

**Appropriate Assessment (AA)
Screening Report**
of the
Proposed Variation
to the
**County Donegal Development Plan
2018-2024 (As Varied)**
in respect of
**the Deletion of Letterkenny-Specific
Policy Content.
(Variation No. 3)**

**In line with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the
EU Habitats Directive**



**Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall**
Donegal County Council

Community Development & Planning Services

14th September, 2023

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Detailed planning policy coverage for Letterkenny is currently contained in the County Development Plan 2018-2024 (As Varied). Donegal County Council is currently in the process of preparing a new Local Area Plan for Letterkenny. It is envisaged that the latter Plan will be adopted as policy in November, 2023 and come into effect in early 2024. At that stage it shall be necessary to remove the Letterkenny-specific policy content from the CDP in order to avoid any discrepancy in the primacy of document. This removal must be undertaken by means of a formal Variation to the CDP. This is largely considered to be a straightforward procedural exercise.

1.2 LEGISLATIVE CONTENT

1.2.1 Habitats Directive and Appropriate Assessment

The EU Habitats Directive requires that an Appropriate Assessment (AA) must be made of any plan or programme that is likely to have a significant effect on the conservation objectives of designated sites before any decision can be made to allow that plan or project to proceed. Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states that:

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

1.2.2 The Process of Appropriate Assessment

While there is no prescribed method for undertaking Appropriate Assessment (AA), or form or content for reporting, methodological guidance promotes a four-stage process to complete the AA. The requirements for individual stages are summarised in Table 1.1. An important aspect of the AA process is that the outcome at each successive stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required. Stages 1 and 2 relate to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and are concerned with the strict protection of sites.

Table 1.1: Stages in the Process of Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment

Stage	Task
1	<p>Screening</p> <p>Screening is the process that addresses and records the reasoning and conclusions in relation to the first two tests of Article 6(3): i) whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the site, and ii) whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives. If the effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant, or uncertain, or if the screening process becomes overly complicated, then the process must proceed to Stage 2 (AA). Screening should be undertaken without the inclusion of mitigation, unless potential impacts clearly can be avoided through the modification or redesign of the plan or project, in which case the screening process is repeated on the altered plan. The greatest level of evidence and justification will be needed in circumstances when the process ends at screening stage on grounds of no impact.</p>
2	<p>Appropriate Assessment</p> <p>This stage considers whether the plan or project, alone or in combination with other projects or plans, will have adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, and includes any mitigation measures necessary to avoid, reduce or offset negative effects. The proponent of the plan or project will be required to submit a Natura Impact Report/Natura Impact Statement, i.e. the report of a targeted professional scientific examination of the plan or project and the relevant Natura 2000 sites, to identify and characterize any possible implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives, taking account of in combination effects. This should provide information to enable the competent authority to carry out the appropriate assessment. If the assessment is negative, i.e. adverse effects on the integrity of a site cannot be excluded, then the process must proceed to Stage 4, or the plan or project should be abandoned.</p>
3	<p>Alternative Solutions</p> <p>This stage examines any alternative solutions or options that could enable the plan or project to proceed without adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site. The process must return to Stage 2 as alternatives will require appropriate assessment in order to proceed. Demonstrating that all reasonable alternatives have been considered and assessed, and that the least damaging option has been selected, is necessary to progress to Stage 4.</p>
4	<p>Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI)/Derogation</p> <p>Stage 4 is the main derogation process of Article 6(4) which examines whether there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) for allowing a plan or project that will have adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site to proceed in cases where it has been established that no less damaging alternative solution exists. The extra protection measures for Annex I priority habitats come into effect when making the IROPI case. Compensatory measures must be proposed and assessed. The Commission must be informed of the compensatory measures. Compensatory measures must be practical, implementable, likely to succeed, proportionate and enforceable, and they must be approved by the Minister.</p>

Section 2 of this Report addresses Stage 1: Screening.

2 SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

2.1 Methodology

The European Commission's Methodological Guidance outlines four sub-steps within the screening exercise as follows:

1. Determining whether the project or plan is directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site;
2. Describing the project or plan and the description and characterisation of other projects or plans that in combination have the potential for having significant effects on the Natura 2000 sites;
3. Identifying the potential effects on the Natura 2000 sites;
4. Assessing the significance of any effects on the Natura 2000 sites.

