

## **STAGE 1: SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT**

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

Plan or Project:

**DRAFT CAVAN COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2014 – 2020)**

On behalf of:

**CAVAN COUNTY COUNCIL**

**AUGUST 2013**

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## **STAGE ONE: SCREENING**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA)**

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

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

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

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

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

## 1.2 Legislative Background to Appropriate Assessment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **1.3 Stages in the Appropriate Assessment Process**

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### 1.4 Scope of the AA for Draft County Cavan Development Plan.

The scope of the AA considers the following information:

*Description of Draft Development Plan*

- Extent and influence of the Draft Development Plan including spatial context of Natura 2000 sites in County Cavan and within 15km of the county boundary;
- Projected settlement strategy, rezoning and revisions to local area plans; and,
- Zoning policies and objectives relevant to the Natura 2000 network.

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

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

*Mitigation*

- Details of policies within the Core Strategy of the Draft Development Plan that guide the protection and conservation of qualifying features within Natura 2000 sites and the wider ecological network of sites supporting Natura 2000 site integrity;
- Details of the measures that could be employed to avoid the risk of impacts.

*Cumulative effects*

- A consideration of in-combination impacts on the Natura 2000 Network of all existing and draft County Development Plans within 15km of County Cavan.

#### 1.5 Main Sources of Formal Guidance

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

## **1.6 Main Sources of Consultation**

- The Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment of the Draft County Development Plan was carried out concurrently and with consideration of overlapping issues pertinent to the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Draft County Development Plan with consultation and direction provided by the Executive Planner at Cavan County Council (Eve Harrison);
- Consultation with Heritage Council: Heritage Officers for County Cavan (Ann-Marie Ward); Longford (Mairead Ni Chonghaile); and, Meath (Dr. Loreto Guinan).
- Consultation with National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS): Director of Conservation for County Cavan, Monaghan & Longford (Michael Hackett) and Conservation Officers (John Matthews (Cavan West)); David McDonagh (Cavan East)). NPWS Officers from bordering counties also provided detailed summaries of threats to individual Natura 2000 sites; Fiona Wheeldon (Leitrim); Susan Moles (Longford); Maurice Eakin (Director of Conservation for County Louth, Meath & Dublin)); Annette Lynch (Meath); and, also specialist advice on Upland habitats in County Cavan was provided by Caitriona Douglas of NPWS.

## **1.7 Key Statutory Instruments Relevant to the Assessment Process**

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



## **2.0 DESCRIPTION & FEATURES OF PLAN**

### **2.1 Review of the County Cavan Development Plan 2014 - 2012**

The Plan establishes a framework for the co-ordinated and sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental development of County Cavan. The Plan details the policies and objectives of Cavan County Council's vision for the spatial and sectoral development of Cavan over the period from 2014 – 2020. The Plan also serves as a point of reference for statutory authorities, planners, developers and the general public on how development proposals are likely to be assessed.

The Plan comprises 11 chapters followed by general policies and objectives for all Town and Village Plans. The introductory chapter details the role, content and context of the Plan. Chapter 2 details the Settlement Strategy for the County, analysing how demographics and populations have changed during the life time of the previous Plan, and projecting population growth within a settlement hierarchy. Chapters 3 – 11 outline the development strategy for County Cavan on a thematic basis with each chapter outlining strategic themes, policies and objectives.

### **2.2 Development Plan Screening Process**

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

### **2.3 Proximity of Settlement Framework to Natura 2000 sites.**

Table 1 summarises the requirements of the Settlement Framework and zoning policies in the Draft County Cavan Development Plan 2014 – 2020 and the proximity (relevance) to designated sites within the Natura 2000 Network.

ArcView software using Ordnance Survey maps and NPWS shapefiles were used to identify the boundaries of Natura 2000 Sites in County Cavan and within 15km of the County boundary. The location of Special Protection Areas and Special Protection Areas are shown in Figures 1. and, Figure 2. respectively.

**Table 1:** Settlement Framework and Proximity to Natura 2000 sites.

Settlement Hierarchy	Core Strategy & Local Area Plan Objectives	Proximity to Natura 2000 Site
Bailieborough	It is one of County Cavan's major towns and functions as a housing, retail, service and employment provider for the surrounding community. Bailieborough town continues to demonstrate strong population growth with a 28.7% increase from 2006 – 2011. The Settlement Framework identified a requirement for 26 hectares of land suitable for residential development. This is to cater for the current and future population up to 2020.	Lough Sheelin SPA, 22.9km west south-west; Lough Oughter & Associated Loughs SAC, 29km to the west north-west; and, Lough Oughter Complex SPA, 30km to the west north-west.
Ballyjamesduff	Development pressure and significant population together with some topographical constraints has resulted in the town sprawling out from the centre towards the east, north east and south. Further development to be contained as a priority within and adjacent to the town core boundary. The population of Ballyjamesduff town has increased by 52% over the period 2006 – 2011. The Settlement Framework identified a requirement for 26 hectares of land suitable for residential development.	Lough Sheelin SPA, 6.1km to the south-west; River Boyne & River Blackwater SAC and SPA, 12.3km to the south-east; and, Lough Oughter SPA, 19.9km to the north-west.
Cootehill	There has been some development of the back lands of main street properties which has opened up the possibility for further development of this town core. The town has seen significant growth and development with some very large housing developments and a number of business, industrial and enterprise units. The population of Cootehill has increased by 12% over the period 2006 – 2011. The Settlement Framework identified a requirement for 26 hectares of land suitable for residential development.	Lough Oughter & Associated Loughs SAC, 14.7km to the west; Kilroosky Lough Cluster SAC, 15.5km to the north-west; and, Lough Oughter Complex SPA, 20.2km to the west.
Kingscourt	There is significant capacity for development in the backlands of main street properties but it is essential that this is conducted in a sensitive manner which does not detract from the traditional form of this town. The town has experienced a significant growth of 33.1% between 2006 and 2011. The Settlement Framework identified a requirement for 26 hectares of land suitable for residential development.	Lough Sheelin SPA, 32km east south-east; Lough Oughter & Associated Loughs SAC, 38.9km to the west north-west; and, Lough Oughter Complex SPA, 39.8km to the west north-west.
Virginia	In more recent times residential development has	River Boyne & River Blackwater SAC

	<p>sprung up on all sides of the traditional Town Core. The town's physical development is restricted to the South by Lough Ramor and to the North by the proposed Virginia by-pass corridor. This has pushed development to the east and west of the core along the N3 route. The development of back lands will be key to the continued progress of this town. The town has experienced continued growth of 31.6% between the years 2006 – 2011 however; this rate of increase is much reduced compared to growth of 58.6% during the period 2002 to 2006. Given the towns strategic location further growth is expected. The Settlement Framework identified a requirement for 26 hectares of land suitable for residential development.</p>	<p>and SPA, 4.5km to the south; and, Lough Sheelin, 12.2km to the west.</p>
Ballyconnell	<p>Trade and activity with Northern Ireland has developed and tourist activities have also expanded, helped by the construction of the Shannon-Erne Waterway. New residential developments including apartment blocks along the river, large housing estates and commercial and retail developments have brought a new vitality to the Town. Ballyconnell continues to experience strong population growth with a population increase of 42% over the period 2006 – 2011. The Settlement Framework identified a requirement for 15 hectares of land suitable for residential development.</p>	<p>Lough Oughter &amp; Associated Loughs SAC, within 1km east of Ballyconnell; Lough Oughter Complex SPA, 8.7km to the south-east; and, Cuilcagh – Anierin Uplands SAC, 12.8km to the west.</p>
Belturbet	<p>Since 2006 the population in Belturbet has undergone a slight decline of -3%. There is a potential capacity for further retail and service development in the core area of the town mainly through the re-use of derelict and unused buildings. The Settlement Framework identified a requirement for 15 hectares of land suitable for residential development.</p>	<p>The River Erne flows through the town and is included within the designation for Lough Oughter &amp; Associated Loughs SAC, considered within immediate proximity to Belturbet; and, Lough Oughter Complex SPA, 3.4km to the south.</p>
Mullagh	<p>Mullagh has experienced significant development and population growth (67.5% between the years 2006 – 2011), in some part, due to its strategic location adjacent to the Greater Dublin Area. This rapid growth has not allowed the town itself to develop in a similar fashion and it is likely that many inhabitants work outside the town. The Settlement Framework identified a requirement for 15 hectares of land suitable for</p>	<p>River Boyne &amp; River Blackwater SAC and SPA, 6.3km to the south; Lough Bane &amp; Lough Glass SAC, 18.9km to the south-west; White Lough, Ben Loughs &amp; Lough Doo SAC, 20.7km to the south-east.</p>

	residential development.	
Ballinagh	<p>The Settlement Framework identified Small towns as being on Tier four of the Settlement Hierarchy. Small towns have a population of fewer than 1,000 with some basic retailing and a mix of social, educational and other services. Zoning objectives have not been identified for these small towns. It is important that the retail and service function of each small town and village remains within the traditional town core and residential development close to it. This will create the compact urban form that is the most sustainable. The Settlement Framework as identified an overall target growth for Tier Four and Tier Five Settlements (Villages), as 975 persons up to 2020.</p>	Lough Oughter Complex SPA, 4.4km north-west; Lough Oughter & Associated Loughs SAC, 4.7km north-west; and, Lough Sheelin SPA, 13.5km south-east.
Ballyhaise		Lough Oughter & Associated Loughs SAC within 1km to the north-east; Lough Oughter Complex SPA, 4.2km to the west.
Shercock		Killyconny Bog SAC, 22.3km south south-west.
Killeshandra		Considered to be within immediate proximity to Lough Oughter & Associated Loughs SAC, and Lough Oughter Complex SPA.
Arva		Lough Oughter & Associated Loughs SAC, 7.2km north-east; and, Lough Oughter Complex SPA, 8.7km to the north-east.
Kilnaleck		Lough Sheelin SPA, 3.2km to the south; and, Lough Kinale & Derragh Lough SPA, 7.1km south of Kilnaleck.
Swanlinbar		Cuilcagh – Anierin Uplands SAC, 1.5km to the west.
Blacklion	Corratirrim SAC, 1.1km to the south; Cuilcagh – Anierin Uplands SAC, 5.6km to the south; and Boleybrack Mountain SAC, 7.5km south-west.	
Loch Gowna	Lough Oughter & Associated Loughs SAC, 11.4km north; Lough Oughter Complex SPA, 11.7km north; Lough Sheelin SPA, 13.7km south-east; and, Lough Kinale & Derragh Lough SPA, 13.8km south-east.	

## **2.4 Proposed Development Plan Policies and Objectives.**

The following relevant information contained within the Draft Cavan County Development Plan 2014 – 2020 provides the strategic direction and policy against which proposed developments are based. A material consideration in that strategy and respective policy platform is the regulatory and legal instruments protecting designated sites with a specific focus on the key conservation objectives of those sites.

### **Chapter 2 – Settlement Framework**

The Settlement Framework aims to set a vision and overall strategy for the spatial development of the County and a framework for the development of the policies and objectives in subsequent sections of the plan. Relevant items listed in the Core Strategy:

- 1. To ensure that the future spatial development of County Cavan is in accordance with higher level plans including the National Development Plan, National Spatial Strategy, Border Regional Planning Guidelines, as well as, national policy guidance issued under section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, as amended, the River Basin Management Plans, surface water regulations and the Habitats Directive.*
- 5. To take in account, in the assessment of development proposals, Article 6(3) (4) and Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, the Surface Water Regulations 2009 and the relevant measures of the River Basin Management Plans 2009 – 2015.*
- 7. To restrict or prevent development in areas at risk of flooding in accordance with the Planning and Flood Risk Guidelines 2009.*
- 17. To promote and facilitate the provision of the necessary transport infrastructure to fully accommodate existing and future population needs as well as the demand for economic development in an environmentally sustainable manner.*
- 18. To facilitate the provision of the County's infrastructure in a sustainable and efficient manner that promotes the social and economic development of the County.*
- 19. Proposals for the generation of energy from renewable sources will be supported provided that the wider environmental benefits are not outweighed by any detrimental impacts of the proposed development (including any electricity transmission facilities needed) on the landscape, public safety, and the local environment).*

### **Chapter 3 – Economic Development**

- A-P2** *To facilitate and encourage the sustainable development of agricultural enterprises, agri-tourism projects and farm diversification and other suitable proposals that supports the development of alternative rural enterprises.*
- A-O1** *To promote the continued development and expansion of the Agri-Food Sector.*
- A-O4** *To ensure that all agricultural activities comply with legislation on water quality, such as the Phosphorous Regulations, Water Framework Directive and Nitrates Directive.*
- I-O1** *Ensure that there is sufficient and suitable lands reserved for new enterprise development at key locations throughout the county.*

**F-P2** To encourage forestry and forestry related development, as a means of diversifying from traditional farming activity.

