

HABITATS
DIRECTIVE
ASSESSMENT
SCREENING
REPORT OF THE
LIMERICK CITY
AND COUNTY
COUNCIL LOCAL
ECONOMIC AND
COMUNITY PLAN
DRAFT SOCIO-
ECONOMIC
STATEMENT 2015-
2021 –PROPOSED
AMENDMENTS

Prepared for Limerick City and County Council

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HABITATS DIRECTIVE ASSESSMENT

SCREENING OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO LIMERICK LECP DRAFT SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATEMENT FOLLOWING PUBLIC CONSULTATION PERIOD.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the submissions made following publication of the Limerick Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) Draft Socio-economic Statement. The LECP Draft Socio-economic Statement was placed on public display inviting members of the public and interested parties to make submissions or observations from 04th June 2015 until 02nd July 2015 inclusive. A further period of consultation was held with stakeholders and elected members. A total of 18 written submissions were received within the statutory timeframe, three of which relate to the environment. Thereafter some further text has been added primarily a new text section that highlights fit and consistency of the socio-economic statement with higher level strategies (Section 1.4.2 new text). These are also considered in this assessment.

The purpose of this report is to consider whether the amendments to the LECP draft Socio Economic Statement will have any likely significant effects on European Sites. This Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) screening report is prepared to inform the Submissions Report with regard to the response to proposed amendments to the LECP draft Socio Economic Statement.

The proposed amendments to the Limerick LECP Draft Socio Economic Statement are outlined and the likely significant environmental effects or potential impacts of the amendments are screened and assessed in Table 1. Where new text is proposed under high level goals, Action Areas and /Specific Actions, the text is presented in yellow highlighted font.

This screening report concludes that these amendments will not have the potential to result in significant effects to the conservation status or integrity of European Sites. Based on this Finding of No Significant Effects a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

TABLE 1 SCREENING ASSESSMENT

Reference	Text/new text	HDA Comment
Section 1.3.4	<p>New text on Guiding Principles regarding consistency with development plans etc.</p> <p>Additional text reaffirming integration of sustainable development considerations including processes into the plan.</p>	<p>Positive, consistency with the Development Plans, other Sub-regional Plans and the SIFP will ensure all actions arising out of the LECP are in line with the approach adopted during the formulation of these Plans. Each of these Plans have been assessed for their potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites and have included within them a precautionary approach that aims to avoid such effects as well as a range of mitigation measures to ensure no significant adverse effects to European Sites. Consistency with these Plans will ensure the LECP follows the approach and measures outlined in these Plans. Reaffirming integration of sustainable development considerations further supports this approach.</p>
Section 1.3.5	<p>New section supporting public participation and reference to Public Participation Network</p>	<p>The inclusion of this amendment will not have the potential to result in likely significant effects to European Sites as it does not relate to land use activities.</p>
Section 1.4.1	<p>New diagrams showing spatial planning context</p>	<p>This is an editorial amendment to the LECP to provide greater clarity on the spatial planning context. It will not have any relevance to the integrity or conservation status of European Sites.</p>
Figure 2	<p>Inclusion of EU Targets for EU 2020 strategy</p>	<p>This is an editorial amendment to the LECP to provide greater clarity in relation to national and EU targets. It will not have any relevance to the integrity or conservation status of European Sites.</p>
Section 1.4.2	<p>New text existing policy and guidance framework, and overview of existing strategies and plans.</p> <p>New text discussing fit and consistency with higher level strategies.</p>	<p>This is an editorial amendment to the LECP which aims to set out the background policy framework upon which high-level goals are derived. It will not have any relevance to the integrity or conservation status of European Sites.</p> <p>Where the additional text refers to higher</p>

Reference	Text/new text	HDA Comment
		<p>level strategies such as Rural Development Operational Programme, such strategies/programmes have already been subject to assessment under the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>The additional text will not have any relevance to the integrity or conservation status of European Sites.</p>
Figure 3	SWOT – strength renewable energy potential and threat – dependence on fossil fuel.	Acknowledgement of renewable energy potential and reliance on fossil fuel assists in raising awareness and integration of this issue more clearly into the LECP as it progresses.
Section 2.2. High Level Goals	<p>(viii) <i>To ensure the protection of the receiving environment in implementing the LECP.</i></p> <p>(ix) Promote the transition of Limerick City and County towards a low carbon future by 2030.</p>	These new goals are inserted on foot of submissions during the consultation period and give rise to positive environmental impacts for goal (viii) and for air quality and climate in particular for goal (ix). The potential for positive environmental effects through the implementation of these goals will in turn have the potential to result in positive effects for European Sites (i.e. through reductions in air pollution and goals to limit the potential consequences of climatic impacts).
Section 2.2. Cross cutting priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy & Climate Change are important elements in every sector of society and economy. It is important that the severe weather effects of climate change together with changes to agriculture are addressed to ensure the needs of future generations are met. 	New cross cutting priority text – impacts as above.
Section 2.4.8	<p><i>Energy Security and Supply</i></p> <p>(i) To Promote the development of indigenous energy sources and technologies, to secure Limericks low carbon transition.</p> <p>(ii) To promote energy efficiency in all sectors of the economy</p> <p>(iii) To reduce the carbon footprint associated with socio-economic activity within Limerick City & County, as a</p>	<p>(i) While in achieving the objective to promote the development of indigenous energy sources and technologies the potential exists for land uses changes to occur (eg the provision of transport services/links), the nature and location of these changes cannot be determined at this stage. This is an example of a general</p>

