy safeguards existing open space, however, it includes exceptions and therefore the potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
16.3 Community and Cultural			
CCF 1 Community and Cultural Facilities	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
17.0 Economic Theme			
17.1 Economic development			
ECN 1 Economic Development in the Countryside	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
ECN 2 Expansion of an Established Economic Development Use in the Countryside	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
ECN 3 Redevelopment of an Established Economic Development Use in the Countryside	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.

Plan Proposal/Policy	Criteria	Screening	Comment
ECN 4 Major Economic Development in the Countryside	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
ECN 5 Small Scale Economic Development Projects	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
ECN 6 Farm Diversification	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
ECN 7 Agricultural and Forestry Development	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
ECN 8 Economic Development in Settlements	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
ECN 9 Retention of Zoned Lands and Economic Development Uses	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
ECN 10 Development incompatible with Economic Development Uses	F	Screened Out	The policy is a strategic high level policy to avoid incompatible development. In itself (i.e. in the absence of other policies) the policy cannot lead to any development or change.
17.2 Retailing and Town Centres			
RTC 1 Retailing and Other Main Town Centre Use	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
RTC 2 District Centres	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
RTC 3 Local Centres	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
RTC 4 Villages and Small Settlements	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
RTC 5 Retailing in the Countryside	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
RTC 6 Roadside Service Facilities	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
17.3 Tourism			
TOU 1 Tourism Development in Settlements	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
TOU 2 Tourist Amenities in the Countryside	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
TOU 3 Hotels, Guest Houses and Tourist Hostels in the Countryside	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
TOU 4 Major Tourism Development in the Countryside- Exceptional Circumstances	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
TOU 5 Self Catering Accommodation in the Countryside	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
TOU 6 New and Extended Holiday Parks in the Countryside	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
TOU 7 Safeguarding Tourism Assets	D/F	Screened Out	This policy is a general plan-wide safeguarding policy and one that cannot lead to development or other change.
17.4 Minerals development			
MIN 1 Minerals Development	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.

Plan Proposal/Policy	Criteria	Screening	Comment
MIN 2 Areas of Constraint on Minerals Development	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
MIN 3 Minerals Safeguarding	D/F	Screened Out	This policy is a general plan-wide safeguarding policy and one that cannot lead to development or other change.
MIN 4 High Value Minerals	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
MIN 5 Hydrocarbon Development	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
MIN 6 Peat Extraction	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
MIN 7 Restoration and Aftercare of Minerals Sites	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
MIN 8 Development at Risk associated with Past Underground Mineral Extraction	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
17.5 Telecommunications, Utilities and Infrastructure			
TUI 1 Telecommunications Development	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
TUI 2 Infrastructure, Utilities and Overhead Lines	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
17.6 Transportation			
TRAN 1 Accessible Environments	B/G	#N/A	This is a general statement of policy promoting accessibility and convenient movement in the design of development which cannot have any effect on a European site.
TRAN 2 Access to Public Roads	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
TRAN 3 Access to Protected Routes	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
TRAN 4 Safeguarding New Transport Schemes	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy which cannot have any effect on a European site.
TRAN 5 Protection of Disused Transport Routes	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy which cannot have any effect on a European site.
TRAN 6 Transport Assessment	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy which cannot have any effect on a European site.
TRAN 7 Parking and Servicing Arrangements	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
TRAN 8 Active Travel including Walking and Cycling	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
TRAN 9 Provision of Car Parks	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
18.0 Environmental Theme			
18.1 Historic Environment			
HE 1 The Preservation of Archaeological Remains of Regional Importance and their Settings	D	Screened Out	This policy is a general plan-wide environmental/site safeguarding policy.
HE 2 The Protection of Archaeological Remains of Local Importance and their Settings	D	Screened Out	This policy is a general plan-wide environmental/site safeguarding policy.
HE 3 Archaeological Assessment and Evaluation	B	Screened Out	This is a policy listing general criteria for testing the acceptability of proposals.