2.2 Is The Proposed Variation Directly Connected With or Necessary To The Management of the Natura 2000 Sites?

The Methodological Guidance outlines that for a project or plan to be '*directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site*', the management component must refer to management measures that are for conservation purposes, and the 'directly' element refer to measures that are solely conceived for the conservation management of a site and not direct or indirect consequences of other activities.

The Proposed Variation (No. 3) to the County Donegal Development Plan, 2018-2024 is nominal in character, in that it deletes Letterkenny-specific narrative and policies and is therefore not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the Natura 2000 sites in the County.

2.3 Description of the Proposed Variation

The Proposed Variation is a procedural step to delete all Letterkenny-specific content from the County Development Plan, 2018-2024 (As Varied). This content will not be replaced with new policy in this document. Going forward, detailed statutory planning policy for Letterkenny will be contained in the emerging Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan, due to be adopted in mid-November, 2023 and become effective in early January, 2024. In order to effectively remove detailed policy coverage from the CDP, the Proposed Variation specifically:

- Includes 10 amendments to Part A and B of the County Donegal Development Plan including:
 - 6 individual amendments to the narrative by deletion of reference to Letterkenny; and
 - 4 individual amendments to policies UB-P-2, UB-P-14, UB-P-15 and UB-P-16 by deletion of reference to Letterkenny.
- Includes 8 amendments to Part C of the County Donegal Development Plan including:
 - 7 individual amendments to the narrative by deletion of reference to Letterkenny; and
 - Deletion of Chapter 12 Letterkenny pages 2-23 and maps 12.1A, 12.1B, 12.2 and 12.3.

2.4 Other Plans or Projects With Potential For In-Combination Effects On Natura 2000 sites

2.4.1 Donegal County Development Plan, 2018-2024 (As Varied)

The County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024 (As Varied) ('the CDP') is a spatial land use plan which was prepared under the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (As Amended). It is framed within a hierarchy of strategic planning policy across International, National, Regional and County level guidelines and is the principal instrument used to manage change in land use in County Donegal. It provides a framework within which other local operational plans are developed. The CDP sets out the strategic objectives and policies for the overall development of the County up to 2024 and beyond. It provides a framework for the future physical, social, economic, cultural and environmental growth and sustainable development of County Donegal over the 6-year period of the Plan and beyond.

A detailed Natura Impact Report in support of the Appropriate Assessment of the CDP was compiled along with a detailed Environmental Report in support of the Strategic Environmental Assessment and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). These assessment processes were conducted through an iterative process to ensure their findings were incorporated into the policies and objective of the Plan itself. This process resulted in a robust set of mitigation and monitoring measures to ensure there were no likely significant adverse effects to any European Site arising from the implementation of the Plan.

There are 73 Natura 2000 sites (both terrestrial and marine) within County Donegal comprising 47 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and 26 Special Protection Areas (SPA). The SACs comprise c. 128,000 hectares and the SPAs comprise c. 69,000 which overlap in parts but which in total comprises c. 143,000 hectares.

2.4.2 Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan, 2023-2029

The Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan 2023 – 2029 (hereinafter referred to as 'the Plan') is being prepared in accordance with the requirements of Sections 18-20 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) (the Act). The Plan sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Letterkenny in the context of the National Planning Framework (NPF), the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly area (the RSES) and the Donegal County Development Plan 2018- 2024 (As Varied) (the CDP).

The Plan is being drafted having regard to Ministerial Guidelines issued pursuant to Section 28 of the Act, and in accordance with EU requirements regarding Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA). Arising from these obligations, supporting documents have been prepared including a Natura Impact Report (in respect of Appropriate Assessment); an Environmental Report (in respect of Strategic Environmental Assessment); a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment; and an Infrastructural Assessment.

The Plan is comprised of two parts. Part A contains the plans and policies of a 'conventional' land use plan, whilst a Local Transport Plan is contained in Part B. Together, these two parts constitute the Written Statement of the Plan. The Plan also contains a Zoning Map and other maps.

A detailed Natura Impact Report in support of the Appropriate Assessment of the Letterkenny Plan was compiled along with a detailed Environmental Report in support of the Strategic Environmental Assessment and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) at both Draft Plan and Proposed Material Alterations stages. These assessment processes were conducted through an iterative process to ensure their findings were incorporated into the policies and objective of the Plan itself. This process resulted in a robust set of mitigation and monitoring measures to ensure there were no likely significant adverse effects to any European Site arising from the implementation of the Plan.

