

### **Review of Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment of proposed draft Donegal Development Plan 2018 -2024**

#### **The request**

Donegal County Council has consulted Derry City and Strabane District Council on its Screening for Appropriate Assessment for the proposed County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024. Donegal County Council has concluded that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment will be required and is seeking submissions or observations in relation to the scope and level of detail of the Appropriate Assessment.

#### **Shared Environmental Service Role**

This review has been prepared by the Shared Environmental Service to advise Derry City and Strabane District Council on the above report. This response relates to sites located within N. Ireland. We have reviewed the Screening Report and drafted a response for your consideration in relation to how appropriately it considers potential impacts on NI European sites and its conclusions. Other planning and environmental issues or protected sites such as ASSI's, World Heritage Sites or AONB's have not been considered in this response.

#### **Overview**

Donegal County Council has commenced a review of its existing Development Plan 2012 - 2018 and is preparing a new County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024 (CDDP). The new CDDP will be the principle instrument for managing change in land use in the entire administrative area of Donegal County Council and will provide a framework within which other local operational plans are developed. The proposed structure of the Draft CDDP is as follows although this may be added to during plan preparation:

- Core Strategy;
- Economic Development;
- Infrastructure;
- Housing;
- The Natural and Built Heritage;
- Natural Resource Development;
- Tourism and Marine;
- Community Culture and Gaeltacht;
- Development and Technical Standards;
- Childcare Strategy.

The plan will be subject to Appropriate Assessment and to Strategic Environmental Assessment.

### **Approach of the Screening for Appropriate Assessment**

The report firstly outlines the strategic context noting that the overarching plans have been subject to Appropriate Assessment and incorporate mitigation to ensure no significant effects on the Natura 2000 network. It is acknowledged that plans in Northern Ireland may also have an effect on Natura 2000 sites in either jurisdiction. It goes on to provide an overview of County Donegal before identifying the Natura 2000 sites which are the Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas in and within 15km of the plan area. Generalised potential impacts are listed in 2.7. Those that could particularly cause transboundary effects are:

Creating barriers or severing links of mobile species

- Air emissions
- Water demand/wastewater treatment
- Agricultural drainage and changes in land use
- Disturbance of sensitive habitats or species due to tourism and recreation
- Landscape management, development and urbanisation

More detailed consideration of potential impacts is provided although this cannot be site specific at this stage. In section 3.0 these impacts are evaluated in terms of how they could affect Natura 2000 sites.

### **N. Ireland Sites**

The European sites in N. Ireland considered in the Scoping Report are listed in tables 3 and 4 and it includes all sites within Derry and Strabane District Council which are 15km or less from Donegal. All sites meeting this criterion have been included and take account of the most up to date conservation objectives published by NIEA.

### **Analysis**

The Screening for Appropriate Assessment considers all the European sites in Northern Ireland that should be considered and lists all their site selection features. It identifies potential impacts in general terms. No analysis has been carried out at this stage of the actual site selection features that could be impacted and it is more meaningful to do this as detail of the plan is developed so that more specific impacts can be assessed.

### **Conclusion**

The outcome of the Screening for Appropriate Assessment is correct and it provides a good baseline for carrying out the full Appropriate Assessment in due course. Derry City and Strabane District Council may want to advise Donegal County Council that preparation of its own Local Development Plan is underway.

## **Recommended Response**

The Screening for Appropriate Assessment correctly identifies all Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection areas in Derry City and Strabane District Council and captures the potential impacts in broad terms. It is agreed that the plan should be subject to full Appropriate Assessment taking account of more detailed information on spatial and policy proposals for land use in County Donegal.

### ***Shared Environmental Service***

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