## **Chapter 4 – Physical Infrastructure**

### **Section 1: Roads & Transport**

**RTO1** To ensure the co-ordination of transport and land use planning.

**RTO 2** To implement the recommendations of the Transportation Plans for the towns of Cavan, Kingscourt, Bailieborough and Cootehill which were carried out in recent years.

**RT OBJ 4** A long term objective for this County is the extension of the Navan Rail line into Kingscourt and beyond to Cavan.

**RT OBJ 10** To promote the development of cycling by the development of cycle links.

**RT OBJ 37** N55 National Secondary Route: To progress and develop the N55 Ballinagh Bypass.

**RT OBJ 42** To progress and develop the Cavan to Dundalk Strategic Route Improvement Scheme (Dundalk - Shercock - Cootehill - Cavan; R-188, R-192, R-162, R-178).

### **Section 2: Water & Wastewater Services**

**WWSP01** To support the objectives of the report entitled 'Water Services Investment Programme – Assessment of Needs 2009 – 2015'.

### **Section 3: Waste Management**

No policies or objectives within the Draft Plan that relevant to potential threats to Natura 2000 sites.

### **Section 4: Energy**

**E-OBJ1** To support the infrastructural renewal and development of electricity networks in the County.

**EN010** To encourage and facilitate the expansion of the Gas network in County Cavan.

### **Section 5: Telecommunications and Information Technology**

No policies or objectives within the Draft Plan that relevant to potential threats to Natura 2000 sites.

## **Chapter 5 – Housing**

**HP2** To implement the provisions of the Housing Strategy.

**H01** Require that all new residential developments include a mix of house types and sizes to cater for different needs including families, single persons, the elderly and mobility impaired.

**H06** Ensure a sequential approach to residential development in which the priority location for new residential development will be town and village cores, brownfield sites and suitable areas adjoining town and village cores.

## **Chapter 6 – Social Strategy & Community Facilities**

**RO1** To meet the recreational needs of all communities and individuals in the county.

### **Chapter 7 – Built Heritage & Archaeology**

No policies or objectives within the Draft Plan that relevant to potential threats to Natura 2000 sites.

### **Chapter 8 – Natural Heritage & Environment**

All policies and objectives detailed in this chapter relate to the protection of natural resources and are considered later in the Screening process (see Section 4.4 below).

### **Chapter 9 – Recreation & Tourism**

**WA –01** *To promote the development of new walking routes and to facilitate the protection, development and maintenance of walking and cycling routes within the County.*

### **Chapter 10 – Rural Settlement Strategy**

**RHO3** *Applications in rural areas shall be for individual dwelling houses only and must be made in the name of the person who is the intended occupier of the dwelling house.*

**RHO8** *To cater for the housing requirements of members of the local rural community who have a rural generated housing needs.*

**RHO9** *Urban generated housing development shall be directed into town and village settlements.*

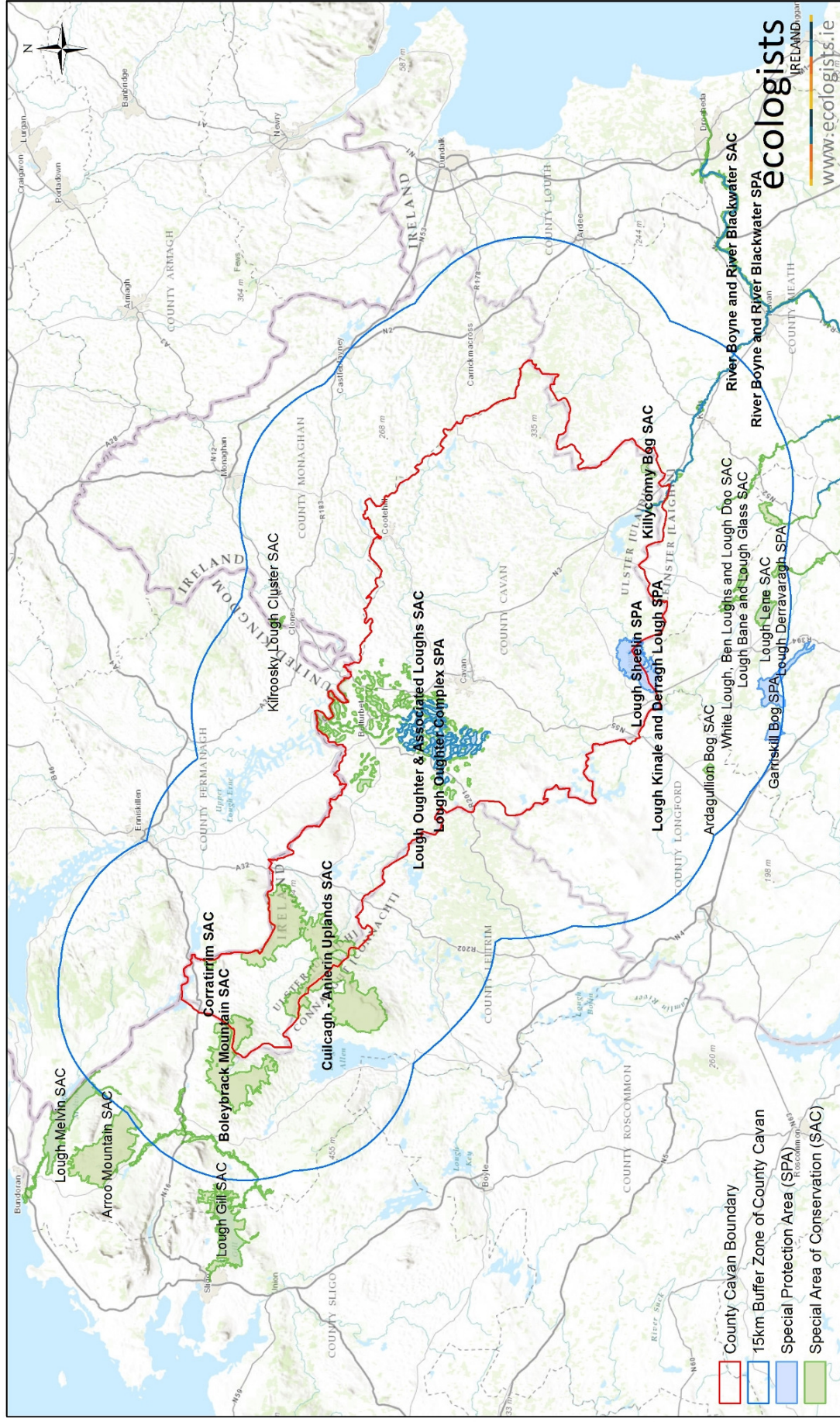
**RHO12** *To facilitate proposals for permanent residential development in order to tackle declining population levels.*

### **Chapter 11 – Development Management Standards**

No policies or objectives within the Draft Plan that relevant to potential threats to Natura 2000 sites.



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





### **3.0 NATURA 2000 SITES**

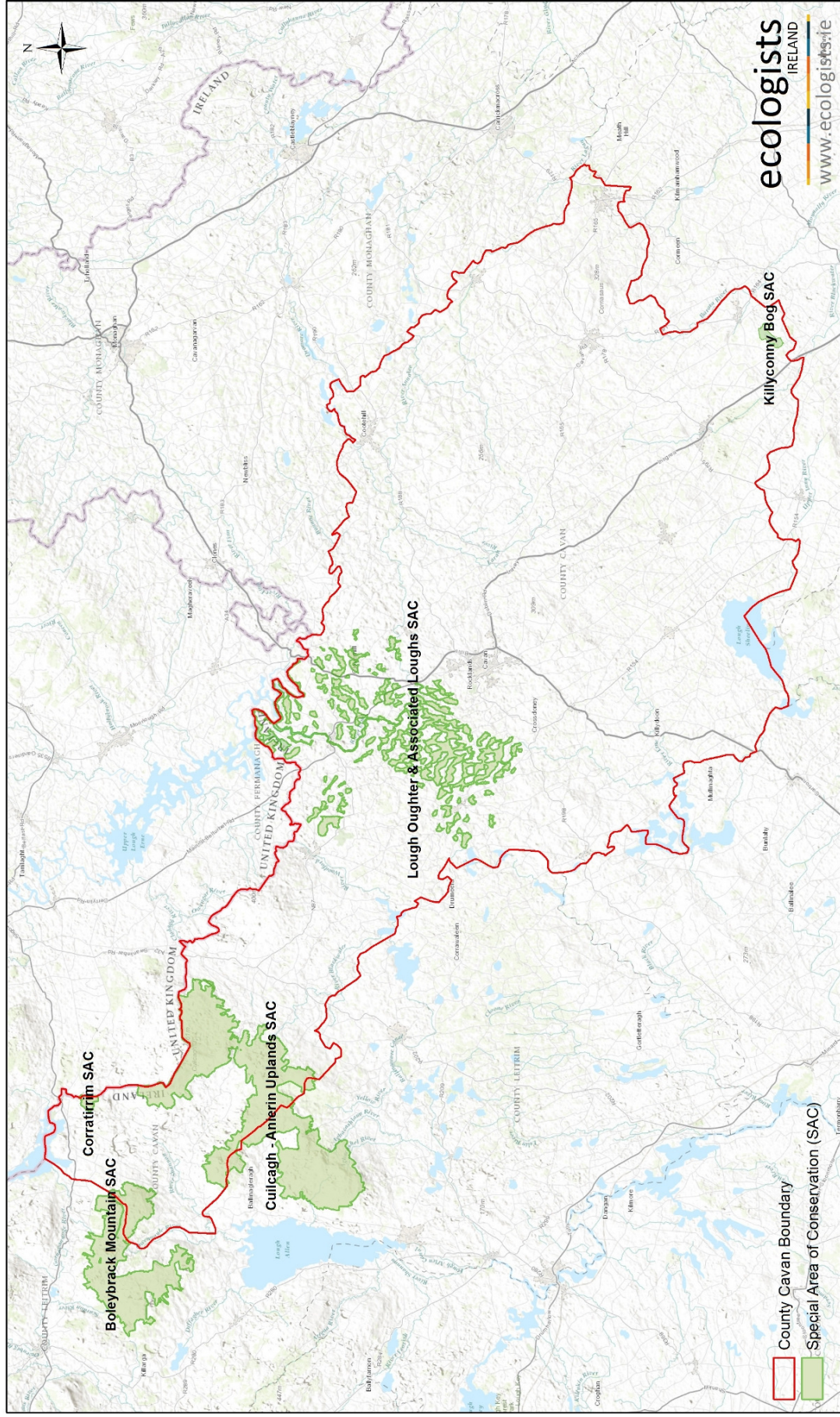
#### **3.1 Overview of Natura 2000 Sites in County Cavan.**

The natural environment both within and surrounding County Cavan is rich in biodiversity, the extensive drumlins so prevalent across the country are integrated into a largely agricultural landscape, with inter-drumlin areas forming a diverse network of lakes, rivers, wetlands and peatlands. As shown in Figure 1, there are currently nine Natura 2000 sites designated for conservation interest within a European context. Five Special Areas of Conservation are designated within the County, including two sites that overlay the boundary, covering a total land area of c.16,600ha. Four Special Protection areas have been designated within the County, two of which overlay the boundary with a total land cover of c.4110.2ha.

#### **3.2 Special Areas of Conservation in County Cavan.**

The five SACs located within Cavan represent a diverse range of annexed habitats. The inter-drumlin network of wetlands and upland peatlands typical of the Cavan landscape comprise the core interest across the Natura 2000 network in the region. A broad guild of environmental conditions and associated habitats occur within County Cavan; from the botanically rich limestone pavement at Corratirrim, to the sparse arctic-alpine vegetation on siliceous rocky outcrops in the Cuilcagh-Anierin Uplands. The River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC is the only site designated for annexed species within the County, notably for nationally important populations of River Lamprey, Atlantic Salmon, and European Otter. Figure 2. Shows the location of all SACs in the County. Table 2 summarises the designated features of each site and the relevant policies and objectives in the Draft Cavan County Development Plan 2014 – 2020 that may have potential to exacerbate the existing pressures and threats to site integrity.

