

# APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT CONCLUSION STATEMENT

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## FOR THE DUNDALK LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025-2031

for: **Louth County Council**



Comhairle Contae Lú  
**Louth County Council**

by: **CAAS Ltd.**



**APRIL 2025**

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# Section 1 Introduction and Background

## 1.1 Introduction

This is the Appropriate Assessment (AA) Conclusion Statement for the Dundalk Local Area Plan. The obligation to undertake AA derives from Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC as transposed into Irish legislation by, inter alia, the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. AA is a focused and detailed impact assessment of the implications of a strategic action (such as a plan or programme) or project, alone and in combination with other strategic actions and projects, on the integrity of any European Site in view of its conservation objectives. This AA Conclusion Statement should be read in conjunction with the Plan and associated documents including the AA Natura Impact Report (NIR).

## 1.2 Legislative Requirements in relation to AA

In carrying out the AA for the Plan, Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, requires, inter alia, that the Council considers the matters arrayed in the first column on Table 1.1 below. The second column identifies how these issues have been addressed.

**Table 1.1 Matters taken into account by the AA**

Matter specified by the Regulations	How addressed by AA
(a) the Natura Impact Report	An AA NIR accompanies this AA Conclusion Statement and the Plan.
(b) any supplemental information furnished in relation to any such report	This AA Conclusion Statement accompanies the NIR that provides additional detail on European Sites.
(c) if appropriate, any additional information sought by the authority and furnished by the applicant in relation to a Natura Impact Report	
(d) any information or advice obtained by the public authority	Submissions made during the Plan preparation/AA process were taken into account in the preparation of the final, consolidated AA NIR.
(e) if appropriate, any written submissions or observations made to the public authority in relation to the application for consent for proposed plan or project	Proposed Material Alterations were screened for the need to undertake Stage 2 AA (Stage 2 AA was not required for the Alterations).
(f) any other relevant information	

In addition to the above, the Regulations require that the Council makes available for inspection a determination regarding the outcome of the assessment with respect to whether or not the Plan would adversely affect the integrity of a European site (a copy of this determination is provided at Section 4).

## 1.3 AA Conclusion Statement

Non-Statutory AA guidance (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009) states that (Section 4.14) it *"is recommended that planning authorities include a clear and discrete AA Conclusion Statement as a distinct section in the written statement of the plan separate to the SEA statement."* This guidance recommends that the following issues are addressed by the AA Conclusion Statement:

- Summary of how the findings of the AA were factored into the Plan (see Section 2);
- Reasons for choosing the Plan as adopted, in the light of other reasonable alternatives considered as part of the AA process (see Section 3);
- A declaration that the Plan as adopted will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of European Sites (provided at Section 4); and
- The NIR (the AA NIR is accompanied by this AA Conclusion Statement and has informed the AA Determination – see Section 4).

Furthermore, as stated in the Draft "Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2021):

*"...There is a similar requirement to publish a determination relating to the AA that may have been undertaken. Under Article 6.3 of the Habitats Directive the determination (often termed an 'AA Conclusion Statement') must state as to whether or not the Draft Plan would adversely affect the integrity of a European site. However as stated in Section 3.5, this determination must have been made prior to the adoption of the Draft Plan."*

This AA Conclusion Statement addresses the above issues, including the signed AA Determination included at Section 4.

## Section 2 How the findings of the AA were factored into the Plan

The SEA and AA team worked with the Plan-preparation team at the Council in order to integrate requirements for environmental protection and management into the Plan.

The Plan was prepared in an iterative manner whereby the Plan and AA documents have informed subsequent versions of the other. The findings of the AA were integrated into the Plan through mitigation measures. These mitigation measures ensure that the Plan will not affect the integrity of the European Sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.<sup>1</sup> The mitigation measures included in the Local Area Plan that most relevant to the protection of European sites are identified in Table 2.1 below.

Furthermore, the detailed Plan preparation process undertaken by the Planning Department for the higher-level County Development Plan, combined with specialist input from the SEA and AA processes, resulted in the integration of mitigation into that Plan that must be complied with in the Plan area. These measures are also identified on Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1 Measures that will protect European sites and their sustaining resources integrated into the Plan<sup>2</sup>**

Component	Development Objectives / Mitigation Measure(s)
Alignment with County Development Plan	<p><b>DM 1</b> To require planning applications to be consistent with the relevant guidance and comply with the relevant standards set out in the Development Management Guidelines of the County Development Plan and any relevant policy objectives, designation, or standards set out in this Plan, the County Development Plan, or Section 28 Guidelines.</p> <p><b>DM 2</b> To ensure the Dundalk Local Area Plan is consistent with the County Development Plan. A Variation to the County Development Plan will be required to take account of any amendments made to text and policy objectives, zoning and flood zones map, or composite map relating to Dundalk during the preparation of this Plan.</p>
Natural Heritage and Biodiversity	<p><b>SC 1</b> To ensure that any development in Dundalk makes a positive contribution to the character, setting, and built and natural environment of the town.</p> <p><b>CH 1</b> To protect and conserve the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA) designated under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives.</p> <p><b>CH 2</b> To ensure that all proposed developments comply with the requirements set out in the DECLG 'Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities 2010'.</p> <p><b>CH 3</b> To ensure that no plan, programme, or project giving rise to likely significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on European sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Local Area Plan, either individually or in combination with other plans, programmes or projects<sup>3</sup>.</p> <p><b>CH 4</b> All masterplans, and the objectives therein, being implemented by the Council for the Plan area shall have regard to the requirements under Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.</p> <p><b>CH 5</b> To co-operate with the Regional Planning Assembly and adjoining local authorities, public agencies and community interests to protect regionally significant heritage assets, environmental quality, and to identify threats to existing environmental quality in a transboundary context throughout the region including Northern Ireland.</p> <p><b>CH 6</b> To ensure that any development within or adjacent to a pNHA is designed and sited to minimise its impact on the ecological value of the site and to resist development that would result in a significant deterioration of habitats or a disturbance of species</p> <p><b>CH 7</b> To ensure the preservation of the uniqueness of Dundalk's sensitive landscape setting by ensuring that new development meets high standards of siting and design and does not unduly damage or detract from the character of a landscape or natural environment.</p> <p><b>CH 10</b> To ensure that any development proposals protect and enhance the wetland sites in Dundalk.</p> <p><b>Section 10.7 Trees Woodland and Hedgerows</b> Any development that, in exceptional circumstances, requires the removal of trees or groups of trees shall include proposals that replace the trees to be removed with semi-mature, native trees at a ratio of five new trees per single tree felled (5:1). On smaller, more constrained sites, where the ratio of 5:1 trees cannot be provided, consideration may be given to reducing this ratio. Where trees and/or hedgerows are required to be removed in order to facilitate development, this shall be done outside the nesting season (1 st of March to the 31st of August each year).</p> <p><b>Section 10.8 Hedgerows</b> This Plan will seek to protect and retain hedgerows of visual and ecological value. Where hedgerows cannot be retained as part of a development, a new hedgerow consisting of native species shall be planted when feasible.</p> <p><b>Section 10.11 Green Infrastructure<sup>4</sup></b> This Plan will seek to enhance and protect the wildlife corridors and habitats throughout Dundalk. Any new development shall strive to identify existing features of ecological importance and, where possible, should incorporate and utilise these to facilitate the building of a coherent network of rich biodiversity sites and linkages. All development proposals should seek to enhance biodiversity and make a positive contribution to the overall green infrastructure network of Dundalk. It is considered that the augmentation of Dundalk's green infrastructure through the</p>