Plan Proposal/Policy	Criteria	Screening	Comment
HE 4 Archaeological Mitigation	D	Screened Out	This policy is a general plan-wide environmental/site safeguarding policy.
HE 5 Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes of Special Historic Interest	I	Screened In	While this policy is principally intended as a general plan-wide environmental/site safeguarding policy, the conditional aspect means that the potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HE 6 Listed Buildings- Change of Use and/or Extension or Alteration of a Listed Building	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HE 7 Demolition of a Listed Building	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HE 8 Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HE 9 New Development in a Conservation Area	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HE 10 Demolition in a Conservation Area	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HE 11 Demolition in Areas of Townscape or Village Character	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HE 12 New Development in Areas of Townscape or Village Character	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HE 13 Enabling Development	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
HE 14 Conversion and Re-Use of Non-Designated Heritage Assets	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
18.2 Natural Heritage			
NH 1 Protection of European and Ramsar Sites- International	M	Screened In	This policy restates the legal and policy requirements of the Habitats Regulations and the SPSS in relation to European sites. As the policy is explicitly to protect European sites/Ramsar sites, it must be screened in for further assessment.
NH 2 Species Protected by Law	D	Screened Out	This policy is a general plan-wide environmental/site safeguarding policy. May afford additional protection to some site selection features.
NH 3 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (National)	D	Screened Out	This policy is a general plan-wide environmental/site safeguarding policy. May afford additional protection to some site selection features.
NH 4 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (Local)	D	Screened Out	This policy is a general plan-wide environmental/site safeguarding policy. May afford additional protection to some site selection features.
NH 5 Habitats, Species, Biodiversity or Features of Natural Heritage Importance	D	Screened Out	This policy is a general plan-wide environmental/site safeguarding policy. May afford additional protection to some site selection features.
NH 6 Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs)	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
NH 7 Landscape Wedges	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
NH 8 Area(s) of Outstanding Natural Beauty	B/D	Screened Out	This policy is a general plan-wide environmental/site safeguarding policy and lists general criteria for testing the acceptability / sustainability of proposals.
NH 9 Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCIs)	D	Screened Out	This policy is a general plan-wide environmental/site safeguarding policy. May afford additional protection to some site selection features.
18.3 Flood Risk and Drainage			

Plan Proposal/Policy	Criteria	Screening	Comment
FRD 1 Development in Fluvial (River) Flood Plains	I	Screened In	Largely protective through constraining development in fluvial and coastal flood plains, however exceptions apply, therefore the potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
FRD 2 Protection of Flood Defence and Drainage Infrastructure	A	Screened Out	This is a general statement of policy which cannot have any effect on a European site.
FRD 3 Development and Surface Water (Pluvial) Flood Risk outside Flood Plains	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
FRD 4 Artificial Modification of Watercourses	I	Screened In	This policy allows for culverting in limited circumstances therefore the potential for effects on a European site cannot be excluded.
FRD 5 Development in Proximity to Controlled Reservoirs	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
18.4 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy			
RLED 1 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
18.5 Waste Management			
WMT 1 Environmental Impact of a Waste Management Facility	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
WMT 2 Waste Collection and Treatment Facilities	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
WMT 3 Waste Disposal	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
WMT 4 Land Improvement	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
WMT 5 Development in the vicinity of Waste Management Facilities	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
18. 6 Environmental Protection			
EP 1 Environmental Pollution	D	Screened Out	This is a general plan-wide environmental safeguarding policy.
EP 2 Land Contamination	I	Screened In	The potential for development with a pathway to a European site cannot be excluded.
PART 3			
19.0 Other Specialised Areas			
DC1 Developer Contributions	A	Screened Out	This is a strategic high-level statement of policy which sets out requirement for developer contributions and planning agreements. In itself, it cannot have any effect on a European site. Implications of delivery are assessed under related Strategic and Operational Policies
PART 4			
20.0 Monitoring and Review	NA	Screened Out	Administrative text setting out Plan monitoring and review arrangements.
Monitoring and Review Monitoring Framework	NA	Screened Out	Administrative text setting out Plan monitoring and review arrangements.

Plan Proposal/Policy	Criteria	Screening	Comment
APPENDICES Appendix 1 Transitional Arrangements Appendix 2 Guidance for Development Relying on Non-Mains Wastewater Infrastructure Appendix 3 Hazardous Substances and Major Accident Hazard Pipelines Appendix 4 Guidance for Outdoor Advertisements Appendix 5 Residential Space Standards Appendix 6 Definition of an Established Residential Area Appendix 7 Wheelchair Housing Space Standards Appendix 8 Guidance for Householder Development Appendix 9 Vernacular Buildings Appendix 10 Homeworking Appendix 11 Tourism: Part A: Tourist Amenities in the Countryside Part B: Landscape Design Considerations for Holiday Parks Appendix 12 Flood Risk: Part A – Sustainable Drainage Part B – Assessing Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Appendix 13 Maps	NA	Screened Out	The appendices provide visuals, evidence and additional supporting information associated with the Plan Strategy. The appendices cannot have any effect on a European site.

INTERESTED IN DEVELOPMENT

in the Armagh City,
Banbridge and
Craigavon Borough

Please contact

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