2.4.3 Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy

The Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy ('Letterkenny 2040') is a process to realise a Regeneration Strategy for Letterkenny town centre, which builds on ambition and vision for the town to realise its full potential as a magnet that draws and keeps people. Letterkenny 2040 aims to guide development of the town centre, putting people at the very heart of regeneration and change. It is visionary, innovative and creative in the design of new ideas for the town centre, creating a place where everyone will find their perfect mix of familiarity and possibility. Working in partnership with the wider community, Letterkenny 2040 is about designing the town centre as an attractive and thriving place, creating projects that can be further progressed toward funding opportunities when they arise.

The project was commissioned by Donegal County Council, led by the Regeneration and Development Team and is funded by the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF), a flagship initiative of Project Ireland 2040. It forms part of a wider programme of regeneration initiatives that are also supported by URDF and are being progressed including design and development of walking and cycling infrastructure, strategic land acquisition for the purposes of regeneration, reuse of the former courthouse and the redevelopment of Market Square.

Project proposals have been subject to Appropriate Assessment screening. Projects proceeding in accordance with the provisions of Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (As Amended) are subject to further assessment of any potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites in that they are assessed against the relevant precautionary policies of the County Development Plan, 2018-2024 (As Varied).

2.5 BASIS OF ASSESSMENT

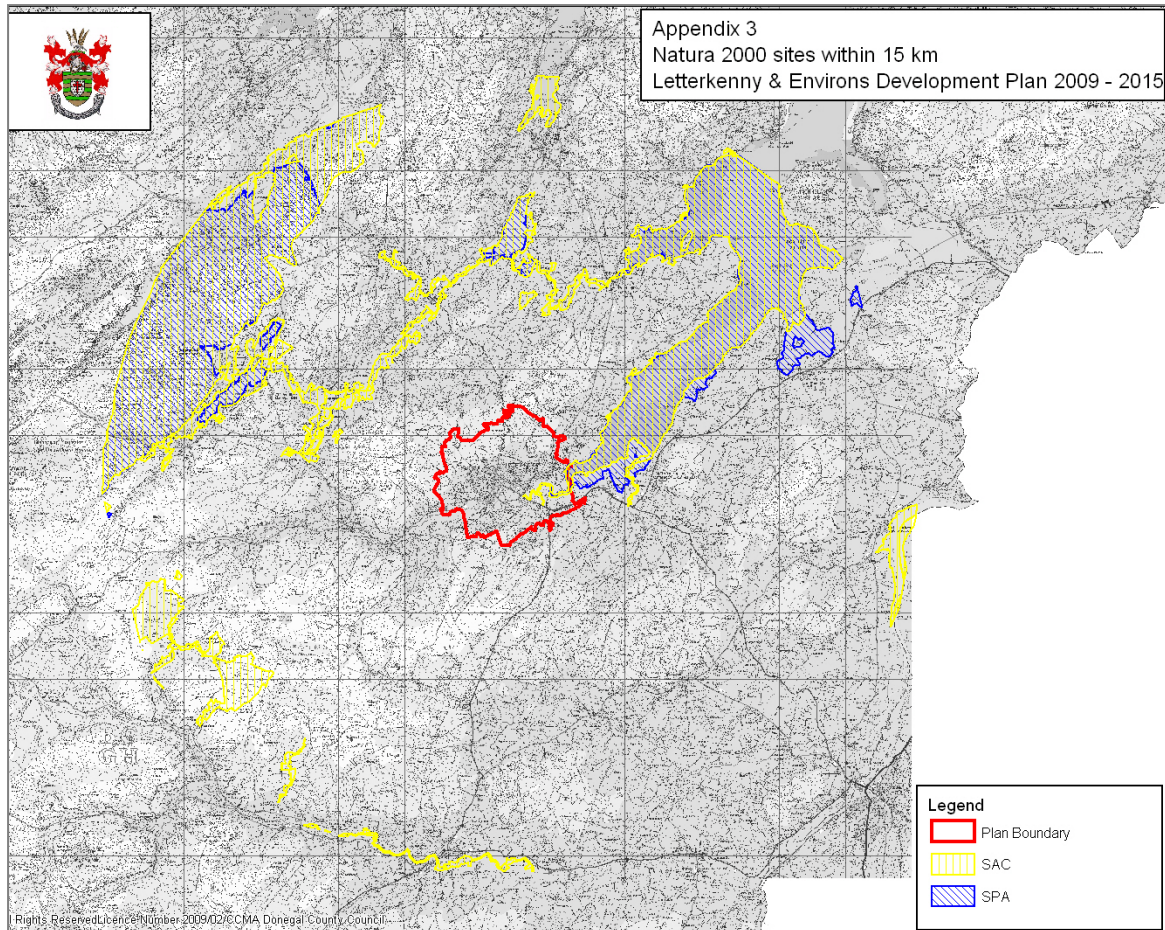
2.5.1 Aim of EU Habitats Directive

The aim of the EU Habitats Directive (92/443/EEC) is to promote the maintenance of biodiversity, taking account of economic, social, cultural and regional requirements. The Directive recognises that in the European territory of the Member States, natural habitats are continuing to deteriorate, and an increasing number of wild species are seriously threatened. In order to ensure the restoration or maintenance of natural habitats and species of Community interest at a favourable conservation status, it is necessary for Member States to designate special areas of conservation in order to create a coherent European ecological network. Criteria for site designation are set out in the Directive.