Figure 2. Special Areas of Conservation in County Cavan.



**Table 2. Qualifying Features of Special Areas of Conservation in County Cavan.**

<b>NATURA 2000 Site</b>	<b>Qualifying Features</b>	<b>Extent and Character</b>	<b>Threats to Site Integrity</b>
<p><b>Boleybrack Mountain</b> Special Area of Conservation [002032]                      Site Area: 4268.76ha</p> <p>Boleybrack Mountain is an extensive upland plateau situated to the north of Lough Allen. It is dominated by blanket bog and wet heath, with small oligotrophic lakes scattered throughout.</p>	<p><b>Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160]</b>                      Dystrophic systems most often associated with Blanket bogs [7130] and may include isolated seasonal pools, random collections of irregularly-shaped more-or-less permanent waters, and ordered linear or concentric arrays of pools and small lochs. Dystrophic pools may be also found on raised bogs situated mainly on plains and valley bottoms. These water bodies are very acidic and poor in plant nutrients. Their water has a high humic acid content and is usually stained dark brown through exposure to peat. Most examples are small (less than 5 ha in extent), shallow, and contain a limited range of flora and fauna.</p> <p><b>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010]</b>                      Wet heath usually occurs on acidic, nutrient-poor substrates, such as shallow peats or sandy soils with impeded drainage. The vegetation is typically dominated by mixtures of cross-leaved heath <i>Erica tetralix</i>, heather <i>Calluna vulgaris</i>, grasses, sedges and <i>Sphagnum</i> bog-mosses</p>	<p>This habitat represents approximately 1% of the land cover within the SAC (c.42ha). Natural dystrophic lakes occur in 87% of all suitable 10km squares in Ireland. 10 SACs are designated for this habitat type. Boleybrack Mountain SAC represents 1.17% of the total SAC contribution in the Member State.</p>	<p>Changes in local hydrology (drainage); Forestry; Peat extraction; Renewable wind-energy development; Over-grazing; Under-grazing; Recreation; and, illegal dumping.</p> <p><b>Policies &amp; Objectives:</b>  <b>A-P2</b>  <b>A-O1</b>  <b>F-P2</b>  <b>WA –O1</b>  <b>RO1</b></p>
<p><b>European dry heaths [4030]</b>                      Occur in a variety of forms in Ireland, mostly on free-draining, nutrient poor acidic soils associated with upland or lowland slopes.</p>	<p><b>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010]</b>                      Wet heath usually occurs on acidic, nutrient-poor substrates, such as shallow peats or sandy soils with impeded drainage. The vegetation is typically dominated by mixtures of cross-leaved heath <i>Erica tetralix</i>, heather <i>Calluna vulgaris</i>, grasses, sedges and <i>Sphagnum</i> bog-mosses</p>	<p>This habitat represents 30% of the land cover within the SAC (c.1280ha). Wet heath occurs in 89% of suitable 10km squares in Ireland. 40 SACs are designated for this habitat type. Boleybrack Mountain SAC represents 3.15% of the total SAC contribution for the Member State.</p> <p>This habitat represents 22% of the land cover within the SAC (c.939ha). Dry Heaths occur in 81% of all suitable 10km squares in Ireland. Boleybrack Mountain</p>	

<p><b>Killybonny Bog</b> candidate                  Special Area of Conservation                  [000006]                  Site Area: 191.2ha                  There are few raised bogs in the</p>	<p><b>Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinia caerulea</i>) [6410]</b>  <i>Molinia</i> meadows are found mainly on moist, moderately base-rich, peats and peaty gley soils, often with fluctuating water tables. They usually occur as components of wet pastures or fens, and often form mosaics with dry grassland, heath, mire and scrub communities.</p> <p><b>Blanket bogs (*if active only) [7130]</b>                  These extensive peatlands have formed in areas where there is a climate of high rainfall and a low level of evapotranspiration, allowing peat to develop not only in wet hollows but over large expanses of undulating ground.                  *Active' is defined as supporting a significant area of vegetation that is normally peat-forming. Typical species include the important peat-forming species, such as bog-mosses <i>Sphagnum</i> spp. and cottongrasses <i>Eriophorum</i> spp., or purple moor-grass <i>Molinia caerulea</i> in certain circumstances, together with heather <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> and other ericaceous species.</p>	<p>represents c.2.4% of the total SAC contribution within the Member State.</p> <p>This habitat represents 1% of the land cover within the SAC (c.42ha). <i>Molinia</i> meadows occur within 96% of all suitable 10km squares in Ireland. Boleybrack Mountain represents c.1.3% of the total SAC contribution within the Member State.</p> <p>This habitat represents 30% of the land cover within the SAC (c.1280ha). Blanket Bogs occurs in 83% of all suitable 10km squares in Ireland. Boleybrack Mountain represents c.0.8% of the total SAC contribution for this habitat in the Member State.</p>	
	<p><b>Active raised bogs [71 10]</b>                  Peat-forming ecosystems that have developed during thousands of years of peat accumulation, to such an extent that the depth of peat isolates them from the influence of groundwater. Within the raised bog ecosystem the bog</p>	<p>The habitat type forms 20% of the land cover within the SAC (c.38.2ha). This habitat is largely confined to the lowland central and mid-west of the country and is extremely rare in Ireland with few pristine</p>	<p>Peat extraction; Changes in local hydrology (drainage); Illegal burning; Forestry; Renewable wind-energy development; Over-grazing; Under-grazing; and,</p>

<p>region and Killyconny Bog is one of the best developed consisting of two small basins which have coalesced over a low drumlin ridge.</p>	<p>surface typically displays a distinctive micro-topography, with patterns of hummocks and hollows rich in <i>Sphagnum</i> and other peat-forming species.</p>	<p>examples remaining. This habitat has undergone an estimated decrease in land cover of more than 35% in the last decade and respectively only occurs in 56% of suitable concentrated 10km squares in Ireland. Killyconny Bog represents c.8.3% of the SAC contribution for this habitat in the Member State.</p>	<p>illegal dumping.   <b>Policies:</b>  <b>A-P2</b>  <b>A-O1</b>  <b>F-P2.</b></p>
<p><b>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]</b> Degraded raised bogs occur where there has been widespread disruption, usually by man, to the structure and function of the peat body. This can involve changes to the hydrology, vegetation, and physical structure of the bog, leading to desiccation, oxidation and loss of species or changes in the balance of the species composition. In contrast to 7110 Active raised bogs, peat is not currently forming in degraded bog, however which are 'capable of natural regeneration', i.e. "where the hydrology can be repaired and where, with appropriate rehabilitation management, there is a reasonable expectation of re-establishing vegetation with peat-forming capability within 30 years".</p>	<p><b>Limestone pavements [8240]</b>                  The landscape, flora and associated fauna have evolved in response to millennia of farming, principally grazing. This habitat supports a diverse flora and forms mosaics of orchid-</p>	<p>This habitat type forms c.26% of the land cover within the SAC (49.7ha). This habitat occurs in 81% of 10km squares in Ireland, exemplifying the extent of degradation within raised bogs in a national context. Killyconny bog represents c.0.6% of the SAC contribution for this habitat in the Member State.</p>	
<p><b>Corratirrim</b> Special Area of Conservation [000979]                  Site Area: 117.03ha                  In the north-west of Co. Cavan,</p>		<p>This habitat forms c.23% of the land cover within the SAC (23.4ha). Limestone pavement occur in 81% of suitable 10km squares in Ireland. 23 SACs are</p>	<p>Agricultural improvement / reclamation, agricultural abandonment, grazing regimes, direct loss of habitat through</p>



<p>Carboniferous limestone underlies the shales and grits that form the Cuilcagh range.</p>	<p>rich grassland, limestone heath and hazel scrub. Limestone pavement is found mainly in counties Clare, Galway and Mayo, most famously in the Burren and the Aran Islands.</p>	<p>designated for this habitat type. Corratirrim represents c.0.1% of the total SAC contribution for this habitat in the Member State.</p>	<p>quarrying.  <b>Policies:</b> <b>A-O1</b> <b>A-P2</b> <b>F-P2</b></p>
<p><b>Cuilcagh – Anierin Uplands</b> Special Area of Conservation [000584] Site Area: 9739.7ha  This site has one of the largest expanses of intact, undisturbed mountain blanket bog in Ireland.</p>	<p><b>Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or of the <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> [3130]</b> The clear soft water which characterises this habitat type contains low to moderate levels of plant nutrients and supports a characteristic assemblage of plant species. The vegetation community is characterised by amphibious short perennial vegetation, with shoreweed <i>Littorella uniflora</i> being considered as the defining component.</p>	<p>This habitat represents c.1% of the land cover with the SAC (97.4ha). Oligotrophic to Mesotrophic lakes occur in 83% of suitable 10km squares in Ireland. There are 10 SACs designated for this habitat type. Cuilcagh – Anierin Uplands represents c.2.4% of the SAC contribution for this habitat within the Member State.</p>	<p>Changes in local hydrology; Peat extraction; Overgrazing; Forestry; burning; Illegal dumping; Changes in local hydrology; Renewable wind-energy development; and, Recreation.  <b>Policies:</b> <b>A-P2</b> <b>A-O1</b> <b>F-P2</b>.</p>
	<p><b>Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160]</b> Dystrophic systems most often occur on 7130 Blanket bogs and may include isolated seasonal pools, random collections of irregularly-shaped more-or-less permanent waters, and ordered linear or concentric arrays of pools and small lochs. These water bodies are very acidic and poor in plant nutrients. Their water has a high humic acid content and is usually stained dark brown through exposure to peat. Most examples are small (less than 5 ha in extent), shallow, and contain a limited range of flora and fauna</p>	<p>This habitat represents approximately 1% of the land cover within the SAC (c.97ha). Natural dystrophic lakes occur in 87% of all suitable 10km squares in Ireland. 10 SACs are designated for this habitat type. Cuilcagh - Anierin Uplands SAC represents c.2.7% of the total SAC contribution in the Member State.</p>	