<sup>1</sup> Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be: (a) no alternative solution available, (b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and (c) adequate compensatory measures in place.

<sup>2</sup> Note that non-material changes to individual Plan provisions referenced in this report may be updated during the finalisation of the Plan, including numbering, formatting and graphic design.

<sup>3</sup> Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, where there must be no alternatives, imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project to proceed and adequate compensatory measures are in place.

<sup>4</sup> As defined in the Plan: Green infrastructure is a term used to describe the network of natural spaces and corridors in a given area. Green infrastructure assets include open spaces, such as, parks and gardens, woodlands, fields, hedges, playing fields, coastal habitats, as well as footpaths, cycleways and/or rivers. Assets involving water are often referred to as 'blue infrastructure', but these are all included in the overarching term of 'Green Infrastructure'.

Component	Development Objectives / Mitigation Measure(s)
	<p>provision of ecological enhancement, will make a positive contribution to Dundalk's ecological value and also climate change mitigation.</p> <p><b>CH 18</b> To protect and enhance Dundalk's Green Infrastructure in accordance with the details and recommendations included in Table 10.7 'Dundalk's Green Infrastructure Features and Potential for Enhancement'.</p> <p><b>Section 10.12 Species Protected by Law</b></p> <p>The presence of species such as otters, pine martins, badgers, frogs, newts, bats and swifts which are protected by law is a material consideration when the Council is considering any development proposal.</p> <p><b>CH 17</b> To protect and enhance features of interest in Dundalk's Green Infrastructure network thereby ensuring that sensitive habitats and protected species are safeguarded, unless in exceptional circumstances or when an alternative habitat can be provided.</p> <p><b>Section 3.4.2 Spot Objectives</b></p> <p>A – Dundalk Bay, South of Racecourse – To preserve the ecological character and biodiversity value of the lands.</p>
Peatlands, wetlands and surface water courses	<p><b>CH 10</b> To ensure that any development proposals protect and enhance the wetland sites in Dundalk.</p> <p><b>CH 18</b> To protect and enhance Dundalk's Green Infrastructure in accordance with the details and recommendations included in Table 10.7 'Dundalk's Green Infrastructure Features and Potential for Enhancement'.</p> <p><b>CH 17</b> To protect and enhance features of interest in Dundalk's Green Infrastructure network thereby ensuring that sensitive habitats and protected species are safeguarded, unless in exceptional circumstances or when an alternative habitat can be provided.</p> <p><b>INF 27</b> To ensure that, where feasible, no development, including clearing or storage of materials, takes place within a minimum distance of 10m measured from the bank of any river, stream, or watercourse unless the development is water compatible. New developments shall seek to incorporate the 'Four Steps to Good Riparian and River Planning for Urban Areas' as set out in 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment' (Inland Fisheries Ireland, 2020).</p>
Water services, groundwater, water quality and SuDS <sup>5</sup>	<p><b>INF 1</b> To liaise and work in partnership with Uisce Éireann in identifying, prioritising and progressing the implementation of water and wastewater projects and policies over the lifetime of this Plan that will enable Dundalk to achieve the projected population target and housing allocation set out in Table 2.4 in the Development Strategy (chapter 2) of this Plan.</p> <p><b>INF 3</b> To support the provision, extension and upgrade of high-quality water and wastewater services infrastructure for both existing and future developments within the plan area, consistent with the principles of sustainability.</p> <p><b>INF 4</b> To require all new developments to connect to the public supply where public water and wastewater infrastructure is available, or likely to be available, and which has sufficient capacity.</p> <p><b>INF 5</b> To discourage the use of pump stations for conveyance of sewage unless the proposed pump station will cater for a significant catchment of zoned development lands that otherwise cannot be serviced. Where deemed appropriate, in consultation with Uisce Éireann, temporary pumping arrangements may be considered as an interim measure, pending the provision of more permanent arrangements within a reasonable timeframe. All arrangements for same will be as per the requirements and agreement of Uisce Éireann.</p> <p><b>INF 6</b> To promote the sustainable use of water and water conservation (such as rainwater harvesting) in existing and new developments within Dundalk and to support the commitment to water conservation and leakage reduction in accordance with best practice, and through the implementation of the National Leakage Reduction Programme.</p> <p><b>Section 9.4 Surface Water Management and Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS)</b></p> <p>All new developments in the Plan area shall incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) into their design proposals and shall be designed in accordance with the best practice guidance set out in the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS) and the Nature-based Solutions to the Management of Rainwater and Surface Water Runoff in Urban Areas – Best Practice Interim Guidance Document.</p> <p><b>INF 7</b> To require the use of sustainable drainage systems to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of SuDS measures be incorporated in all new development (including extensions to existing developments). All development proposals shall be accompanied by a comprehensive SuDS assessment including run-off quantity, run off quality and impacts on habitat and water quality and should have particular regard to nature-based solutions and section 3.5 of the accompanying Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in Volume 4, 'Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and Surface Water Guidance and Strategy'<sup>6</sup>.</p> <p><b>INF 8</b> To require that all development proposals meet the design criteria, (adjusted to reflect local conditions), and material designs contained in the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS) and demonstrate how runoff is captured as close to source as possible with subsequent slow release to the drainage system and watercourse.</p> <p><b>INF 9</b> To seek to avoid the discharge of additional surface water to combined sewers and promote Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and solutions to maximise the capacity of Dundalk's combined drainage system.</p> <p><b>INF 10</b> To ensure all new developments provide for separated drainage systems.</p> <p><b>INF 11</b> To promote rainwater harvesting and grey water use in all developments and in particular for larger developments, as an alternative to attenuation.</p> <p><b>INF 12</b> To encourage in all buildings, and particular in buildings of increased height, the provision of green roofs and green walls as an integrated part of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), wherever possible.</p> <p><b>INF 13</b> To encourage the use of Nature based Sustainable Urban Drainage System (NbSUDS), when feasible, where streetscape enhancement programmes or resurfacing programmes are planned.</p> <p><b>Section 9.5 Water Quality and River Basin Management Plan</b></p> <p>This Plan sets out the measures to protect and improve the quality of our waters.</p> <p><b>INF 14</b> To implement the EU Water Framework Directive through the implementation of the appropriate River Basin Management Plan and Programme of Measures to protect and improve water bodies and to ensure developments shall not, individually or cumulatively, adversely impact on the status of waterbodies, subject to Water Framework Directive exemptions.</p> <p><b>INF 15</b> To ensure all new development incorporates appropriate measures to protect existing water bodies, through appropriate treatment of runoff. In particular, discharges from car parks shall be appropriately treated so as to remove pollutant materials.</p> <p><b>INF 16</b> To protect any groundwater resources in Dundalk and to implement the recommendations included in any Groundwater Protection Scheme prepared under the EU Groundwater Directives</p>
Tourism	<p><b>RT 15</b> To develop and enhance the tourism, recreational and amenity potential of the town's waterways and coastal area, while not compromising the ecological importance of these areas.</p>
Green / Blue Infrastructure	<p><b>MOV 13</b> To continue to support the development of a network of greenways in Dundalk and the surrounding areas including those set out in section 8.6 of this Plan, and to continue to engage and work with stakeholders including Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), the National Transport Authority (NTA) and the Office of Public Works (OPW) in the progression of these projects.</p> <p><b>DM 1</b> To require planning applications to be consistent with the relevant guidance and comply with the relevant standards set out in the Development Management Guidelines of the County Development Plan and any relevant policy objectives, designation, or standards set out in this Plan, the County Development Plan, or Section 28 Guidelines.</p>