Reference	Text/new text	HDA Comment
	<p>clear indicator of energy security and supply</p>	<p>objective where it is not possible to identify where, when or how the policy may be implemented, or where effects may occur, or which European Sites, if any, may be affected. Furthermore it is noted that this goal is in line with Policy EM.21 of the Limerick CDP, which has previously been assessed for potential effects to European Sites.</p> <p>(ii) & (iii) have the potential to result in positive effects to the environment in general will associated positive effects for the conservation status and integrity of European Sites.</p>
<p>Section 2.5.3 Transport</p>	<p>(i) Facilitate public investment to fill gaps in the strategic road infrastructures, improving connectivity within the local authority area, to other urban centres and international access transport infrastructures and services (including Shannon Airport and ports);</p> <p>(ii) Progress proposals relating to rail links and Colbert Station redevelopment / renewal, identified in Limerick 2030 in line with the investment programmes of the relevant agencies;</p> <p>(iii) Further develop SMARTER Travel in the urban environment including development of routes, local educational campaigns and other initiatives including car pooling / shared transport and reduction of car usage linked to promoting the low carbon agenda, quality of life, health and well-being; As a means of improving accessibility for all residents, workers and visitors to Limerick, further develop walking, cycling and public transport, particularly in urban areas, through the development of infrastructure in</p>	<p>These amendments will not result in likely significant effects to European Sites.</p> <p>The amendment or new texts all promote accessible and public transport which will not result in any changes to land use within or adjacent to European Sites.</p>

Reference	Text/new text	HDA Comment
	<p>cooperation with other agencies, and through behavioural change programmes such as Smarter Travel Workplaces and Campuses, and Green Schools Travel.</p>	
	<p>(iv) Support the National Transport Authority's Rural Transport Programme in order to improve access for the rural population to key services (health, education), employment and day-to-day activities (shopping), especially targeting those without own transport and vulnerable groups (e.g. elderly persons on low incomes).</p>	
	<p>(v) Establish innovative rural transport initiatives to improve access of rural populations to key services (health, education), employment and day-to-day activities (shopping), especially targeting those without own transport and vulnerable groups (e.g., elderly persons on low incomes).</p>	
	<p>(vi) Facilitate investment in public transport that is universally accessible.</p>	
<p>Section 2.5.4 Low carbon, improved energy efficiency and local responses to climate change</p>	<p>(i) In partnership with statutory, voluntary and community organisations, promote the low carbon agenda, improved energy efficiency, careful use of water resources and local action to mitigate effects of climate change through efficient resource management and reduced CO2 emissions;</p> <p>(ii) Promote and support local development of indigenous energy resources and technologies, particularly community based initiatives employment and community based initiatives in these areas;</p> <p>(iii) Support access to wider networks of local initiatives to bring new knowledge, exchange of</p>	<p>For the proposed amendments to (i) and (ii) see the HDA response to Section 2.4.8 amendments above.</p> <p>For (iv) the implementation of actions to address climate change at the local level in County Limerick will have the potential to contribute to positive effects in terms of abating the potential risks posed by climate change. Furthermore it is noted that any specific land use actions that may be implemented in line with such actions will be required to be undertaken in accordance with the policies and objectives of the County and City DPs. Both plans contain a range of safeguards to ensure that future public infrastructure development will not have the potential to negatively affect European Sites.</p> <p>Both development plans have been subject to HDA and it has been concluded that, in light</p>

Reference	Text/new text	HDA Comment
	<p>experience and joint action in these fields including international experience.</p> <p>(iv) Implement the actions set out for Limerick City and County in the Climate Change Strategy for the Mid West Region Establish</p> <p>(v) Promote the development of energy and water infrastructure to support city, county and community based low carbon projects.</p>	<p>of the safeguards contained within these Plans, the land use policies, objectives and zonings relating to future public infrastructure will not have the potential to negatively affect European Sites.</p> <p>For (v) it is acknowledged that the potential exists for land uses changes to occur during the development of energy and water infrastructure (eg the provision of transport services/links), the nature and location of these changes cannot be determined at this stage. This is an example of a general objective where it is not possible to identify where, when or how the policy may be implemented, or where effects may occur, or which European Sites, if any, may be affected. Furthermore it is noted that this Action seeks to promote such development and the promotion of this will not in itself result in land use effects.</p>

3.2 CONCLUSION TO HDA SCREENING ASSESSMENT

The specified environmental authorities were consulted over the display period and comments and feedback from the 18 submissions received have further informed the LECP draft Socio-Economic Statement; as can be seen in Table 1 above, these amendments are not identified as giving rise to significant effects to European Sites and several of the amendments have further strengthened environmental considerations in the Goals and Action Areas, which will have the potential to result in positive effects for the future conservation status and integrity of European Sites.

Therefore, on the basis of the above, this Screening Assessment has found that the proposed amendments to the LECP will not have the potential to result in Likely Significant Effects to European Sites and does not require Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment at this juncture. As the LECP progresses to the next stage, it will be further screened against requirements under the SEA and Habitats Directive Assessments.