	<p><b>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010]</b></p> <p><b>European dry heaths [4030]</b></p> <p><b>Species rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas [6230]</b> Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands tend to develop where there is flushing through base-rich strata on siliceous bedrock. These may include moderately base-rich metamorphic and igneous rocks. The soils have an acidic pH (&lt;7.0 and mainly &lt;6.0) and are derived from bedrocks with at least some silica. Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands are important because they support a wide range of species, including Atlantic, sub-Atlantic and arctic-alpine plants and invertebrates.</p> <p><b>Blanket bogs (*if active only) [7130]</b></p> <p><b>Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [9220]</b> Chasmophytic vegetation consists of plant communities that colonise the cracks and fissures of rock</p>	<p>This habitat represents approximately 15% of the land cover within the SAC (c.1461ha), equivalent to 3.6% of the total SAC contribution in the Member State.</p> <p>This habitat represents approximately 5% of the land cover within the SAC (c.487ha), equivalent to 1.25% of the total SAC contribution in the Member State.</p> <p>This habitat represents approximately 1% of the land cover within the SAC (c.97.4ha). This habitat occurs in 84% of all suitable 10km squares in Ireland. 10 SACs are designated for this habitat type. Cuilcagh – Anierin represents 13.3% of the total SAC contribution for this habitat type in the Member State.</p> <p>This habitat represents approximately 58% of the land cover within the SAC (c.5649ha), equivalent to c.3.6% of the total SAC contribution within the Member State.</p> <p>This habitat represents approximately 1% of the land cover within the SAC (97.4ha) and occurs in 100% of suitable 10km</p>	
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	<p>faces. The type of plant community that develops is largely determined by the base-status of the rock face. Siliceous communities develop on acid rocks whereas calcareous sub-types develop on lime-rich rocks such as limestone and calcareous schists.</p>	<p>squares in Ireland. 16 SACs are designated for this habitat type. Cuilcagh – Anierin Uplands represent c.2.81% of the total SAC contribution within the Member State.</p>	
<p><b>Lough Oughter &amp; Associated Loughs</b> [000007]                  Site Area: 4757.9ha                  Lough Oughter and its associated loughs occupy much of the lowland drumlin belt in north and central Cavan between Upper Lough Erne, Killashandra and Cavan town consisting of some 90 inter-drumlin lakes and 14 basins in the course of the Erne River.</p>	<p><b>Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i>-type vegetation [3150]</b> Natural eutrophic lakes have nutrient levels that are higher than those of oligotrophic, dystrophic or mesotrophic lakes, resulting in higher natural productivity, and are typically species-rich. However, many such lakes have been damaged by over-enrichment with nutrients, resulting in hypertrophic conditions and a reduction in species-richness.</p>	<p>This habitat represents approximately 67% of the land cover within the SAC (3187.8ha). This habitat occurs in 87% of suitable 10km squares in Ireland. 11 SACs are designated for this habitat type. Lough Oughter &amp; Associated Loughs represent 24% of the total SAC contribution within the Member State.</p>	<p>Water quality and pollution (waste water treatment / effluent); Arterial drainage; Water abstraction (lowering of the regional water table); Loss of fringe vegetation to development; Illegal dumping; and, Introduction of non-native invasive species.</p> <p><b>Policies:</b>                  The Settlement Framework identified a requirement for 15 hectares of land suitable for residential development within the towns of Ballyconnell and Belturbet. Both towns are within close proximity to this SAC.</p>
<p><b>River Boyne &amp; River Blackwater</b> Special Area of Conservation [002299]                  Site Area: 2320.8ha</p>	<p><b>Alkaline Fens [7230]</b>                  Alkaline fens consist of a complex assemblage of vegetation types characteristic of sites where there is tufa and/or peat formation with a high water table and a calcareous base-rich</p>	<p>The extent and location of Alkaline Fen within the SAC is not detailed in the site synopsis. Alkaline Fen occurs in 73.9% of suitable 10km squares in Ireland. 39 SACs</p>	<p>Dredging; Forestry; Draining for agriculture; infilling; pollution from fertilisers and eutrophication.</p>



	<p>water supply.</p> <p><b>Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> [91E0]</b>                  Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) comprises woods dominated by alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and willow <i>Salix</i> spp. on flood plains in a range of situations from islands in river channels to low-lying wetlands alongside the channels. The habitat typically occurs on moderately base-rich, eutrophic soils subject to periodic inundation.</p> <p><b>River Lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> [1099]</b>                  The river lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> is found in coastal waters, estuaries and accessible rivers. The species is normally anadromous (i.e. spawning in freshwater but completing part of its life cycle in the sea), and pollution or artificial obstacles such as weirs or dams impede migration.</p> <p><b>Atlantic Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> [1106]</b></p>	<p>are designated for this habitat type. Within the SAC this habitat represents only c.1% of the land cover (23.2ha), equivalent to 0.79% of the entire SAC contribution within the Member State.</p> <p>The extent of alluvial forests within the Boyne catchment is localised and restricted to small areas. The largest area of this habitat occurs on a chain of three small riparian islands 2.5km west of Drogheda. Alluvial Forest occurs in 61% of suitable 10km squares in Ireland. 28 SACs are designated for this habitat type. Within the SAC, however, this habitat represents only c.1% of land cover (23.2ha), equivalent to c.0.71% of the entire SAC contribution within the Member State.</p> <p>River Lamprey are widespread throughout Ireland and considered to be in favourable conservation status nationally, occupying 100% of suitable 10km squares in Ireland. 9 SACs are designated for River Lamprey. The River Boyne &amp; River Blackwater represents 1.12% of the total SAC contribution for this species.</p> <p>The River Boyne system is an important</p>	<p><b>Policies:</b>  <b>A-P2</b>  <b>A-O1</b>  <b>F-P2</b></p>
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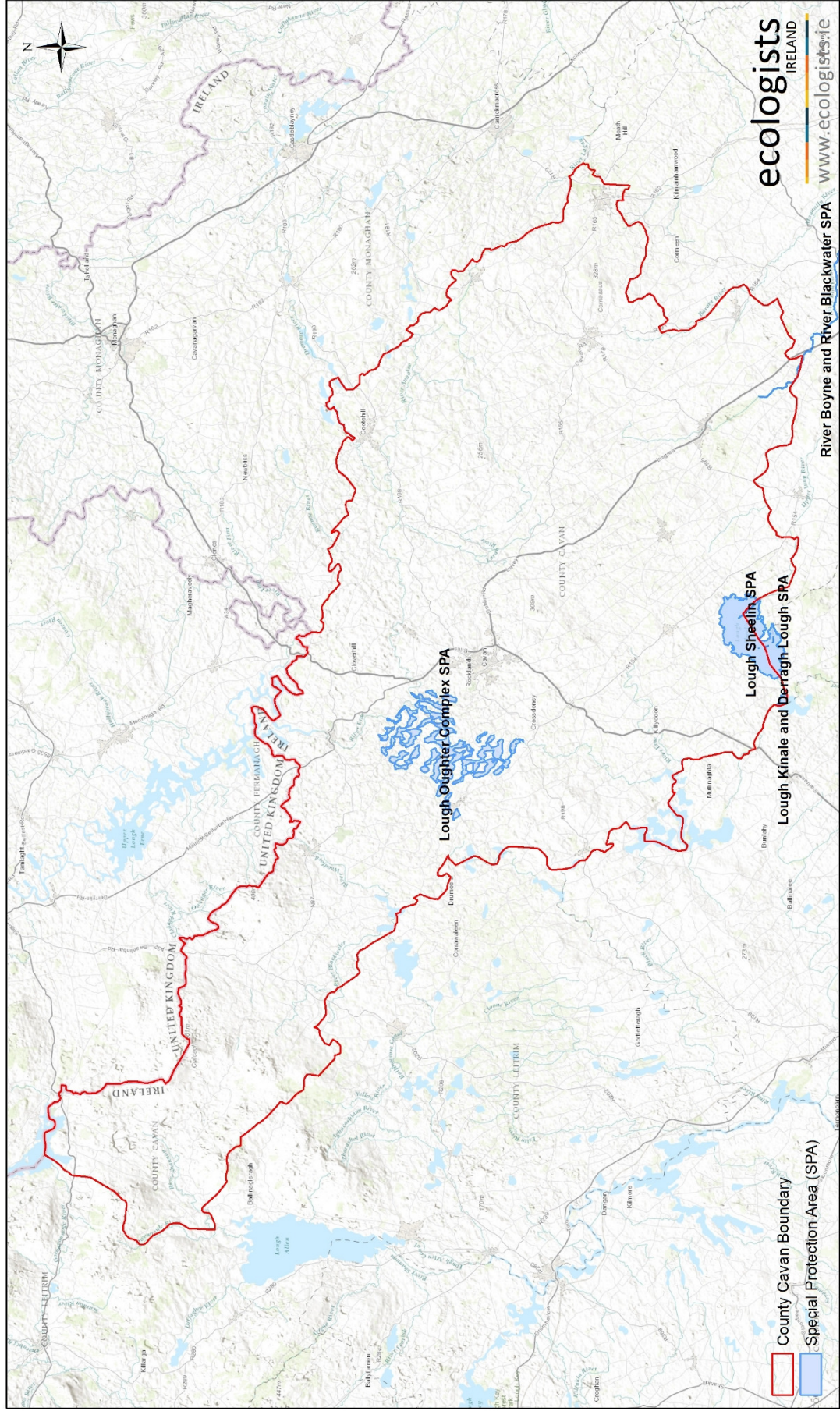
	<p>The Atlantic salmon is an anadromous species (i.e. adults migrate from the sea to breed in freshwater). Spawning takes place in shallow excavations called redds, found in shallow gravely areas in clean rivers and streams where the water flows swiftly. The young that emerge spread out into other parts of the river. After a period of 1-6 years the young salmon migrate downstream to the sea as 'smolts'. Salmon have a homing instinct that draws them back to spawn in the river of their birth after 1-3 years in the sea. This behaviour has resulted in genetically distinct stock between rivers and even within individual rivers, with some evidence of further genetic distinctiveness in the tributaries of large rivers.</p> <p><b>European Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> [1355]</b></p> <p>The otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> is a semi-aquatic mammal, which occurs in a wide range of ecological conditions, including inland freshwater and coastal areas. Inland populations utilise a range of running and standing freshwaters. These must have an abundant supply of food (normally associated with high water quality), together with suitable habitat, such as vegetated river banks, islands, reedbeds and woodland, which are used for foraging, breeding and resting.</p>	<p>spawning catchment for Atlantic Salmon, with excellent salmon spawning throughout the main tributaries and headwaters, Atlantic Salmon occur in 148 Irish Rivers. 26 SACs are designated for this species. The River Boyne &amp; River Blackwater represents 0.52% of the total SAC contribution in the Member State.</p> <p>Occur throughout the Boyne river system. Nationally the European Otter occupies 53.8% of suitable 10km squares in Ireland. 47 SACs are designated for this species. The River Boyne &amp; River Blackwater 0.34% of the total SAC contribution.</p>	
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### **3.3 Special Protection Areas in County Cavan.**

Many species of migratory waterbirds depend on interconnected networks of wetlands. The extensive inter-drumlin networks of wetlands of Cavan are an important resource for migrating and wintering waterbirds and three of the four Special Protection Areas in the County are designated for these interest features. Wetlands are also a great asset to the local community and economy, benefitting people by providing clean water and opportunities for fishing, agriculture, recreation and tourism within the County. Despite their importance, wetlands are amongst the world's most vulnerable ecosystems – being threatened by conversion for agriculture and development, drought, drainage and pollution. Consequently, an alarming 42% of the migratory waterbird populations in Europe are in decline.

The remaining site is the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA and is designated for Kingfisher. Figure 3 shows all SPAs in County Cavan. Table 3 summarise the qualifying features of each site and the potential threats and existing pressures from the Draft Cavan County Development Plan 2014 – 2020.

Figure 3. Special Protection Areas in County Cavan.



**Table 3. Qualifying Features of Special Protection Areas in County Cavan.**

<b>NATURA 2000 Site</b>	<b>Qualifying Features</b>	<b>Extent and Character</b>	<b>Threats to Site Integrity</b>
<p><b>Lough Oughter Complex</b>                      Special Protection Area                      [004049]                      Site Area: 1466.5ha</p> <p>The Lough Oughter Complex SPA is of ornithological importance for its wintering waterbird populations. Of particular note is the internationally important population of Whooper Swan that is based in the area. The site also supports nationally important populations of a further two wintering species and, notably, holds the highest breeding concentrations of Great Crested Grebe in the country.</p>	<p><b>Great Crested Grebe [A005]</b> is a widespread breeder across much of Europe, which accounts for less than half of its global breeding range. Its European breeding population is large (&gt;300,000 pairs). The species breeds on fresh or brackish waters with abundant emergent and submerged vegetation showing a preference for non-acidic eutrophic waterbodies with flat or sloping banks and muddy or sandy substrates usually 0.5-5 m deep and with large areas of open water. Suitable habitats include small pools or lakes, backwaters of slow-flowing rivers and artificial waterbodies (e.g. reservoirs, fish-ponds, gravel pits and ornamental lakes).</p> <p><b>Whooper Swan [A038]</b> Four discrete populations of the Whooper Swan have been identified in western Eurasia. Icelandic breeding stock winters in Iceland, Britain and Ireland comprising of c.16,000 birds.</p>	<p>Ireland supports approximately 2,074 breeding pairs. It is estimated that c.24% of the breeding population in Ireland occurs within SPAs. Lough Oughter is at the centre of the Irish breeding range of Great Crested Grebe and the site supports in excess of 5.5% of the estimated national breeding total of this species (115 individuals), equivalent to 23% of the SPA contribution for this species respectively.</p> <p>Ireland supports approximately 3,500 wintering Great Crested Grebe. It is estimated that c.43% occur in SPAs. Lough Oughter Complex support an average peak count of 85 individuals each year, equivalent to 2.4% of the wintering population in the Member State, and 6.5% of the SPA contribution for this species respectively.</p>	<p>Changes in local hydrology; nutrient enrichment from agricultural run-off and waste-water; loss of fringe vegetation or damage to the vegetation sequence as a result of development (e.g., private jetties). Disturbance of roosting birds from recreation.</p> <p>Lough Oughter is on the list of Wildfowl Sanctuaries and is an exclusion zone from Open Season Orders; however there is anecdotal evidence that illegal hunting of Wigeon within the complex does occur.</p>
<p><b>Policies &amp; Objectives:</b></p> <p><b>HP2</b></p> <p><b>HO1</b></p> <p><b>HO6</b></p> <p><b>RO1</b></p> <p><b>RO8</b></p> <p><b>RH09</b></p>			<p>Ireland supports approximately 10, 320 wintering Whooper Swan. It is estimated that c.1,853 of these birds winter in SPAs. Lough Oughter supports 318 roosting Whooper Swan (five year mean peak 1995 – 2000), equivalent to 3% of the wintering population in the Member State, and 17% of the SPA contribution for this species. The Icelandic population is believed to be stable or declining slightly.</p>