These sites are of the highest biodiversity importance for rare and threatened habitats and species across the EU. SACs are selected for the conservation of habitats listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive, and for species of animals (other than birds) and plants listed in Annex II. SPAs are selected for the conservation of birds listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (codified version of Council Directive 79/409/EEC As Amended)) and other regularly occurring migratory birds and their habitats. The annexed habitats and species for which each site has been selected are the qualifying interests of the sites, and the conservation objectives of the site are based on these qualifying interests.

2.5.2 Designated Sites

Map 1 shows that there are 2 European sites located within the Letterkenny Plan area as contained in the CDP i.e. Lough Swilly Special Protection Area (SPA) and Lough Swilly Special Area of Conservation (SAC). In addition, a further 8 European sites have been identified within 15km of the proposed plan boundary. These comprise 6 SACs and 2 SPAs.



SACs within and within 15km of the Letterkenny Plan Area	SPAs within and within 15km of the Letterkenny Plan Area
116 Ballyarr Wood	4060 Lough Fern
173 Meentygrannagh Bog	4075 Lough Swilly
2047 Cloghernagore Bog & Glenveagh National Park	
2176 Leannan River	
2287 Lough Swilly	
River Finn	

2.5.3 Assessment Summary

In order to assess any potential impact of the implementation of the Proposed Variation alone or in combination with other projects or plans on the relevant Natura 2000 sites identified in Section 2.5.2 above, an impact screening matrix was used. The findings are contained within Table A1 (for SACs) and Table A2 (for SPAs) of Appendix A of this report. The assessment concludes that the Proposed Variation, either itself or cumulatively with other relevant plans or projects, will not have any adverse effect on the integrity of any designated sites.

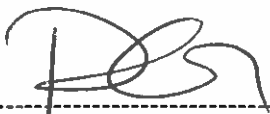
2.6 RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of the absence of any issues or concerns raised or identified in the assessment contained in Appendix A:

It is recommended that:

1. The Planning Authority determines that it can be excluded on the basis of objective information that the Proposed Variation will not have a significant effect on the listed sites, either individually or in combination with other plans or project, and that an Appropriate Assessment is not required;

and
2. Arising from the Determination detailed at 1. above, and in accordance with Section 177U(7)(a) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (As Amended), the Planning Authority makes a copy of its Determination available for public consultation at the offices of the Planning Authority during office hours and on the website of the authority as soon as may be after the making of the Variation.



P. Christy,
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18/9/23

APPENDIX A: NATURA 2000 SITES RELEVANT TO THIS AA

Table A1: Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) within Letterkenny Plan Area and within 15km Zone of Influence