<sup>5</sup> Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

<sup>6</sup> Because of the infinite range of land use types and associated developments and designs that could occur on sites under this Plan, the full range of SuDS available should be considered, taking into account the recommendations and information provided in Section 3.5 of the SFRA report.

Component	Development Objectives / Mitigation Measure(s)
	<p><b>DM 2</b> To ensure the Dundalk Local Area Plan is consistent with the County Development Plan. A Variation to the County Development Plan will be required to take account of any amendments made to text and policy objectives, zoning and flood zones map, or composite map relating to Dundalk during the preparation of this Plan.</p>
Built environment	<p><b>INF 2</b> To support the delivery of essential infrastructure, incorporating appropriate climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, concurrent with the future residential, commercial and employment growth of Dundalk.</p> <p><b>INF 32</b> To protect and maintain environmental quality in Dundalk through the implementation of relevant European, National and Regional policy and legislation relating to air quality, greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management.</p> <p><b>EE 12</b> To support on-site renewable energy projects and any other initiatives by businesses to reduce their carbon footprint, which will contribute to achieving national targets for net zero emissions by 2050.</p>
Flood Risk Management	<p><b>INF 17</b> To support the progression of the Dundalk and Blackrock Flood Relief Scheme and the delivery of associated infrastructure critical to the implementation of the Scheme; and to prohibit development that could prejudice the future delivery of the Scheme.</p> <p><b>INF 19</b> To require all proposals for development falling within or adjacent to an identified flood zone(s) to submit a site-specific flood Risk Assessment, based on the most up to date information available, that demonstrates that the proposal identifies all sources of flood risk to and from the proposed development, can adequately manage and mitigate any flood risk arising from the development including details of any structural and non-structural risk management measures (e.g. floor levels, flood-resilient construction etc.), and will not exacerbate flood risk elsewhere<sup>7</sup>.</p>
Coastal Erosion	<p><b>INF 22</b> To require, on a case-by-case basis to be determined by the Planning Authority at either the preplanning or planning application stage, the preparation of a Coastal Erosion Assessment Report for development within 100 metres of the coastline. New development will be prohibited unless it can be objectively established based on the best scientific information at the time of the application, that the likelihood of erosion at a specific location is minimal taking into account, inter alia, any impacts.</p> <p><b>INF 23</b> To ensure that Dundalk's natural coastal defences (beaches, salt marshes and estuary lands) are protected and to ensure they are not put at risk by inappropriate works or development.</p> <p><b>INF 24</b> To explore, where coastal erosion is considered a threat to existing properties, the technical, environmental, and economic feasibility of coastal adaptation and coastal retreat management options.</p> <p><b>INF 25</b> To employ soft engineering techniques as an alternative to hard coastal defence works, wherever possible.</p> <p><b>INF 26</b> To identify, prioritise and implement necessary coastal protection works subject to the availability of resources, whilst ensuring a high level of protection for natural habitats and features, and ensure due regard is paid to visual and other environmental considerations in the design of any such coastal protection works.</p>
Invasive species	<p><b>The management of invasive species' occurrence and risk where required is provided for by adherence to the policy objectives of the current Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 (as varied) via policies NBG 12 and NBG 13, as outlined below:</b></p> <p><b>NBG 12</b> Prevent and control the spread of invasive plant and animal species within the County.</p> <p><b>NBG 13</b> Development sites must be investigated for the presence of invasive species, which if present must be treated and/or eradicated in accordance with best practice. Where appropriate, Invasive Species Management Plans will be prepared for such sites.</p> <p><b>The above policy objectives therefore render any development or project resulting from the implementation of this Plan subject to compliance with policy objectives NBG 12 and NBG 13 of the current Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 (as varied).</b></p>
Agriculture	<p><b>INF 28</b> To protect and maintain environmental quality in Dundalk through the implementation of relevant European, National and Regional policy and legislation relating to air quality, greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management.</p> <p><b>The sustainable and appropriate management of the agricultural sector within the Plan area are provided for by adherence to the policy objectives of the current Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 (as varied) via policies ENV 20, ENV 21, ENV 22 and ENV 23, as outlined below:</b></p> <p><b>ENV 20</b> To ensure compliance with and to implement the provisions of the Nitrates Directive in so far as it falls within the remit of the Council to do so.</p> <p><b>ENV 21</b> To assess agricultural developments and associated agricultural waste matters within the County in accordance with the European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2017 for the purpose of preventing or eliminating the entry of polluting matters to waters.</p> <p><b>ENV 22</b> To encourage the use of catchment-sensitive farming practices, in order to meet Water Framework Directive targets and comply with the River Basin Management Plan.</p> <p><b>ENV 23</b> To implement the relevant provisions of the Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2011, and the European Communities (Amendment to Planning and Development) Regulations 2011, which require planning permission be sought where the area impacted by works relating to the drainage or reclamation of a wetland exceeds 0.1 hectares, or where such works may have a significant effect on the environment.</p> <p><b>The above policy objectives therefore render any development or project resulting from the implementation of this Plan subject to compliance with policy objectives ENV 20, ENV 21, ENV 22 and ENV 23 of the current Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 (as varied).</b></p>
Forestry	<p><b>The sustainable and appropriate management of the forestry sector within the Plan area are provided for by adherence to the policy objectives of the current Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 (as varied) via policy objective ENV 32, as outlined below:</b></p> <p><b>ENV 32</b> To encourage the development of a well-managed sustainable forestry sector, which is compatible with the protection of the environment including the avoidance of likely significant effects on European sites (SACs and SPAs) and is planted, managed and harvested in accordance with the Forest Service Guidelines for Landscape, Forest Harvesting and Environmental, Archaeology, Biodiversity and Water Quality' and any subsequent guidelines.</p> <p><b>The above policy therefore renders any development or project resulting from the implementation of this Plan subject to compliance with policy objective ENV 32 of the current Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 (as varied).</b></p>
Light pollution	<p><b>INF 28</b> To protect and maintain environmental quality in Dundalk through the implementation of relevant European, National and Regional policy and legislation relating to air quality, greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management.</p> <p><b>INF 32</b> To ensure that all external lighting whether free standing or attached to a building shall be designed and constructed so as not to cause excessive light spillage, glare, or dazzle motorists, and thereby limiting light pollution into the surrounding environment and protecting the amenities of nearby properties, traffic and wildlife.</p>
Air Pollution	<p><b>INF 28</b> To protect and maintain environmental quality in Dundalk through the implementation of relevant European, National and Regional policy and legislation relating to air quality, greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management.</p>