<p><b>Lough Sheelin Special Protection Area [004065]</b>                  Site Area: 1901.7ha                  Lough Sheelin is a medium- to large-sized lake, with a maximum length of 7 km. The lake lies near the top of the catchment of the Inny River, a main tributary of the River Shannon.</p>	<p><b>Wigeon [A050]</b>                  In winter, Wigeon are highly gregarious, and occur in large, mobile flocks. Wigeon is largely a coastal species, feeding on mud-flats, coastal flooded grassland and saltmarsh pastures, however are also widespread on inland flooded grassland.</p> <p><b>Wetland &amp; Waterbirds [A999]</b></p>	<p><b>Ireland supports approximately 125,000 wintering Wigeon.</b>                  It is estimated 3% (3,863) of wintering Wigeon occur within the SPA network. Lough Oughter Complex supports 903 (five year mean peak 1995 – 2000) Wigeon, equivalent to 0.7% of the wintering population within the Member State, and 23.3% of the total SPA contribution for this species.</p> <p>The E.U. Birds Directive pays particular attention to wetlands and, as these form part of this SPA, the wetlands and its associated waterbirds are of special conservation interest for Wetland &amp; Waterbirds.</p>	<p><b>RH012</b>  <b>A-01</b>  <b>A-P2</b></p>
<p><b>Great Crested Grebe [A005]</b>                  As detailed above.</p> <p><b>Pochard [A059]</b>                  During the winter Pochard frequent similar habitats to those it breeds in, including large lakes slow-flowing rivers, reservoirs, brackish waters, marshes and flooded gravel pits. Pochard will shift to coastal habitats such as brackish lagoons, tidal estuaries and inshore waters. Pochard prefer waterbodies less</p>	<p>Ireland supports approximately 3,500 wintering Great Crested Grebe. It is estimated that c.43% occur in SPAs. Approximately 140 Great crested grebe winter at Lough Sheelin, equivalent to 4% of the wintering population in the Member State, and 9.3% of the total SPA contribution for this species.</p> <p>Ireland supports approximately 40,000, wintering Pochard. It is estimated that c.60% of these individuals occur in SPAs. 546 Pochard (average 5 year peak 1995 – 2000) winter at Lough Sheelin, equivalent to 1.3% of the wintering population in the Member State, and 2.2% of the total SPA contribution for this species.</p>	<p>Pochard, Tufted Duck and Goldeneye are on the Open Season Order of listed birds that may be hunted between the period beginning 1 September in each year and ending on 31 January in the year immediately following that year. Lough Sheelin is not a listed Wildfowl Sanctuary (exclusion zone), therefore hunting is a threat to the maintenance of the population. Trophic status of the lake has varied greatly since the 1970s due to pollution from mainly</p>	<p>Pochard, Tufted Duck and Goldeneye are on the Open Season Order of listed birds that may be hunted between the period beginning 1 September in each year and ending on 31 January in the year immediately following that year. Lough Sheelin is not a listed Wildfowl Sanctuary (exclusion zone), therefore hunting is a threat to the maintenance of the population. Trophic status of the lake has varied greatly since the 1970s due to pollution from mainly</p>

	<p>than 3 m deep, diving to the bottom to forage. They feed on seeds, roots, grasses, sedges and aquatic plants, as well as invertebrates, amphibians and small fish.</p> <p><b>Tufted Duck [ A061]</b>                  In winter, Tufted Ducks are highly gregarious, preferring large, freshwater lakes, ponds and reservoirs, though they are also found in estuaries, along sheltered seacoasts and on brackish inland seas in winter. They feed by diving, with 80% of the diet consisting of animal material, but also feed on seeds and green parts of aquatic plants, aquatic insects and crustaceans. Its European wintering population is large (&gt;1,200,000 individuals)</p> <p><b>Goldeneye [A067]</b> is a widespread breeder in northern and central Europe, which holds less than half of its global population. Its European wintering population is large (&gt;310,000 individuals).</p>	<p>Ireland supports approximately 40,000 wintering Tufted Duck each winter. It is estimated that c.51% of the wintering population occurs within SPAs. Lough Sheelin supports an average peak number of 762 individuals, equivalent to 1.9% of the wintering population in the Member State, and 3.6% of the total SAC contribution for this species.</p> <p>In Ireland the species winters mainly on large rivers, loughs, turloughs and reservoirs. The species is restricted to water close to the shore and less than 10 m deep (showing a preference for waters 4 m deep). Ireland supports approximately 11,000 individual Goldeneye each winter. It is estimated that c.77% of the wintering population occurs within SPAs. Lough Sheelin supports an average peak number of 225 individuals, equivalent to 2% of the wintering population</p>	<p>agricultural sources. It was recently (1998-2000) classified as a highly eutrophic system.                  Threats therefore centre heavily on deterioration in water quality.                  Other threats are loss of fringe vegetation, changes in hydrology due to drainage; and, recreational disturbance.</p> <p><b>Policies &amp; Objectives:</b></p> <p><b>HP2</b>  <b>HO1</b>  <b>H06</b>  <b>RO1</b>  <b>RH09</b>  <b>RH012</b>  <b>A-01</b>  <b>A-P2</b></p>
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		<p>within the Member State, and 2.5% of the total SPA contribution for this species.</p> <p>As detailed above.</p>	
<p><b>Lough Kinale Special Protection Area [004061]</b>                  Site Area: 282.3ha                  Lough Kinale is a relatively small lake that is situated immediately downstream of Lough Sheelin.                  Lough Kinale has two main basins, almost separated by swamp formations.</p>	<p><b>Wetland &amp; Waterbirds [A999]</b></p> <p><b>Pochard [A059]</b>                  As detailed above.</p>	<p>Ireland supports approximately 40,000, wintering Pochard. It is estimated that c.60% of these individuals occur in SPAs. Lough Kinale supports a peak average number of 951 individuals, equivalent to 2.3% of the wintering population within the Member State, and 3.9% of the total SPA contribution for this species.</p>	<p>As for Lough Sheelin, Pochard, and Tufted Duck are on the Open Season Order of listed birds that may be hunted between the period beginning 1 September in each year and ending on 31 January in the year immediately following that year. Lough Kinale is not a listed Wildfowl Sanctuary (exclusion zone), therefore hunting is a threat to the maintenance of the population.</p>
	<p><b>Tufted Duck [A061]</b>                  As detailed above.</p>	<p>Ireland supports approximately 40,000 wintering Tufted Duck each winter. It is estimated that c.51% of the wintering population occurs within SPAs. Lough Kinale supports a peak average number of 449 individuals, equivalent to 1.1% of the wintering population within the Member State, and 2.2% of the total SPA contribution for this species.</p>	
	<p><b>Wetland &amp; Waterbirds [A999]</b></p>	<p>As detailed above.</p>	<p>The trophic status of Lough Kinale has varied greatly since the 1970s due to pollution and was also recently (1998-2000) classified as a highly eutrophic system. Threats are continued nutrient enrichment and eutrophication; the loss of fringe vegetation due to agricultural reclamation and development; changes in hydrology due to</p>



<p><b>River Boyne &amp; River Blackwater</b> Special Protection Area [004232] Site Area: 460.3ha</p>	<p><b>Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i> [breeding]</b> [A229] Kingfishers are relatively widespread throughout Ireland with a more easterly bias in their distribution, however are considered to be a bird of conservation concern (Amber listed).</p>	<p>The survey undertaken in 2010 by Cummins <i>et al.</i> 2010 estimated 15 probable and 4 possible breeding pairs within the River Boyne, representing some of the highest numbers per kilometre recorded during the survey (0.09 – 0.12 territories per km). Estimates of national population were not provided in Cummins <i>et al.</i> 2010 due to the site specific focus of the study. Gibbons <i>et al.</i> 1993 present estimates of between 1,300 – 2,100 breeding pairs in Ireland. The SPA therefore represents between c.0.9 and 1.5% of the national population.</p>	<p>drainage; and, recreational disturbance.  <b>Policies &amp; Objectives:</b> <b>HP2, HO1, H06, RO1, RH09, RH012, A-01, A-P2</b></p>
			<p>Destruction and loss of riparian banks (nest sites); human disturbance at nest sites during the breeding season; predation from domestic cats, rats and mink; and, river pollution  <b>Policies &amp; Objectives:</b> <b>A-01, AP2, R01.</b></p>

### 3.4 Overview of Natura Sites within 15km of County Cavan

All Natura 2000 sites entirely or partially within a 15km buffer from the county boundary have been included in this assessment in accordance with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidance (DoEHLG, 2010). This distance was deemed to be sufficient to cover all likely significant effects which may arise from the implementation of the County Development Plan on Natura 2000 sites. ArcView software using Ordnance Survey maps and NPWS shapefiles were used to identify the boundaries of Natura 2000 Sites within 15km of the Cavan County border. Cavan borders six counties; Leitrim to the west, Fermanagh and Monaghan to the north, Meath to the south-east, Longford to the south-west and Westmeath to the south.

### 3.5 Special Areas of Conservation within 15km of County Cavan

Eight SACs occur within 15km of the Cavan County boundary. Figure 4 shows the location of these sites in relation to County Cavan. Table 4 summarises the designated features of these sites and the potential threat and impacts from policies and objectives in the Draft Cavan County Development Plan.

Figure 4. Special Areas of Conservation within 15km of County Cavan.

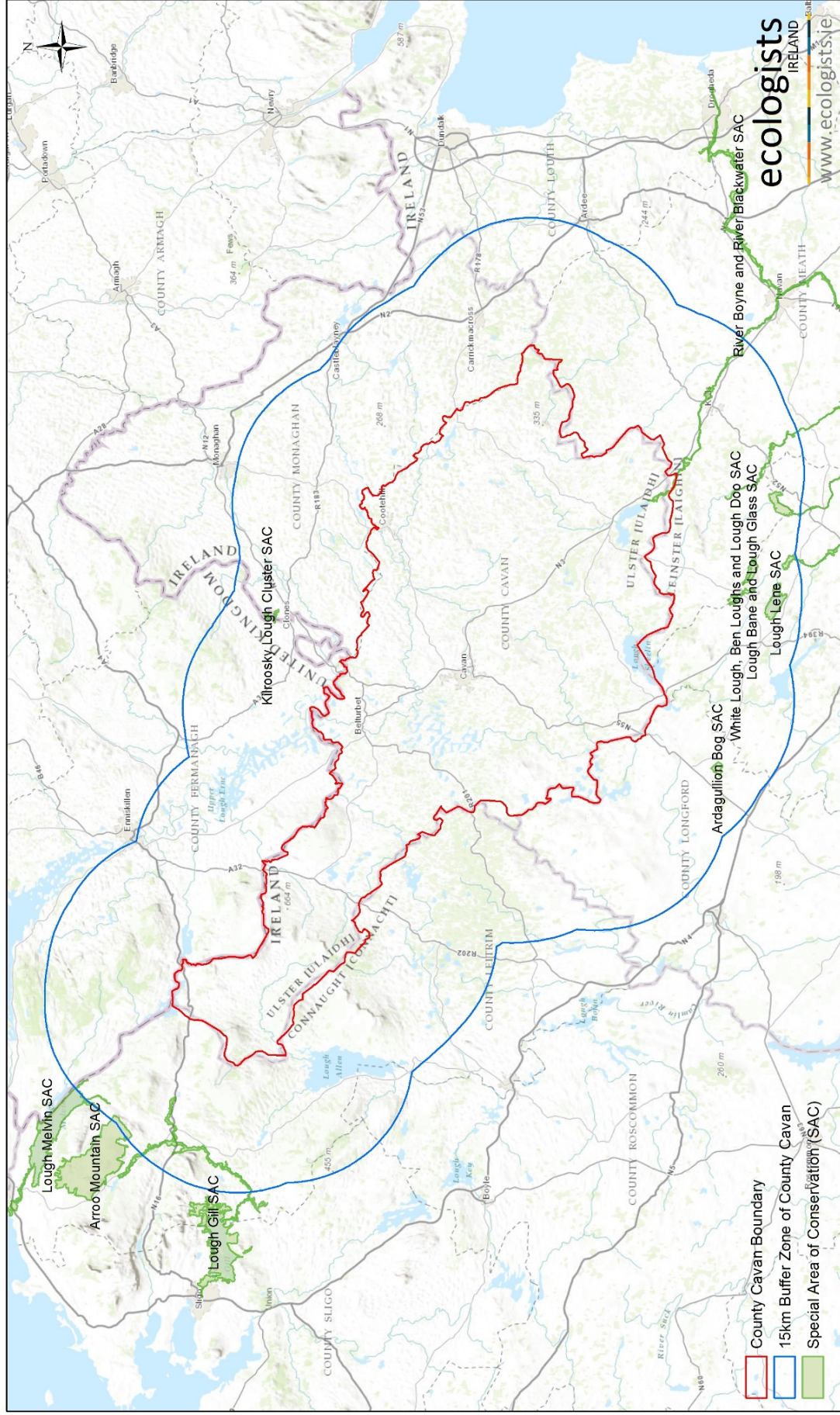


Table 4. Qualifying Features of Special Areas of Conservation within 15km of County Cavan.