Site code	Site name	Qualifying interests	Conservation objectives	Assessment of Likely Effects on specific Natura 2000 site arising from the proposed variation.
116	Ballyarr Wood	91A0 Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles	<p>To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected (NPWS (2016) Conservation objectives for Ballyarr Wood SAC [000116]. Generic Version 5.0. Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs).</p> <p>To maintain the extent, species richness and biodiversity of the site. To provide facilities on site for the visiting public so as to improve its recreational use and potential educational value. To establish effective liaison and co-operation with neighbouring landowners, legal users and relevant authorities.</p>	<p>Ballyarr Woods SAC is located 4.4km outside the Letterkenny Plan boundary. Having regard to (1.) the unusual nature of the Proposed Variation insofar as it is intended only to remove policy content from the CDP and therefore will not of itself facilitate any development that might have any impact on any designated sites;</p> <p>(2.) the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Reports prepared for both the County Development Plan, 2018-2024 (As Varied) and the Draft Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan, 2023-2029 (which Plans will collectively replace the content to be removed under the subject Variation) that, being subject to robust sets of mitigation and monitoring measures, they will not have adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site; and</p> <p>(3.) the fact that projects being pursued under the Letterkenny 2040</p>

Site code	Site name	Qualifying interests	Conservation objectives	Assessment of Likely Effects on specific Natura 2000 site arising from the proposed variation.
				<p>Regeneration Project will be subject to project-level screening for Appropriate Assessment and to further assessment under the precautionary policies contained in the aforementioned statutory land use plans,</p> <p>it is considered that the Proposed Variation will not have any adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.</p>
173	Meentygrannagh Bog	<p>7130 Blanket bogs (* if active bog)</p> <p>7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs</p> <p>7230 Alkaline fens</p> <p>1393 Slender Green Feather-moss <i>Drepanocladus vernicosus</i></p>	<p>To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected (NPWS (2016) Conservation objectives for Meentygrannagh Bog SAC [000173]. Generic Version 5.0. Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs).</p>	<p>Meentygrannagh Bog SAC is located 12km outside the Letterkenny Plan boundary.</p> <p>Having regard to (1.) the unusual nature of the Proposed Variation insofar as it is intended only to remove policy content from the CDP and therefore will not of itself facilitate any development that might have any impact on any designated sites;</p> <p>(2.) the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Reports prepared for both the County Development Plan, 2018-2024 (As Varied) and the Draft Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan, 2023-2029 (which Plans will collectively replace the content to be removed under the</p>

Site code	Site name	Qualifying interests	Conservation objectives	Assessment of Likely Effects on specific Natura 2000 site arising from the proposed variation.
				<p>subject Variation) that, being subject to robust sets of mitigation and monitoring measures, they will not have adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site; and</p> <p>(3.) the fact that projects being pursued under the Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Project will be subject to project-level screening for Appropriate Assessment and to further assessment under the precautionary policies contained in the aforementioned statutory land use plans,</p> <p>it is considered that the Proposed Variation will not have any adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.</p>
2047	Cloghernagore Bog & Glenveagh National Park	<p>3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>)</p> <p>3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation</p> <p>4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i></p> <p>4030 European dry heaths</p>	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected (NPWS (2016) Conservation objectives for Cloghernagore Bog and Glenveagh National Park SAC [002047]. Generic Version 5.0. Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs).	<p>Cloghernagore Bog & Glenveagh National Park SAC is located 9.8km outside the Letterkenny Plan boundary.</p> <p>Having regard to (1.) the unusual nature of the Proposed Variation insofar as it is intended only to remove policy content from the CDP and therefore will not of itself facilitate any</p>

Site code	Site name	Qualifying interests	Conservation objectives	Assessment of Likely Effects on specific Natura 2000 site arising from the proposed variation.
		4060 Alpine and Boreal heaths 6410 <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) 7130 Blanket bogs (* if active bog) 7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles * 1029 Freshwater Pearl Mussel <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> 1106 Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> 1355 Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> 1421 Killarney Fern <i>Trichomanes speciosum</i>		<p>development that might have any impact on any designated sites;</p> <p>(2.) the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Reports prepared for both the County Development Plan, 2018-2024 (As Varied) and the Draft Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan, 2023-2029 (which Plans will collectively replace the content to be removed under the subject Variation) that, being subject to robust sets of mitigation and monitoring measures, they will not have adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site; and</p> <p>(3.) the fact that projects being pursued under the Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Project will be subject to project-level screening for Appropriate Assessment and to further assessment under the precautionary policies contained in the aforementioned statutory land use plans,</p> <p>it is considered that the Proposed Variation will not have any adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.</p>