<sup>7</sup> More information on requirements in relation to Structural and Non-Structural Risk Management Measures are provided in a footnote to this Policy Objective at Table 5 of the accompanying SFRA report in Volume 4.

Component	Development Objectives / Mitigation Measure(s)
	<p><b>Section 9.9.2 Air Quality</b> This Plan will support the provision of air quality real time monitoring stations at appropriate locations in Dundalk.</p>
<p>Noise Pollution</p>	<p><b>INF 28</b> To protect and maintain environmental quality in Dundalk through the implementation of relevant European, National and Regional policy and legislation relating to air quality, greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management. <b>INF 33</b> To implement the Noise Action Plan for Louth County Council in order to avoid, prevent and reduce the harmful effects to humans and wildlife, including annoyance, due to environmental noise exposure. <b>INF 34</b> Developments for noise sensitive uses shall have regard to the noise maps contained within the Louth Noise Action Plan 2024-2028 or any subsequent plan and developers shall be required, where deemed necessary by the Planning Authority, to produce a noise impact assessment and mitigation plans, for any new noise sensitive development within these areas.</p>
<p>Geology</p>	<p><b>CH 8</b> In consultation with the Geological Survey of Ireland – protect from inappropriate development and maintain the character, integrity and conservation value of those features or areas of geological interest.</p>
<p>Extractive Industry / Contaminated Lands</p>	<p><b>Section 9.9.5 Contaminated Land and Soil Remediation</b> Any lands that are known or suspected of contamination will require detailed investigative works to be carried out as part of a planning application to identify the source and extent of contamination. A risk-based approach in accordance with best practice techniques, in consultation with the Environmental Protection Agency and any other relevant bodies (as required or necessary), shall be taken to the remediation of contaminated lands to ensure works are completed to the highest standards. <b>INF 35</b> To ensure that development on contaminated lands includes appropriate remediation measures.</p>
<p>Climate</p>	<p><b>CA 1</b> To support the implementation of the Climate Action Plan 2024, the National Energy Climate Plan and the Louth Climate Action Plan 2024- 2029 and other relevant policy and legislation or subsequent publications. <b>CA 2</b> To reduce carbon emissions and create a climate resilient town by prioritising measures to address climate change by way of both effective mitigation and adaptation responses in accordance with available guidance and best practice. <b>CA 4</b> To support the implementation of the Dundalk Blackrock Decarbonisation Zone through the delivery of the 16 actions contained within the Louth Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. <b>INF 2</b> To support the delivery of essential infrastructure, incorporating appropriate climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, concurrent with the future residential, commercial and employment growth of Dundalk. <b>INF 28</b> To protect and maintain environmental quality in Dundalk through the implementation of relevant European, National and Regional policy and legislation relating to air quality, greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management. <b>MOV 2</b> To support investment in sustainable transport infrastructure that will make walking, cycling and public transport more attractive and appealing, and facilitate accessibility for all, regardless of age, physical mobility, or economic status. <b>MOV 4</b> To encourage a modal shift from use of the private car towards more sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling, and public transport and to support any initiatives that would assist in the attainment of the Climate Action Plan 2024 mode share targets for 2030: 53% (Car), 19% (Public Transport) and 28% (Active Travel). <b>Section 8.4.3 Objectives of the Local Transport Plan</b> Align with the Climate Action Plan and reduce greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions <b>MOV 8</b> To support the retrospective provision of walking and cycling infrastructure, where feasible, to achieve growth in sustainable mobility and strengthen and improve the walking and cycling network. <b>MOV 12</b> To support the design and implementation of public realm projects within the Plan area that will make Dundalk and Blackrock more attractive and liveable spaces which are climate resilient, promote sustainable transport, and facilitate accessibility for all, regardless of age, physical mobility, or social disadvantage. <b>MOV 15</b> To support the Green School Travel and Safe Routes to School Programmes and any other sustainable transport initiative developed by schools. <b>MOV 32</b> To facilitate the switch to Electric Vehicles through the roll-out of additional electric charging points at appropriate locations within Dundalk in association with relevant agencies and stakeholders and facilitate the provision of electricity charging infrastructure within Dundalk in accordance with the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025 and any subsequent strategy. <b>EE 12</b> To support on-site renewable energy projects and any other initiatives by businesses to reduce their carbon footprint, which will contribute to achieving national targets for net zero emissions by 2050.</p>
<p>Renewable Energy</p>	<p><b>CA 3</b> To promote awareness of climate change and to work in partnership with other bodies to ensure best practice with regard to use of renewable energy technologies. <b>INF 38</b> To support initiatives for limiting and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases through energy efficiency and the development and progression of renewable energy projects at suitable locations, utilising the natural resources available in Dundalk, in an environmentally acceptable manner subject to normal proper planning considerations including in particular the impact on areas of environmental or landscape sensitivity. <b>EE 12</b> To support on-site renewable energy projects and any other initiatives by businesses to reduce their carbon footprint, which will contribute to achieving national targets for net zero emissions by 2050.</p>
<p>Waste Management</p>	<p><b>INF 28</b> To protect and maintain environmental quality in Dundalk through the implementation of relevant European, National and Regional policy and legislation relating to air quality, greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management. <b>INF 29</b> To support the ongoing investment and maintenance of existing waste disposal and recycling facilities within the Plan area and to facilitate the provision of additional facilities in appropriate locations in accordance with the requirements of the current National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy 2020-2025 or any subsequent plan. <b>INF 30</b> To encourage and support the expansion and improvement of the three-bin system (mixed dry recyclables, organic waste and residual waste) in order to increase the quantity and quality of materials collected for recycling in conjunction with relevant stakeholders. <b>INF 31</b> To support circular economy principles, prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery, to support a healthy environment, economy and society and to enhance employment opportunities.</p>
<p>Monitoring</p>	<p><b>Section 11.3</b> Monitoring procedures are being developed in line with the Louth County Development Plan. The Planning Department will be the lead section for the implementation and monitoring of this plan, primarily through the application of the development management process. The Plan will be used by each directorate to guide decision making and investment throughout the Dundalk area. <b>Section 9.9.2 Air Quality</b> This Plan will support the provision of air quality real time monitoring stations at appropriate locations in Dundalk.</p>
<p>Masterplans</p>	<p><b>CH 4</b> All masterplans, and the objectives therein, being implemented by the Council for the Plan area shall have regard to the requirements under Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.</p>