NATURA 2000 Site	Qualifying Features	Threats to Site Integrity
<p><b>Lough Melvin</b> Special Area of Conservation [000428] Site Area: 2269.8ha</p>	<p>Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> [ 3130] Atlantic Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> [1106] European Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> [1355]</p>	<p>Changes in local hydrology; Forestry (sedimentation); Peat extraction; Renewable wind-energy development; Over-grazing; Under-grazing; and, illegal dumping.</p> <p><b>Policies &amp; Objectives:</b> There are no current policies within the Draft Cavan County Development Plan that are considered to be potential threats to site integrity. This is due to the distance of any towns and villages in Cavan from the Natura 2000 site.</p>
<p><b>Aroo Mountain</b> Special Area of Conservation [ 001403] Site Area: 3967.9ha</p>	<p>Blanket Bog (*active only) [7130] Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010] Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210] Petrifying spring with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220] Calcareous and calcschist screes of the montane to alpin levels [8120]</p>	<p>Forestry; Peat extraction; Illegal burning; Renewable wind-energy development; Over-grazing; Under-grazing; recreational disturbance (e.g. rock climbing).</p> <p><b>Policies &amp; Objectives:</b> There are no current policies within the Draft Cavan County Development Plan that are considered to be potential threats to site integrity. This is due to the distance of any towns and villages in Cavan from the Natura 2000 site.</p>
<p><b>Lough Gill</b> Special Area of Conservation [ 001976] Site Area: 3298.5ha</p>	<p>Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i>-type vegetation [3150] Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus-glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> [91E0]</p>	<p>Changes in local hydrology and drainage; Forestry (sedimentation); Loss of fringe vegetation to development and recreational pressure; illegal removal of trees for timber;</p>

	<p>Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> [91A0]</p> <p>Sea Lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> [1095]</p> <p>Brook Lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i> [1096] / River Lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> [1099]</p> <p>Atlantic Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> [1106]</p> <p>European Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> [1355]</p> <p>White-clawed Crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> [1092]</p>	<p><b>Policies &amp; Objectives:</b></p> <p>There are no current policies within the Draft Cavan County Development Plan that are considered to be potential threats to site integrity. This is due to the distance of any towns and villages in Cavan from the Natura 2000 site.</p>
<p><b>Ardagullion Bog</b> Candidate Special Area of Conservation [002341]</p> <p>Site Area: 117.3ha</p> <p>Ardagullion Bog is located 5 km north-east of Edgeworthstown, mainly in the townlands of Cloonshannagh (Coolamber Manor Demesne) and Ardagullion in Co. Longford. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog.</p>	<p>Active raised bogs [7110].</p> <p>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120].</p> <p>Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150].</p>	<p>Changes in local hydrology; Forestry; Peat extraction; Renewable wind-energy development; Illegal burning; Over-grazing; Under-grazing; and, illegal dumping.</p> <p><b>Policies &amp; Objectives:</b></p> <p>There are no current policies within the Draft Cavan County Development Plan that are considered to be potential threats to site integrity. This is due to the distance of any towns and villages in Cavan from the Natura 2000 site.</p>
<p><b>Garriskil Bog</b> Candidate Special Area of Conservation [000697]</p> <p>Site Area: 324.8ha.</p> <p>This raised bog site lies 3 km west of Lough Derravaragh and 3 km east of Rathowen. It is bounded to the southeast and southwest by the rivers Inny and Riffey.</p>	<p>Active raised bogs [7110].</p> <p>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120].</p> <p>Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150].</p>	<p>Changes in local hydrology; Forestry; Peat extraction; Renewable wind-energy development; Illegal burning; Over-grazing; Under-grazing; and, illegal dumping.</p> <p><b>Policies &amp; Objectives:</b></p> <p>There are no current policies within the Draft Cavan County Development Plan that are considered to be potential threats to site integrity. This is due to the</p>

<p><b>Lough Lene</b> Candidate Special Area of Conservation [002121]                  Site Area: 489.9ha                  This lake is situated 4km north east of Castlepollard in Co. Westmeath. It is a deep (20m max.), clear hard-water lake with marl deposition.</p>	<p>Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp [3140].                  White-clawed Crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> [1092].</p>	<p>distance of any towns and villages in Cavan from the Natura 2000 site.                  Changes in local hydrology; Water abstraction; Nutrient enrichment from agricultural run-off and development.                  Loss and fragmentation of fringe vegetation from development and resultant shifts in population density, especially for young life-stages of White-clawed crayfish; and, the spread of invasive American crayfish and associated diseases.</p>
<p><b>White Lough, Ben Loughs &amp; Lough Doo</b> Candidate Special Area of Conservation [001810]                  Site Area: 116.3ha.                  This site is comprised of four hard water lakes in a small, poorly-drained valley, 4 km east of Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath.</p>	<p>Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp [3140].                  White-clawed Crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> [1092].</p>	<p><b>Policies &amp; Objectives:</b>                  There are no current policies within the Draft Cavan County Development Plan that are considered to be potential threats to site integrity. This is due to the distance of any towns and villages in Cavan from the Natura 2000 site.</p>
<p><b>Lough Bane &amp; Lough Glass</b> Candidate Special Area of Conservation [002120]                  Site Area: 203.5ha.                  This site is located on the Meath/Westmeath border, about 10 km south of Oldcastle. It comprises three lakes situated in a shallow valley. Lough Bane is by far the largest of the group, with the much smaller Lough Glass occurring immediately to the east and Lough Glass North to the north-west. The lakes occur at the headwaters of the River Deel, with the main outflow at the south-east end of Lough Bane.</p>	<p>Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp [3140].                  White-clawed Crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> [1092].</p>	<p>distance of any towns and villages in Cavan from the Natura 2000 site.</p>

<p><b>Kilroosky Lough Cluster</b> Special Area of Conservation [001786]                  Site Area: 57.6ha.                  Kilroosky Lough Cluster straddles the border with Northern Ireland, and is located approximately 2 km north-west of Clones, Co. Monaghan. The site consists of three separate areas which contain several calcium-rich, clean water (oligo-mesotrophic) lakes and their marginal fen vegetation.</p>	<p>Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210].</p>
	<p>Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp [3140].</p>
	<p>Alkaline Fens [7230].</p>
	<p>White-clawed Crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> [1092].</p>

### 3.6 Special Protection Areas within 15km of County Cavan

Two Special Protection Areas are designated within 15km of the Cavan county boundary. Both of these sites are located to the south of County Cavan in County Westmeath. Garriskil Bog SPA (14.1km south of the boundary) is designated for wintering Greenland white-fronted Goose, while Lough Derravaragh SPA (12.2km south of the boundary) is designated for its importance to wintering Waterbirds. Figure 5 shows the location of these SPAs in relation to Cavan County boundary. Table 5 summarises the potential threats and impacts on these sites from policies and objectives within the Draft Cavan County Development Plan.





**Table 5. Qualifying Features of Special Protection Areas within 15km of County Cavan.**

<b>NATURA 2000 Site</b>	<b>Qualifying Features</b>	<b>Threats to Site Integrity</b>
<p><b>Garriskil Bog</b> Candidate Special Protection Area [004102]                      Site Area: 324.25ha                      Site lies 3 km west of Lough Derravaragh in Co. Westmeath. It is bounded to the southeast and southwest by the rivers Inny and Riffey.</p>	<p>Greenland White-fronted Goose [A395]</p>	<p>Forestry; Changes in local hydrology; Peat extraction; Renewable wind-energy development; Illegal burning; Over-grazing; Under-grazing; and, illegal dumping.</p> <p><b>Policies &amp; Objectives:</b>                      There are no current policies within the Draft Cavan County Development Plan that are considered to be potential threats to site integrity. This is due to the distance from the Natura 2000 site (14.1km).</p>
<p><b>Lough Derravaragh</b> Special Protection Area [004043]                      Site Area: 1 120.4ha                      Lough Derravaragh is located approximately 12 km north of Mullingar town. It is a medium- to large-sized lake of relatively shallow water (maximum depth 23 m). The lake extends along a south-east/north-west axis for approximately 8 km. The Inny River, a tributary of the River Shannon, is the main inflowing and outflowing river.</p>	<p>Whooper Swan [A038]                      Pochard [A059]                      Tufted Duck [ A061]                      Coot [ A125]                      Wetland &amp; Waterbirds [A999]</p>	<p>Changes in local hydrology; nutrient enrichment from agricultural run-off and waste-water; loss of fringe vegetation or damage to the vegetation sequence as a result of development (e.g., private jetties). Disturbance of roosting birds from recreation.</p> <p><b>Policies &amp; Objectives:</b>                      There are no current policies within the Draft Cavan County Development Plan that are considered to be potential threats to site integrity. This is due to the distance from the Natura 2000 site (12.2km).</p>



### **3.7 Conservation Objectives**

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

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing;
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future; and,
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable;

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

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

## 4.0 SCREENING OF POTENTIAL LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

### 4.1 Assessment Criteria

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

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

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

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

The strategic development proposals in the Draft Cavan County Development Plan are:

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

The Core Strategy determines the level of residential zoning, changes to zoning and the expected or desired land use targets during the lifetime of the Plan. Projected population growth within the town and village plans has resulted in an allocation of 175ha available for development. The residential zoning targets within the Draft Cavan County Development Plan 2014 – 2020 for smaller towns and villages results in no allocation of lands for development. The overall area of land identified for development, notably the number of housing units is therefore significantly reduced.

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

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

*Size, scale, area and land take:*

The total area of land cover subject to land use zoning objectives in the Draft Cavan County Development Plan 2014 – 2020 is 175ha. These lands areas are allocated to meet the projected demand for residential development as part of town and village plans on the basis of trends in population growth. The Draft Cavan

County Development Plan does not propose any zoning of land within Natura 2000 sites. Notwithstanding this zoning, the Council shall take appropriate steps to avoid the deterioration of these designated sites in accordance with the policies and objectives set out in the Draft Cavan County Development Plan (please refer to Section 4.2 below). The protection of the Natura 2000 network of sites is further strengthened by the additional policies and objectives of the Council relating to Flood Risk Management, the Water Framework Directive and the EU Habitats Directive.

The inclusion within the Plan of the N55 Ballinagh Bypass along the National Secondary Route and the preferred route corridor for the Cavan to Dundalk Strategic Route Improvement Scheme (Dundalk - Shercock - Cootehill - Cavan; R-188, R-192, R-162, R-178) are essential to the future development of the County Cavan. The promotion and development of cycle links will also provide improved resources for recreation and tourism within the County. However, it is important that this infrastructure is delivered in an environmentally sensitive way. The delivery of this infrastructure shall be subject to an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC).