Site code	Site name	Qualifying interests	Conservation objectives	Assessment of Likely Effects on specific Natura 2000 site arising from the proposed variation.
2176	Leannan River	3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) 3130 Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea 1029 Freshwater Pearl Mussel <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> 1106 Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> 1355 Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> 1833 Slender Naiad <i>Najas flexilis</i>	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected (NPWS (2016) Conservation objectives for Leannan River SAC [002176]. Generic Version 5.0. Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs).	The Leannan River SAC is located 3.8km outside the Letterkenny boundary. Having regard to (1.) the unusual nature of the Proposed Variation insofar as it is intended only to remove policy content from the CDP and therefore will not of itself facilitate any development that might have any impact on any designated sites; (2.) the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Reports prepared for both the County Development Plan, 2018-2024 (As Varied) and the Draft Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan, 2023-2029 (which Plans will collectively replace the content to be removed under the subject Variation) that, being subject to robust sets of mitigation and monitoring measures, they will not have adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site; and (3.) the fact that projects being pursued under the Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Project will be subject to project-level screening for Appropriate Assessment and to further assessment

Site code	Site name	Qualifying interests	Conservation objectives	Assessment of Likely Effects on specific Natura 2000 site arising from the proposed variation.
				<p>under the precautionary policies contained in the aforementioned statutory land use plans, it is considered that the Proposed Variation will not have any adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.</p>
2287	Lough Swilly	<p>1130 Estuaries 1150 * Coastal lagoons 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae) 1355 Otter Lutra lutra 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles</p>	<p>To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Qualifying Interests for which the SAC has been selected which are defined by the list of attributes and targets in the site-specific conservation objectives (NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: Lough Swilly SAC 002287 and Lough Swilly SPA 004075. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht), and in relevant supporting documentation.</p>	<p>The Lough Swilly SAC lies partially within the Letterkenny Plan area.</p> <p>Having regard to (1.) the unusual nature of the Proposed Variation insofar as it is intended only to remove policy content from the CDP and therefore will not of itself facilitate any development that might have any impact on any designated sites;</p> <p>(2.) the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Reports prepared for both the County Development Plan, 2018-2024 (As Varied) and the Draft Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan, 2023-2029 (which Plans will collectively replace the content to be removed under the subject Variation) that, being subject to robust sets of mitigation and monitoring measures, they will not</p>

Site code	Site name	Qualifying interests	Conservation objectives	Assessment of Likely Effects on specific Natura 2000 site arising from the proposed variation.
				<p>have adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site; and</p> <p>(3.) the fact that projects being pursued under the Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Project will be subject to project-level screening for Appropriate Assessment and to further assessment under the precautionary policies contained in the aforementioned statutory land use plans,</p> <p>it is considered that the Proposed Variation will not have any adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.</p>
2301	River Finn	<p>3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>)</p> <p>4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i></p> <p>7130 Blanket bogs (* if active bog)</p> <p>7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs</p> <p>1106 Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i></p> <p>1355 Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i></p>	<p>To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected (NPWS (2016) Conservation objectives for River Finn SAC [002301]. Generic Version 5.0. Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs).</p>	<p>The River Finn SAC is located 10.5km outside the Letterkenny Plan boundary.</p> <p>Having regard to (1.) the unusual nature of the Proposed Variation insofar as it is intended only to remove policy content from the CDP and therefore will not of itself facilitate any development that might have any impact on any designated sites;</p> <p>(2.) the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Reports prepared for both the County Development Plan, 2018-2024 (As</p>

Site code	Site name	Qualifying interests	Conservation objectives	Assessment of Likely Effects on specific Natura 2000 site arising from the proposed variation.
				<p>Varied) and the Draft Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan, 2023-2029 (which Plans will collectively replace the content to be removed under the subject Variation) that, being subject to robust sets of mitigation and monitoring measures, they will not have adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site; and</p> <p>(3.) the fact that projects being pursued under the Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Project will be subject to project-level screening for Appropriate Assessment and to further assessment under the precautionary policies contained in the aforementioned statutory land use plans, it is considered that the Proposed Variation will not have any adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.</p>

Table A2: Special Protection Areas (SPAs) within Letterkenny Plan Area and within 15km Zone of Influence