## Section 3 Consideration of Alternatives

This section summarises the alternatives considered for the Plan during the preparation process. These alternatives have been incorporated into the Plan having regard to both:

1. The environmental effects (including those related to ecology and European sites) which are identified by the SEA (informed by the AA) and are summarised below; and
2. Planning - including social and economic - effects that also were considered by the Council.

### 3.1 Limitations in Available Alternatives

The Local Area Plan is required to be consistent with the County Development Plan, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region and the National Planning Framework. The County Development Plan includes a population target and housing allocation for Dundalk, which is reflective of the designation and growth strategy for the town in National and Regional Policy. This therefore limits the alternatives available for the Local Area Plan.

### 3.2 Summary of Description and Assessment

#### 3.2.1 Land Uses

**Alternative 1** "More dispersed settlement pattern" would be based on edge of centre development on greenfield sites with a limited focus on town centre regeneration and infill and brownfield development. Densities would be lower and development would be more car dependent. The build out of lands would be developer driven with a limited plan-led approach in the identification of key development areas in the town.

The approach under this alternative would not allow for water supply, waste water, compact growth, public transport and co-ordinated development considerations to be integrated into the Plan to the highest degree. Additional infrastructure would be required to accommodate edge of centre development on greenfield sites, more than would be required for Alternative 2 and some development may have to be serviced by private waste water treatment systems, which would have to be properly maintained.

The development of the town centre would be less compact and less sustainable under this scenario and would not optimally support the longer-term viability of the settlement. 30% of residential development would be less likely to be achieved in core areas in comparison with Alternative 2. Giving less of a preference to lands that have a greater capacity to satisfy the principles of active travel and giving a less focus to key development areas (there would be no clear parameters for development identified, making successful applications for the sustainable, compact development of the town less likely) would allow for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town as envisaged by the wider planning framework to a lesser degree.

This alternative would make less of a contribution towards the protection and management of the environment by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the Town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services. Demand to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area would be provided for. This alternative would be considered the least effective out of both alternatives in the delivery of a sustainable, low carbon and climate resilient future for the town.

The approach under Alternative 1 would benefit the protection of various environmental components to a lesser degree. This alternative would not provide the most evidence-based framework for development and would have the potential to undermine sustainable development and proper planning

- with potential for associated unnecessary significant residual adverse environmental effects on various environmental components, including:

- Conflict with efforts to maximise sustainable compact growth, sustainable mobility and a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society (significant residual adverse effects would occur);
- Significant residual adverse effects upon the achievement of carbon emission reduction targets in line with local, national and European environmental objectives (would occur);
- Significant residual adverse effects upon the economic viability of providing for public assets and infrastructure;
- Significant residual adverse effects on ecology, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats and species;
- Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces (significant residual adverse effects would occur);
- Occurrence of visual impacts (significant residual adverse effects would occur); and
- Increased loadings on water bodies.

**Alternative 2** “Integration of land use and transport planning that focuses on consolidation and build out of extant permissions” would seek to ensure that the future growth of the town and would enable the creation of more sustainable communities where there is a reduced dependence on the private car and more opportunities for people to walk and cycle by a combination of providing the requisite infrastructure and ensuring services and facilities are close to where people live. Key development areas in the town would be identified and the recommendations of the Local Transport Plan would be incorporated into the Local Area Plan.

The approach under this alternative would allow for water supply, waste water, compact growth, public transport and co-ordinated development considerations to be integrated into the Plan to the highest degree. Much of the infrastructure required to be in place to achieve the growth targets is already in place or planned under this alternative.

The development of the town centre would be more compact and sustainable under this scenario and would better support the longer-term viability of the settlement. 30% of residential units would be expected to take place in the core areas of the town. Giving a strong preference to lands that have a greater capacity to satisfy the principles of active travel and giving a focus to key development areas (with clear parameters for development identified, ensuring compliance with planning and environmental requirements and making successful applications for the sustainable, compact development of the town more likely) would allow for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town as envisaged by the wider planning framework to the greatest degree.

This alternative would make the greatest contribution towards the protection and management of the environment by facilitating development of lands (including those within and adjacent to the Town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. This alternative would be considered the most effective out of both Development Strategies considered in the delivery of a sustainable, low carbon and climate resilient future for the town.

The approach under Alternative 2 would benefit the protection of various environmental components. Although potentially adverse effects associated with land use development would exist, they would be mitigated to a significant degree. Less residual environmental effects would result.

Selected Alternative: Alternative 2

### **3.2.2 Vacancy and Regeneration**

Both alternatives for vacancy and regeneration would facilitate the development of the town; however, they would contribute towards environmental protection and management and sustainable development to varying degrees.