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

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

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

Town and Village plans that have allocated areas of land to development and their proximity to Natura 2000 sites are detailed in Table 1. The vast majority of Natura 2000 sites are out-with the sphere of influence for potential impacts from zones for development in the town & village plans, however Ballyconnell and Belturbet village plans are within immediate proximity to Lough Oughter & Associated Loughs SAC. Both village plans have identified a requirement of 15ha of land for development during the lifetime of the Plan. The main potential impacts to this site, and also applicable to the partial overlapping designation of Lough Oughter Complex SPA are changes in hydrology, drainage and deterioration of water quality through nutrient enrichment from agricultural surface water run-off and wastewater treatment.

*Emission (disposal to land, water or air):*

The level of water supply and extraction has been considered in relation to the Settlement Framework within the Draft Cavan County Development Plan 2014 - 2020. It is anticipated that population growth will continue in the County's larger towns, however will be slow or cease in the majority of rural villages. The allocation of set areas for development in the Settlement Framework reflects these projected rates of

growth and demand. As detailed in Chapter 4 – Sections 2 & 3 of the Draft Cavan County Development Plan, water conservation and network management is now an integral component of the Water Services Investment Programme – Assessment of Needs 2009 – 2015 and is key to the sustainable use of water resources. The Settlement Framework provides details of respective Water Supply Schemes for each town and village plans. All Water Supply Schemes and Waste Water Treatment Plants are currently working within capacity. There will be no additional water consumption demand as a result of the Draft Plan. The additional policies in respect of Wastewater Disposal as set out in the Draft Plan will strengthen the protection of receiving waters. The Water Framework Directive has set procedures and obligations for managing water resources at River Basin District level and have expedited a comprehensive assessment of water quality within the region and its catchment area. Accordingly, the updated policy in respect of implementation of the recommendations of the River Basin District Plans as set out in the Draft Plan will assist in securing good water quality standards and associated habitats within the region.

Duration:

The period of the Draft Cavan County Development Plan extends to 2020 and will not continue or be applicable beyond this date.

4.1.3 Description of Likely Changes to the Natura 2000 sites.

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

- *Reduction of habitat area*

The Draft Plan does not propose any additional land take within Natura 2000 sites. The Village Plans for Ballyconnell and Belturbet require the development of 15ha respectively during the lifetime of the Plan and due to the proximity of these settlements to the Lough Oughter & Associated Loughs SAC there are more likely to be pathways of risk to this site through changes in land use within zoned development areas. Prior to any proposed plans or projects commencing each shall be subject to an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC).

- *Disturbance to key species*

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

- *Habitat or species fragmentation*

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

- *Reduction in species density*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### 4.1.5 Indicators of Significance of the Impacts.

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

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

The Draft Cavan County Development Plan 2014 - 2020 has been formulated to ensure that uses, development and effects arising from permissions based upon this Draft (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) shall not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site. Cavan County Council shall take appropriate steps to avoid the deterioration of these designated sites in accordance with the policies and objectives set out in Chapter 8 of the Draft Cavan County Development Plan.

#### 4.1.6 Likely Significance of Potential Impacts

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 4.2 Policies and Objectives protecting Natura 2000 sites

A material consideration in defining the strategy and policies within the Cavan County Development Plan 2014 – 2020 is the regulatory and legal instruments protecting designated sites and their respective conservation objectives. The Plan contains numerous policies and measures which contribute to the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites and compliment Cavan County Council's obligation to ensure that the Plan complies with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

The Plan under Chapter 8 Section 8.6.1 refers to Natura 2000 sites and states:

*“Planning Authorities must ensure that an Appropriate Assessment of the implications of proposals on designated Natura Sites is undertaken. This assessment is required for all planning applications which have shown likely significant effects on these sites through a screening process. Screening for Appropriate Assessment applies to all development proposals, either within or outside a Natura 2000”.*

The screening process involved a review of the proposed policies within the Draft Cavan County Development Plan 2014 - 2020 that implement specific objectives protecting Natura 2000 sites and the environmental conditions that underpin [structure and function] those sites in accordance with the Habitats Directive. The Plan states;

*It is the policy of Cavan County Council:*

**EI-O2** Carefully examine applications for extractive industries in areas designated as SACs, SPAs, pNHAs and other local designations.

**RT OBJ 32** To implement the Roads Programme for the County in association with the NRA. Various road schemes will be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment, where necessary.

**NHPOL6** To have regard to the views of the National Parks and Wildlife Service in respect of proposed development where such development may have an impact on a designated National or European site or proposed site for designation.

**NHPOL7** To continue to undertake surveys and collect data that will assist Cavan County Council in building its knowledge base and meeting its obligations under Article 6 of the Habitat Directives.

*Objectives:*

*It is an objective of Cavan County Council to:*

**NHOBJ3** To ensure an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, and in accordance with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009 and relevant EPA and European Commission guidance documents, is carried out in respect of any Plan or Project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have significant effect on a Natura 2000 site(s), either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, in view of the site's conservation objectives.

**NHOBJ4** *To protect and conserve the conservation value of Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas as identified by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and any other sites that may be proposed for designation during the lifetime of this plan.*

#### **4.3 Ecological Coherence of the Natura 2000 Network in County Cavan**

In addition to examining Natura 2000 sites, Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) are also a material consideration in the screening process. A Natural Heritage Area is an area considered important for the habitats present or which holds species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection. NHAs are given legal protection through statutory instruments which restrict certain activities that may impact negatively on the features of interest. Proposed Natural Heritage Areas are areas consisting of feature(s) of conservation interest but have not yet received full statutory designation. Protecting other designated sites of conservation importance serves an important supportive and functional role; retaining ecological coherence in the wider landscape and improving ecosystem health, and, crucially supports the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 network.

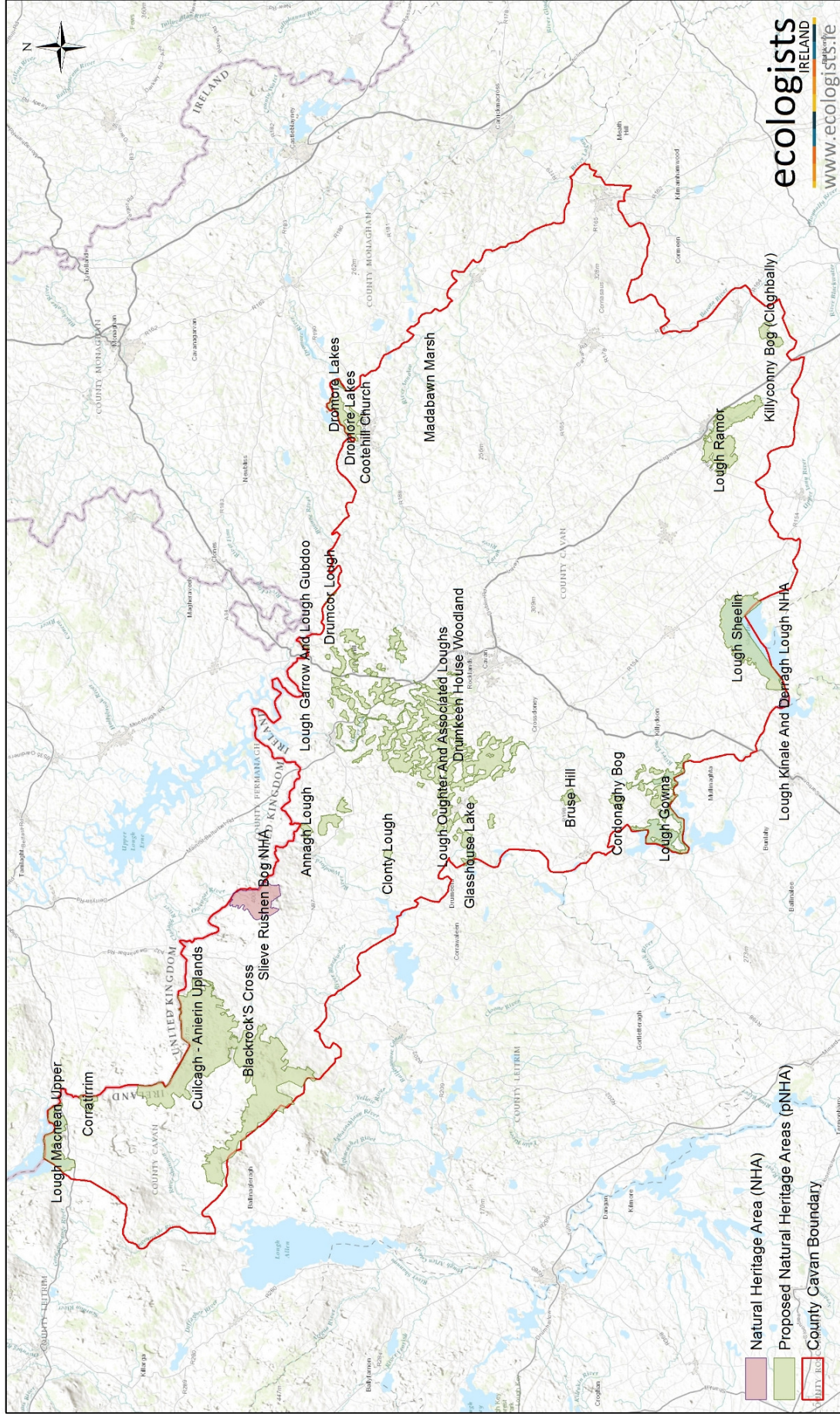
In addition to statutory instruments for NHAs, there is also a key legislative provision in the European Communities (Bird and Habitat) Regulations 2011 that aims to protect annexed habitats that occur outside Special Areas of Conservation. Habitats that are equivalent to those listed, but not within SACs are still classed as priority habitats of international and national importance and under Article 27 (4(b)), the planning authority has a duty to avoid the pollution or deterioration of Annex I habitats.

There are two Natural Heritage Areas in County Cavan, Slieve Rushen Bog NHA, which consists of a plateau of upland blanket bog straddling the border with Co. Fermanagh and is an important site for a declining population of breeding Hen harrier and a very small isolated population of Red Grouse; and, Lough Kinale which is also designated as a Special Protection Area, for its importance in supporting large numbers of wintering Waterbirds.

There are twenty proposed Natural Heritage areas in Cavan and represent a very diverse range of habitats and species of conservation importance. Of relevance to the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network will be that more than half of the pNHAs are inter-drumlin lakes and wetlands with a high variance in water chemistry (nutrient levels and pH), size, depth; in the development of fringe communities and the intact/modified vegetation sequences from open water to adjacent terrestrial habitats. Five pNHAs also closely overlap the boundaries of existing SACs.



Figure 6. Ecological Network Supporting Natura 2000 Sites in County Cavan.



#### 4.4 Policies & Objectives Protecting the Ecological Coherence of Natura 2000 sites.

5.0

6.0

6.1

6.2

6.3

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive states that Member States shall endeavour in their land use, planning and development policies, to encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of importance for wild flora and fauna.

***It is a policy of Cavan County Council:***

- *To conserve the existing wide range of flora, fauna and wildlife habitats in the county through the preservation of ecological corridors and networks vital to the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.*
- *To designate County Biodiversity Sites within the lifetime of this plan and to protect the ecological integrity of these sites.*

***It is an objective of Cavan County Council:***

- *To implement the actions of Cavan County Biodiversity Plan and revisions thereof in fulfilment of the requirements of the National Biodiversity Plan.*
- *To continue to map the habitat of the county to enable planning for the future development in a sensitive and sustainable manner and this mapping to inform the development management process.*

***It is the policy of Cavan County Council:***

***EI –P1*** *To conserve and protect the environment, including in particular, the archaeological and natural heritage, areas of geological or geomorphic interest and conservation and protection of European Designated Sites and any other sites which are protected.*

***NH POL3*** *To ensure the protection of species of flora and fauna afforded legal protection under Irish and European Legislation.*

***NHPOL4*** *To assess the impact on biodiversity of proposals for large developments, particularly those on greenfield sites, or in environmentally sensitive areas. Any such developments where they do occur must include measures for enhancement of biodiversity.*

***NHPOL5*** *Development on or adjacent to National or European designated sites or proposed designated sites during the lifetime of this plan will be permitted only where an assessment has being carried out to the satisfaction of Cavan County Council, in consultation with National Parks and Wildlife Service and indicates that the overall integrity of the site will not be compromised or adversely affected.*

***WPP1*** *To protect the water resources of County Cavan.*

**WPP2** To protect the rivers streams and lakes and all watercourses in the County in order to promote sustainable and suitable habitats for flora and fauna.