Site code	Site name	Qualifying interests	Conservation objectives	Assessment of Likely Effects on specific Natura 2000 site arising from the proposed variation.
4060	Lough Fern	A059 Pochard <i>Aythya ferina</i>	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA (NPWS (2016) Conservation objectives for Lough Fern SPA [004060]. Generic Version 5.0. Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs).	<p>Lough Fern SPA is located 5.8km outside the Letterkenny Plan boundary.</p> <p>Having regard to (1.) the unusual nature of the Proposed Variation insofar as it is intended only to remove policy content from the CDP and therefore will not of itself facilitate any development that might have any impact on any designated sites;</p> <p>(2.) the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Reports prepared for both the County Development Plan, 2018-2024 (As Varied) and the Draft Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan, 2023-2029 (which Plans will collectively replace the content to be removed under the subject Variation) that, being subject to robust sets of mitigation and monitoring measures, they will not have adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site; and</p> <p>(3.) the fact that projects being pursued under the Letterkenny 2040</p>

Site code	Site name	Qualifying interests	Conservation objectives	Assessment of Likely Effects on specific Natura 2000 site arising from the proposed variation.
				<p>Regeneration Project will be subject to project-level screening for Appropriate Assessment and to further assessment under the precautionary policies contained in the aforementioned statutory land use plans,</p> <p>it is considered that the Proposed Variation will not have any adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.</p>
4075	Lough Swilly	<p>A005 Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> A028 Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i> A038 Whooper Swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i> A043 Greylag Goose <i>Anser anser</i> A048 Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> A050 Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i> A052 Teal <i>Anas crecca</i> A053 Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> A056 Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i> A062 Scaup <i>Aythya marila</i></p>	<p>To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA which are defined by the list of attributes and targets in the site-specific conservation objectives (NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: Lough Swilly SAC 002287 and Lough Swilly SPA 004075. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht), and in relevant supporting documentation.</p>	<p>The Lough Swilly SPA lies partially within the Letterkenny Plan area.</p> <p>Having regard to (1.) the unusual nature of the Proposed Variation insofar as it is intended only to remove policy content from the CDP and therefore will not of itself facilitate any development that might have any impact on any designated sites;</p> <p>(2.) the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Reports prepared for both the County Development Plan, 2018-2024 (As Varied) and the Draft Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan, 2023-2029 (which Plans will collectively</p>

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		A067 Goldeneye <i>Bucephala clangula</i> A069 Red-breasted Merganser <i>Mergus serrator</i> A125 Coot <i>Fulica atra</i> A130 Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> A143 Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i> A149 Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i> A160 Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i> A162 Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> A164 Greenshank <i>Tringa nebularia</i> A179 Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> A182 Common Gull <i>Larus canus</i> A191 Sandwich Tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i> A193 Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> A395 Greenland White-fronted goose <i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i> wintering A999 Wetlands & Waterbirds		<p>replace the content to be removed under the subject Variation) that, being subject to robust sets of mitigation and monitoring measures, they will not have adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site; and</p> <p>(3.) the fact that projects being pursued under the Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Project will be subject to project-level screening for Appropriate Assessment and to further assessment under the precautionary policies contained in the aforementioned statutory land use plans,</p> <p>it is considered that the Proposed Variation will not have any adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.</p>

Site code	Site name	Qualifying interests	Conservation objectives	Assessment of Likely Effects on specific Natura 2000 site arising from the proposed variation.
	Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains SPA	[A001] Red-throated Diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>) [A098] Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>) [A103] Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>) [A140] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A466] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina schinzii</i>)	This site has the generic conservation objective: 'To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA' (NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains SPA [004039] Generic Version 9.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.)	<p>Derryveagh and Glendowan Mountains SPA is located 8.6km outside the Letterkenny Plan boundary.</p> <p>Having regard to (1.) the unusual nature of the Proposed Variation insofar as it is intended only to remove policy content from the CDP and therefore will not of itself facilitate any development that might have any impact on any designated sites;</p> <p>(2.) the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Reports prepared for both the County Development Plan, 2018-2024 (As Varied) and the Draft Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan, 2023-2029 (which Plans will collectively replace the content to be removed under the subject Variation) that, being subject to robust sets of mitigation and monitoring measures, they will not have adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site; and</p> <p>(3.) the fact that projects being pursued under the Letterkenny 2040</p>

Site code	Site name	Qualifying interests	Conservation objectives	Assessment of Likely Effects on specific Natura 2000 site arising from the proposed variation.
				<p>Regeneration Project will be subject to project-level screening for Appropriate Assessment and to further assessment under the precautionary policies contained in the aforementioned statutory land use plans,</p> <p>It is considered that the Proposed Variation will not have any adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.</p>