**Alternative 1** would take a “General approach” to promoting the redevelopment of vacant and underutilised lands by including generic policy objectives and narrative. Although this alternative would contribute towards the redevelopment of vacant and underutilised lands, it would do so to a lesser extent than Alternative 2.

The development of the town centre would be less compact and less sustainable under this scenario and would not optimally support the longer-term viability of the settlement. 30% of residential development would be less likely to be achieved in core areas in comparison with Alternative 2. Giving less of a focus to the redevelopment of vacant and underutilised lands that would have capacity to satisfy the principles of active travel and giving less of a focus to opportunity sites (there would be no clear parameters for development identified, making successful applications for the sustainable development of these properties less likely) would allow for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town as envisaged by the wider planning framework to a lesser degree.

This alternative would make less of a contribution towards the protection and management of the environment by facilitating development of properties (including those within and adjacent to the Town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are often already served by infrastructure and services. This alternative would be considered the least effective out of both alternatives in the delivery of a sustainable, low carbon and climate resilient future for the town.

The approach under Alternative 1 would benefit the protection of various environmental components to a lesser degree. Under this alternative, more development would have to be accommodated on more sensitive, less well-serviced, less well-connected lands elsewhere in the Plan area.

Redevelopment of vacant and underutilised lands has the potential to result in elevated levels of potential adverse effects on cultural heritage (both archaeology and architecture) in the short term, arising during construction; however, these would be mitigated and the longer-term protection of these assets would be secured, to a lesser extent under Alternative 1.

**Alternative 2** "Focused and plan-led approach" would involve the identification of specific properties and areas of the town that have significant redevelopment potential. These would be identified as 'opportunity sites' and a supporting narrative would be provided setting out potential uses for the lands. Alternative 2 would contribute towards the redevelopment of vacant and underutilised lands to a greater extent than Alternative 1.

The development of the town centre would be more compact and more sustainable under this scenario and would optimally support the longer-term viability of the settlement. 30% of residential development would be more likely to be achieved in core areas in comparison with Alternative 1. Giving more of a focus to the redevelopment of vacant and underutilised lands that would have capacity to satisfy the principles of active travel and giving more of a focus to opportunity sites (a supporting narrative would be provided setting out potential uses for the lands, making successful applications for the sustainable development of these properties more likely) would allow for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town as envisaged by the wider planning framework to a greater degree.

This alternative would make more of a contribution towards the protection and management of the environment by facilitating development of properties (including those within and adjacent to the Town's core areas) that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are often already served by infrastructure and services. This alternative would be considered the most effective out of both alternatives in the delivery of a sustainable, low carbon and climate resilient future for the town.

The approach under Alternative 2 would benefit the protection of various environmental components to a greater degree. Under this alternative, less development would have to be accommodated on more sensitive, less well-serviced, less well-connected lands elsewhere in the Plan area.

Redevelopment of vacant and underutilised lands has the potential to result in elevated levels of potential adverse effects on cultural heritage (both archaeology and architecture) in the short term, arising during construction; however, these would be mitigated and the longer-term protection of these assets would be secured, to a greater extent under Alternative 2.

Selected Alternative: Alternative 2

### 3.2.3 Density

Both alternatives (**Alternative 1** “Promote high density and buildings of height in the town centre” and **Alternative 2** “Plan led approach to achieving higher densities in the town centre”) for density would contribute towards consolidation of the town centre; however, they would contribute towards environmental protection and management and sustainable development to varying degrees. The selection of densities would have implications for the type and mix of development that would be provided for and the height of buildings and blocks.

**Alternative 1** would facilitate the creation of a more compact settlement and consolidation. Limited consideration would be given to the appropriateness of the location for higher densities or buildings of height. Higher densities and increased building heights can contribute towards the creation of a more compact town; however, a balance is required in achieving recommended densities and creating quality developments and attractive, sustainable neighbourhoods. Not considering the appropriateness of higher densities would be likely to significantly adversely impact upon:

- The protection of built heritage (including designated archaeology and architecture) and its context and setting (which has a key role to play in place-making and contributes significantly to Dundalk’s sense of identity and cultural heritage);
- The protection of the scenery and streetscape of the town and highly sensitive key scenic views of the surrounding area (which is of amenity value to tourists and residents, contributing to well-being and constituting a valuable economic asset);
- The protection of the landscape character of the town and surrounding areas, from which buildings of height would be visible; and
- The appropriate provision of local services for future residents; higher densities may not be appropriate in areas where there is insufficient or inadequate services and infrastructure (this is relevant to the environmental components of population and human health and material assets).

Under **Alternative 2**, specific areas of the town centre would be identified for higher densities. Under this approach, a greater consideration would be given to the appropriateness of higher densities and buildings of height in different parts of the town centre. This would be likely to significantly benefit:

- The protection of built heritage (including designated archaeology and architecture) and its context and setting (which has a key role to play in place-making and contributes significantly to Dundalk’s sense of identity and cultural heritage);
- The protection of the scenery and streetscape of the town and highly sensitive key scenic views of the surrounding area (which is of amenity value to tourists and residents, contributing to well-being and constituting a valuable economic asset);
- The protection of the landscape character of the town and surrounding areas, from which buildings of height would be visible; and
- The appropriate provision of local services for future residents; higher densities may not be appropriate in areas where there is insufficient or inadequate services and infrastructure (this is relevant to the environmental components of population and human health and material assets).

Selected Alternative: Alternative 2

### 3.2.4 Building Heights

**Alternative 1** “Continue with a low-rise suburban approach” would be based on the expansion of low-rise suburban development with limited focus on compact growth. Building heights and associated densities would be lower, resulting in continued commuting and car dependence.

Although the height of individual buildings would be less likely to impact upon landscape character/designations and cultural heritage (both archaeology and architecture), the low-rise suburban approach provided by this Alternative, would result in an increased need for greenfield development, with associated adverse effects upon landscape character and the context of cultural heritage in these areas.

The approach under this alternative would not allow for water supply, waste water, compact growth, public transport and co-ordinated development considerations to be integrated into the Plan to the highest degree. Additional infrastructure would be required to accommodate edge of centre development on greenfield sites, more than would be required for Alternative 2 and some development may have to be serviced by private waste water treatment systems, which would have to be properly maintained.