**WPP3** To promote the engagement of developers and regulators in the promotion of sustainable development and to encourage a high standard of environmental protection. The 'precautionary principle' will apply where a significant risk to the environment exists.

**WPP4** To achieve good status in all our waterbodies and prevent the deterioration of existing quality status in all waterbodies in accordance with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD).

**WLPOL1** To protect existing wetlands from destruction, infilling, fragmentation and degradation.

**WTHSPOL4** To promote and encourage planting of native hedgerow species of local provenance.

**IWW-P2** To protect the biodiversity of rivers, streams and other water courses and maintain them in an open state and to discourage the culverting or realignment thereof.

**IWW-P5** To ensure that the County's watercourses are retained for their biodiversity and flood protection values and to conserve and enhance, where possible the wildlife habitats of the county's rivers and riparian zones, lakes, canals and streams which occur outside of designated areas to provide for a network of habitats and biodiversity corridors throughout the county,

**Objectives:**

**It is an objective of Cavan County Council to:**

**TE&HBEA-O2** To promote the diversification of the rural economy and the growth of rural indigenous industry such as farming, forestry, tourism, while safeguarding the environment and role of the rural area as a strategic asset.

**TE&HBEA-O5** To consider development in rural areas which present substantial employment opportunities having due regard to...[.] Full assessment of any potential environmental effects.

**EI-O3** The Council will require that extractive industry proposals do not adversely impact upon the water environment, including surface water and groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated wetlands.

**WPO 1** All applications for development are assessed in terms of the potential impact on the quality of surface waters through the implementation of where applicable the RBMP's objectives and targets set under the following:- Neagh Bann International River Basin District: Water Matters; North Western International River Basin District: Water Matters; Shannon International River Basin District: Water Matters and the Eastern International River Basin District: Water Matters.

**WPO 2** All development applications are assessed in compliance with the European Communities Environmental Objectives on (Surface Waters) Regulations (2009) (S.I.No 272 of 2009) and the European Communities Environmental Objectives Groundwater Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010).

**F-O4** To resist forestry proposals which would unduly impact on protected views, sensitive upland areas, lands of wildlife interest and in the upper reaches of salmonid rivers which would affect biodiversity.

**ENO13** The following issues will be considered in the assessment of a wind energy development:

*Impact of the development on habitats, by direct loss, degradation, fragmentation and impact on habitats outside the site.*

*Impact of the development on birds through disturbance during construction and operation phase, collision mortality, barrier to movement and loss or degradation of habitats.*

**RHO16** To permit infill development, where appropriate, subject to good planning practice in matters of location, siting, design, access, wastewater disposal and the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and areas of high landscape value.

**RHO19** To ensure that applications that are likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 either directly or indirectly site are subject to an appropriate assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

**RHO24** All proposals involving the installation of an on-site wastewater treatment system must be in accordance with the requirements of the EPA Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (2009) or any subsequent Code of Practice which supersedes it.

**RT OBJ 29** To have regard to the Cavan County Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2009-2014 in the provision of any new Council roads.

**WLOBJ1** To resist development that would destroy, fragment and degrade wetlands.

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

## **5.0 CONCLUSIONS**

This Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment of the Draft Cavan County Development Plan 2014 – 2020 has been conducted in accordance with the “Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC” as published by the European Commission and “Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities” published by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. In view of the information presented for consideration from the statutory consultees, and on implementation of the Draft Core Strategy; Settlement Framework (town and village plans); and, Zoning policies, it is objectively concluded that there are likely to be no significant effects on the Natura 2000 sites and that appropriate protection and mitigation, where necessary, in respect of Natura 2000 Network has been formulated within the Draft Cavan County Development Plan (as outlined in 4.2) to ensure that changes in land utility, development and the potential impacts from permissions based on policies and objectives detailed in the Plan conform to the requirements of the European Communities (Birds & Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011.



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STAGE 1 SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS REPORT MATRIX (FONSE)

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

<p><b>Development Type</b></p>	<p>Draft Cavan County Development Plan 2014 - 2020</p>
<p><b>Development Location</b></p>	<p>County Cavan including surrounding lands within 15km of the county boundary.</p>
<p><b>Natura 2000 site(s) within impact zone</b>  <b>*Sites listed in bold within County Cavan</b></p>	<p><b>Boleybrack Mountain Special Area of Conservation [002032]</b></p> <p><b>Cuilcagh – Anierin Uplands Special Area of Conservation [000584]</b></p> <p><b>Lough Oughter &amp; Associated Loughs [000007]</b></p> <p><b>River Boyne &amp; River Blackwater Special Area of Conservation [002299]</b></p> <p><b>Lough Oughter Special Protection Area [004049]</b></p> <p><b>Lough Sheelin Special Protection Area [004065]</b></p> <p><b>Lough Kinale Special Protection Area [004061]</b></p> <p><b>River Boyne &amp; River Blackwater Special Protection Area [004232]</b></p> <p>Lough Melvin Special Area of Conservation [000428]</p> <p>Aroo Mountain Special Area of Conservation [001403]</p> <p>Lough Gill Special Area of Conservation [ 001976]</p> <p>Ardagullion Bog Candidate Special Area of Conservation [00234]</p> <p>Lough Lene Candidate Special Area of Conservation [002121]</p> <p>White Lough, Ben Loughs &amp; Lough Doo Candidate Special Area of Conservation [001810]</p> <p>Lough Bane &amp; Lough Glass Candidate Special Area of Conservation [002120]</p> <p>Kilroosky Lough Cluster Special Area of Conservation [001786]</p>

	<p>Garriskill Bog Candidate Special Protection Area [004102]</p> <p>Lough Derravaragh Special Protection Area [004043]</p>
<p><b>Qualifying interests of Natura 2000 site(s)</b></p>	<p>Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160]</p> <p>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010]</p> <p>European dry heaths [4030]</p> <p><i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410]</p> <p>Blanket bogs (*if active only) [7130]</p> <p>Active raised bogs [7110]</p> <p>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]</p> <p>Limestone pavements [8240]</p> <p>Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160]</p> <p>Species rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas [6230]</p> <p>Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220]</p> <p>Alkaline Fens [7230]</p> <p>Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> [91E0]</p> <p>Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> [ 3130]</p> <p>Petrifying spring with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220]</p> <p>Calcareous and calschist screes of the montane to alpine levels [8120]</p> <p>Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i>-type vegetation [3150]</p> <p>Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> [91A0]</p> <p>Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150].</p> <p>Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp [3140].</p> <p>Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210].</p> <p>Sea Lamprey [1095]</p> <p>Brook Lamprey [1096]</p> <p>River Lamprey [1099]</p> <p>Atlantic Salmon [1106]</p>

	<p>European Otter [1355]</p> <p>White-clawed Crayfish [1092]</p> <p>Wetland &amp; Waterbirds [A999]</p> <p>Great Crested Grebe [A005]</p> <p>Whooper Swan [A038]</p> <p>Wigeon [A050]</p> <p>Pochard [A059]</p> <p>Tufted Duck [ A061]</p> <p>Goldeneye [A067]</p> <p>Kingfisher [A229]</p> <p>Greenland White-fronted Goose [A395]</p> <p>Coot [ A125]</p>
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<b>1.0 Name of project or plan: Draft Cavan County Development Plan 2014 - 2020</b>	
Name and location of Natura 2000 site:	The Draft Cavan County Development Plan does not relate to any one Natura 2000 site and considers all sites within County Cavan and within a recommended 15km buffer zone.
Description of the project or plan	The Plan establishes a framework for the co-ordinated and sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental development of County Cavan. The Plan details the policies and objectives of Cavan County Council's vision for the spatial and sectoral development of Cavan over the period from 2014 – 2020. The Plan also serves as a point of reference for statutory authorities, planners, developers and the general public on how development proposals are likely to be assessed.
Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (provide details)?	The Draft Cavan County Development Plan 2014 - 2020 is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the Natura 2000 Network. The Plan provides the strategic direction and policy against which proposed developments are based. A material consideration in that strategy and respective policy platform is the regulatory and legal instruments protecting designated sites with a specific focus on the key conservation objectives of those sites.
Are there other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could affect the site (provide details)?	This Draft Plan once adopted will form the County Development Plan. The Plan sets the framework for the sustainable development of the County over a six year period. It is the primary document for the setting out of the councils aim, policies and objectives in terms of land use planning. In doing so it must be consistent with, and ensure the implementation of National and Regional Plans and Guidelines as well as a host of other European, National and Regional Legislation, in terms of the management of the environment.

<b>2.0 The assessment of significance of effects</b>	
Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 Site.	The policies and objectives detailed in Draft Plan will have the effect of strengthening the management of and enhancing the protection of Natura 2000 sites within County Cavan.
Explain why these effects are not considered significant.	<p>Specific policies and objectives have been formulated within the Draft Cavan County Development Plan 2014 - 2020 to allow the Council to take appropriate steps to avoid the deterioration of Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>The legal provision of the Water Framework Directive and the European Communities (Birds &amp; Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 overlap with the requirement of the Planning &amp; Development Acts (as amended) 2010 and ensure linkages between planning and environment legislation in achieving the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 Network.</p> <p>The Draft Cavan County Development Plan 2014 – 2020 has many amendments within policies and objectives that serve to pre-emptively avoid and minimise risks to Natura 2000 sites. Many of these policies and objectives reinforce the statutory authorities’ obligation to comply with environmental legislation and serve to promote the importance of other areas designated for conservation interest and strengthen the protection of ecologically importance networks within the County.</p> <p>The implementation of these policies and objectives during the timeline of the Draft Cavan County Development Plan therefore serve to provide a proactive approach to environmental legislation, promote awareness of environmental issues within the County; and protect the favourable extent and condition of habitats within and out-with Natura 2000 sites.</p>
List of agencies consulted: provide contact name and telephone or email address	<p><b>National Parks &amp; Wildlife Service</b>  John Matthews (West Cavan)  <a href="mailto:John.Matthews@ahg.gov.ie">John.Matthews@ahg.gov.ie</a></p> <p>David McDonagh (East Cavan)  <a href="mailto:David.McDonagh@ahg.gov.ie">David.McDonagh@ahg.gov.ie</a></p> <p>Fiona Wheeldon (Leitrim/Sligo)  <a href="mailto:Fiona.Wheeldon@ahg.gov.ie">Fiona.Wheeldon@ahg.gov.ie</a></p> <p>Caitriona Douglas  <a href="mailto:Caitriona.Douglas@ahg.gov.ie">Caitriona.Douglas@ahg.gov.ie</a></p> <p>Susan Moles (Longford)  <a href="mailto:Susan.Moles@ahg.gov.ie">Susan.Moles@ahg.gov.ie</a></p> <p><b>Heritage Council</b>  Anne-Marie Ward (Cavan Heritage Officer)  <a href="mailto:amcurley@cavancoco.ie">amcurley@cavancoco.ie</a></p>

Response to consultation:	<i>Provision of information relating to existing and potential future threats to Natura 2000 site integrity within relevant jurisdictions.</i>
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<b>3.0 Data collected to carry out the assessment</b>			
<b>Who carried out the assessment?</b>	<b>Sources of data</b>	<b>Level of assessment completed</b>	<b>Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed</b>
<p>Ryan Wilson-Parr B.Sc (Hons) M.Res CMIEEM Director Ecologists Ireland</p> <p>For and on behalf of Cavan County Council.</p>	<p>National Parks and Wildlife Services; Heritage Council;</p> <p>Draft Cavan County Development Plan 2014-2020;</p> <p>The Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report for the Draft Cavan County Development Plan 2014 – 2020.</p> <p>Settlement Framework and respective Town and Village Plans.</p>	<p>Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment</p>	<p>This report titled: Wilson-Parr, 2013. Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment pursuant to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC on Plans &amp; Projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites. Draft Cavan County Development Plan 2014 – 2020.</p>

## Overall Conclusions

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

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

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

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

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

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