Development under this alternative would be less compact and less sustainable and would not optimally support the longer-term viability of the settlement. 30% of residential development would be less likely to be achieved in core areas in comparison with Alternative 2. Lower densities and the absence of a focus to support increased buildings of height at suitable locations would allow for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town as envisaged by the wider planning framework to a lesser degree.

This alternative would make less of a contribution towards the protection and management of the environment by facilitating development of lands that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services. Demand to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area would be provided for. This alternative would be considered the least effective out of both alternatives in the delivery of a sustainable, low carbon and climate resilient future for the Plan area.

The approach under Alternative 1 would benefit the protection of various environmental components to a lesser degree. This alternative would not provide the most evidence-based framework for development and would have the potential to undermine sustainable development and proper planning - with potential for associated unnecessary significant residual adverse environmental effects on various environmental components, including:

- Conflict with efforts to maximise sustainable compact growth, sustainable mobility and a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society (significant residual adverse effects would occur);
- Significant residual adverse effects upon the achievement of carbon emission reduction targets in line with local, national and European environmental objectives (would occur);
- Significant residual adverse effects upon the economic viability of providing for public assets and infrastructure;
- Significant residual adverse effects on ecology, ecological connectivity and non-designated habitats and species;
- Loss of an extent of soil function arising from the replacement of semi-natural land covers with artificial surfaces (significant residual adverse effects would occur);
- Occurrence of visual impacts (significant residual adverse effects would occur); and
- Increased loadings on water bodies.

**Alternative 2** "Support and promote increased building heights at suitably identified locations" would promote and support increased buildings of height (4 storeys or higher) at specific locations in Dundalk identified as being suitable for increased building heights with other locations being considered on a case-by-case basis. The approach under this alternative would facilitate compact growth of the Plan area, with a reduced dependence on the private car and more opportunities for people to walk and cycle.

Although the height of individual buildings would present potential conflicts with landscape character/designations and cultural heritage (both archaeology and architecture), they would only be permitted in suitable locations. Furthermore, increased building heights in these locations would reduce the need for sprawling greenfield development, which would be facilitated by Alternative 1.

Redevelopment of vacant and underutilised lands has the potential to result in elevated levels of potential adverse effects on in the short term, arising during construction; however, these would be mitigated and the longer-term protection of these assets would be secured, to a lesser extent under Alternative 1.

Redevelopment of vacant and underutilised lands has the potential to result in elevated levels of potential adverse effects on cultural heritage (both archaeology and architecture) in the short term, arising during construction; however, these would be mitigated and the longer-term protection of these assets would be secured, to a greater extent under Alternative 2.

The approach under this alternative would allow for water supply, waste water, compact growth, public transport and co-ordinated development considerations to be integrated into the Plan to the highest degree. Much of the infrastructure required to be in place to achieve the growth targets is already in place or planned under this alternative.

Development under this alternative would be more compact and sustainable and would better support the longer-term viability of the settlement. 30% of residential units would be expected to take place in the core areas of the town. Supporting increased buildings of height at suitable locations would allow

for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town as envisaged by the wider planning framework to the greatest degree.

This alternative would make the greatest contribution towards the protection and management of the environment by facilitating development of lands that have relatively low levels of environmental sensitivities and are served (or can be more easily served) by infrastructure and services, thereby helping to avoid the need to develop more sensitive, less well-served lands elsewhere in the Plan area and beyond. This alternative would be considered the most effective out of both Development Strategies considered in the delivery of a sustainable, low carbon and climate resilient future for the Plan area.

The approach under Alternative 2 would benefit the protection of various environmental components. Although potentially adverse effects associated with land use development would exist, they would be mitigated to a significant degree. Less residual environmental effects would result.

Selected Alternative: Alternative 2

### 3.2.5 Transport

**Alternative 1** “General approach” would not inform the LAP with a Local Transport Plan, but would take a general approach to transportation through the implementation of generic policy objectives, including those set out in the County Development Plan. This alternative would provide a less coordinated and less orderly provision of transport infrastructure and services (that would seek to deliver travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes, with interactions with air and human health), with delivery of projects, and associated benefits with respect to sustainable mobility and compact development, less likely. This approach would be less likely to improve the potential for meeting important objectives relating to emissions and energy use. Potentially adverse impacts arising from more coherently planned transport developments on environmental components, including ecology and water, could be mitigated at both LAP and project level.

**Alternative 2** “Focused and plan-led approach” would involve the preparation of a Local Transport Plan for the Plan area and the incorporation of recommendations into the narrative and policy objectives of the Local Area Plan. This would ensure a more coherent approach is taken to the integration of land use and transportation planning and would align with national and local guidance pertaining to climate action and modal change. This alternative would provide a more coordinated and more orderly provision of transport infrastructure and services (that would seek to deliver travel solutions that support moving people from the private car to more sustainable modes, with interactions with air and human health), with delivery of projects, and associated benefits with respect to sustainable mobility and compact development, more likely. This approach would be more likely to improve the potential for meeting important objectives relating to emissions and energy use. Potentially adverse impacts on environmental components, including ecology and water, could be mitigated at both LAP and project level.

Selected Alternative: Alternative 2

### 3.2.6 Climate

**Alternative 1** “High level policy approach” would provide a generic narrative and policy objectives in the Local Area Plan that reflect those set out in the County Development Plan and support the implementation of climate action policy as set out at a national and regional level. **Alternative 2** “Focused, plan-led and collaborative approach” would ensure climate action is a cross-cutting theme of the Plan. A specific chapter would be included in the Plan relating to Climate Action with opportunities for various sectors including transport, business, and residential to include climate adaptation and mitigation measures set out. An evidence-based approach would be taken to identifying any targets or measures and the Plan would be closely aligned with the objectives of the Louth County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. The opportunities for community participation and engagement would also be highlighted.

Both alternatives would contribute towards climate action (both mitigation and adaptation); however, Alternative 2 would contribute to a greater degree than Alternative 1. Consequently, Alternative 2 would contribute to a greater degree towards the protection and management of the environment (and associated positive environmental effects) arising from climate action interactions including:

- Population and human health – lower emissions would improve air quality and therefore human health; flood risk management approach would contribute towards protection of human health;
- Biodiversity, flora and fauna – reducing vulnerability of biodiversity to climate risks and enhancing biodiversity and flora and fauna;
- Soils – reducing risk of soils from climate change;
- Water – reducing vulnerability from coastal and fluvial flood risk;
- Air and Climatic Factors – the transition to a low carbon society and economy would contribute towards achieving targets in relation to greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality;
- Material Assets – driving modal shift towards more sustainable modes of transport; contributing towards the adequate and appropriate provision of water services; contributing towards circular economy principles; contributing towards renewable energy generation targets and energy security.
- Cultural Heritage – contributing towards reuse of the existing built building stock, which includes heritage features, as well as more coordination for retrofitting.

Selected Alternative: Alternative 2

### **3.2.7 Natura 2000**

**Alternative 1** “Continue with measured approach” would follow the current method which identifies and considers appropriate land uses within and in proximity to the designated Natura sites (Dundalk Bay SPA and SAC) to facilitate development while protecting and maintaining the protection of conservation objectives of the designated Natura sites.

**Alternative 2** “Enhanced approach” would seek to provide for a greater transition and compatibility of land uses in the vicinity of the designated Natura sites (Dundalk Bay SPA and SAC). This approach would result in a higher level of protection being afforded to the designated Natura sites and enhanced protection of the conservation objectives associated with the designated sites.

By providing for a greater transition and compatibility of land uses in the vicinity of the designated Natura sites, Alternative 2 would contribute towards the protection of areas outside of European sites from inappropriate development to a greater extent, benefitting all environmental components, including biodiversity and flora and fauna, soil, water, air and climatic factors and landscape.

Selected Alternative: Alternative 2

## **3.3 Reasons for Choosing the Selected Alternative in light of Other Reasonable Alternatives Considered**

Selected alternatives for the Plan from each of the types of alternatives that emerged from the planning/SEA process are indicated above.

These alternatives have been integrated into the adopted Plan having regard to both:

- The environmental effects which were identified by the SEA and are summarised above; and
- Planning – including social and economic – effects that were also considered.

## Section 4 AA Determination



Comhairle Contae Lú  
Louth County Council

### Appropriate Assessment Determination

under  
Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended,  
for the

### Dundalk Local Area Plan 2025-2031

In order to comply with the requirements of Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and pursuant to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive as to whether or not a plan or project would affect the integrity of any European site(s), this Appropriate Assessment determination is being made by Louth County Council relating to the potential for the Dundalk Local Area Plan 2025-2031 that is being adopted to have effects on the integrity of European sites.

In carrying out this Appropriate Assessment (AA), the Council is taking into account the matters specified under Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), including the following:

- The Natura Impact Report prepared for the Draft Plan;
- AA Screening of Proposed Material Alterations;
- The Consolidated Natura Impact Report;
- Written submissions made during the Plan preparation process; and
- Ongoing advice on AA from the Council's agents.

As part of the AA, it was identified that the Plan may, if unmitigated, have likely significant effects on 3 (no.) European sites. Plan elements that could present sources with pathways for likely significant effects to European sites are:

- The Plan's provisions, including those relating to the development strategy, key development and character areas, climate action, sustainable neighbourhoods and communities, economy and employment, retail and tourism, movement, infrastructure and culture and heritage, which introduce sources for potential effects through construction phase such as habitat loss, light pollution, disturbance effects and hydrological interactions through surface hydrological connectivity and/or shared groundwater sources;
- Loading pressures from the operational phase of developments – these sources could result in habitat loss/fragmentation, light pollution, disturbance effects and interactions with water quality (surface and/or groundwater); and
- Increases in visitor numbers to ecologically sensitive areas during the operational phase of developments which have potential to introduce sources for significant effects, such as recreational and tourism developments.

The undersigned, having carefully considered the information referred to above agrees with and adopts the reasoning and conclusions presented and determines that:

- Implementation of the Plan to be adopted would have had the potential to result in adverse effects to the integrity of European sites, if unmitigated.
- The risks to the safeguarding and integrity of the Qualifying Interests, Special Conservation Interests and Conservation Objectives of the European sites have been addressed by the inclusion of mitigation measures into the Plan that will prioritise the avoidance of effects in the first place and mitigate against the identified potential adverse effects on the integrity of European sites where these cannot be avoided. In addition, all lower-level plans and projects arising through the implementation of the Plan will themselves be subject to AA/screening for AA when further details of design and location are known.

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View Council alerts for Louth at [www.mapalserter.ie/Louth](http://www.mapalserter.ie/Louth)

- In-combination effects from interactions with other plans and projects are considered and the mitigation measures incorporated into the Plan are seen to be robust to ensure that there will be no effect on the integrity of any European site as a result of the implementation of the Plan, either alone or in-combination with other plans/projects.
- Having incorporated mitigation measures<sup>ii</sup> into the Plan, it has been demonstrated that the Plan to be adopted is not foreseen to give rise to any adverse effect on the integrity of any designated European site, alone or in combination with other plans or projects<sup>iii</sup>. This demonstration has been made in view of the Conservation Objectives of the habitats and/or species, for which these sites have been designated.

Signatory:



Date:

CH MARCH 25

<sup>i</sup> Incorporating the Draft Plan and all and any material alterations and associated modifications considered by the AA process.

<sup>ii</sup> Local Area Plan measures CA 1, CA 2, CA 4, CA 3, DM 1, DM 2, EE 12, CH 1, CH 2, CH 3, CH 4, CH 5, CH 6, CH 7, CH 8, CH 10, CH 15, CH 16, INF 1, INF 2, INF 3, INF 4, INF 5, INF 6, INF 7, INF 8, INF 9, INF 10, INF 11, INF 12, INF 13, INF 14, INF 15, INF 16, INF 17, INF 19, INF 22, INF 23, INF 24, INF 25, INF 26, INF 27, INF 28, INF 32, INF 29, INF 30, INF 31, INF 33, INF 34, INF 35, INF 39, MOV 2, MOV 4, MOV 13, MOV 8, MOV 12, MOV 15, MOV 28, RT 15 and SC 1.

Text in Local Area Plan at Section 3.4.2 Spot Objectives, Section 9.4 Surface Water Management and Sustainable Urban Drainage System, Section 9.5 Water Quality and River Basin Management Plan, Section 9.9.2 Air Quality Section, 9.9.5 Contaminated Land and Soil Remediation, Section 8.4.3 Objectives of the Local Transport Plan, Section 10.7 Trees Woodland and Hedgerows, Section 10.8 Hedgerows, Section 10.10 Green Infrastructure, Section 10.11 Species Protected by Law and Section 11.3.

Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 (as varied) measures ENV 20, ENV 21, ENV 22, ENV 23, ENV 32, NBG 12 and NBG 13.

Note that non-material changes to individual Plan provisions referenced in this determination and described in the Consolidated Natura Impact Report may be updated during the finalisation of the Plan, including numbering, formatting and graphic design.

<sup>iii</sup> Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be: a) no alternative solution available, b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.